THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF PEER-ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT ON IRANIAN EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the comparative impact of self-assessment and peer-assessment on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' vocabulary learning. For this purpose, 120 female EFL learners were selected from a group of 161 learners based on their performance on a sample NELSON in Pouyandegan Andisheh Saleh (GAP) Language Institute. Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was administered to the participants to measure their degree of extroversion and introversion. They were randomly assigned into two experimental groups and a control group. Moreover, they were also given a Nelson vocabulary pretest to homogenize participants based on their vocabulary knowledge. The twelve sessions treatment which followed included teaching vocabulary using self-assessment in one experimental group and peer assessment in the other. The control group had their own traditional way of teaching without treatment. At the end of the treatment, a teacher-made vocabulary posttest was administered to three groups to see if there were any significance differences between three groups in terms of their achievement on the posttest. The analysis of the test scores using one way ANOVA and an independent samples t-test indicated self-assessment had significant positive effect on introvert learners' vocabulary development, and a significant positive effect on extrovert learners' vocabulary development. Moreover, peer-assessment had higher mean on the posttest of vocabulary than the control group and it can be concluded that peer-assessment had no significant effect on introvert learners' vocabulary development, but a significant positive effect on extrovert learners' vocabulary development.

KEYWORDS: Extrovert, Introvert, Peer-Assessment, Self-Assessment, Vocabulary development

INTRODUCTION

This was challenged by some researchers reporting that personality traits cause differences in what and how people learn (Mc Caulley & Natter, 1980). Similarly, Ackerman and Heggestad (1997) propose that personality dispositions are among the predictors of success in a particular

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task. Among the studied personality types, the concepts of extroversion and introversion are perhaps the most popular ones (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) both in theory and research. Recently, there have been some attempts to make a link between the two personality types and some skills and sub skills. Vocabulary learning is one of major concerns in language teaching and learning and occupies very important position in these areas. Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that "the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, function, notions, or some other unit of planning and teaching but lexis, that is, word and word combination" (p. 132). Since 1980s, many eminent theorists and researchers have been the proponents of shifting from teaching to learning. In line with this reasoning, Huba and Freed (2000) defined assessment as the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and different sources are used to improve following learning in order to improve a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge by means of their educational experiences; the process when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning. There are various ways to empower students including peer assessment, teacher-assessment, and self-assessment. Peer assessment, in which learners assess the work of their classmates, is a kind of learning that lets learners provide feedback on each other's work. Moreover, Falchikov (2001) states that peer assessment is an assessment in which member of a class give feedback and grade the work or performance of their peers using relevant criteria. In self-assessment, marks may be awarded by students themselves. These assessments bring a closer relationship among teachers and students as well as help students develop useful skills in academic and professional areas.

Learning vocabulary is considered as a key factor in achieving a high level of proficiency in the target language (Boers & Lindstrǿmberg, 2008). Nowadays researchers and teachers are paying attention to foreign language vocabulary acquisition. Having a large number of vocabularies is the indicator of communicative competence and it is one of the important aspects of language learning (McCrostie, 2007). Within the last few decades in this regard, the adoption of different ways of assessment in foreign language education has become of crucial importance. In recent years, as Farhady (2006) claims "assessment has perceived a paradigm shift from a discrete-point component-based perspective to a task-based, performance-oriented approach" (P. 28). Peer and self-assessment along with dynamic assessment have proved themselves as useful and mediating tools for teaching and learning in different skills and sub-skills including writing (Seyed Erfani & Agha Ebrahimiyan, 2013), speaking (Hill & Sabet, 2009), reading (Guterman, 2002), grammar (Kovacic, Bubas, & Coric, 2012),and vocabulary (Saeidi & Hosseinpour, 2013). However, the previous studies have not provided conclusive results and techniques for the integration of dynamic assessment in vocabulary learning. Moreover, although self-assessment and peer-assessment have been widely researched in the fields of psychology and education, vocabulary learning was not considered in these studies and personality types such as the concepts of extroversion and introversion (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) both in theory and research were ignored. Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of peer, and self-assessment on English language vocabulary development among Iranian EFL learners with two different personality types within the body of dynamic assessment.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE
Vocabulary

According to Manser (1995) "vocabulary is the total number of words in a language, all words known by a person or used in a particular book, subject, or a list of words with their meanings" (p. 461). In addition, Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary (2003) illustrates that vocabulary means the words that make up a language. Moreover, the term vocabulary refers to "a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of a language might use" (Hatch & Brown, 1995). In importance of vocabulary, Wilkins (1972) argued that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p. 111).

Introvert Learners versus Extrovert Learners

Many second language teachers believe that an outgoing learner is more likely to be successful as a second language learner than his less gregarious counterpart. Language teachers condemn that the extroverts will create more situations for themselves to engage in conversation in the target language (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Therefore, these opportunities to speak a new language will positively affect the development of the student's proficiency in it. Wilson, Fornasier, and White (2010) regarding the difference between introvert and extrovert language learners notify that extroverts are those who are oriented primarily towards the outer world. They are also sociable and impulsive learners who wish to share information as well as interact with others. In contrast, introverts are those who are oriented towards the inner world. Given that they are less sociable but more reserved, and tend to withdraw into themselves (Goby, 2006). However, they used to focus their energy on concepts, ideas, as well as internal experiences (Weibel, Wissmath, & Groner, 2010).

Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment has been developed as an alternative to 'static' types of assessment, namely, standardized tests. According to Haywood (1992) dynamic assessment is a subset of the more generic concept of interactive assessment. He further suggested that "It might be useful to characterize as interactive any approach to psychological or psycho-educational assessment in which the examiner is inserted into an active relationship with a subject and does more than give instructions, pose questions, and record responses. 'Dynamic' should probably be reserved for those approaches in which the interaction is richer, in which there is actual teaching (not of answers but of cognitive tools), within the interaction and in which there is conscious, purposeful, and deliberate effort to produce change in the subject" (Haywood, 1992, p. 233). Haywood and Tzuriel (2002) defined dynamic assessment as a "subset of interactive assessment that includes deliberate and planned mediational teaching and the assessment of the effects of that teaching on subsequent performance. The term dynamic assessment refers to an assessment of thinking, perception, learning, and problem solving by an active teaching process aimed at modifying cognitive functioning. Dynamic assessment differs from conventional static tests in regard to its goals, processes, instruments, test situation, and interpretation of results" (p. 40).

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions are formulated:

Q1. Does self-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

Q2: Does self-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL introvert learners?

Q3. Does self-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL extrovert learners?

Q4. In case of any effect of self-assessment, which of the introvert or extrovert learners benefit more?

Q5. Does peer-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

Q6. Does peer-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL introvert learners?

Q7. Does peer-assessment have any effect on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL extrovert learners?

Q8. In case of any effect of peer-assessment, which of the introvert or extrovert learners benefit more?

Q9. If the answers to research questions one and five are yes, does peer-assessment have more effect than self-assessment on vocabulary development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the present study were 120 female intermediate English language learners, selected out of initial 161 participants as the result of homogenizing test, at Pouyandegan Andisheh Saleh (GAP) Language Institute. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 22. Following the administration of a Nelson test to 161 intermediate learners, 120 ones whose scores fell 1SD below and above the mean were selected. Eysenck's (1999) Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was administered to the participants to measure their degree of extroversion and introversion.

Instruments

The following instruments were used in this study:

Test of Homogeneity (NELSON)

In order to be assured of the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups in terms of English language proficiency, and being sure that they were at intermediate level, a test of NELSON, series 300B, was administered before the pretest. It consisted of four parts: cloze tests, structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. All parts were in the form of Multiple-Choice questions. There were, in all, 50 items and the time allotted was 45minutes.

The Nelson Vocabulary Pretest
To measure the knowledge of the participants in vocabulary, and to prove that they are homogeneous in terms of vocabulary, the participants in all the groups were asked to have the 30 multiple choice Nelson vocabulary test prior to treatment as a pretest.

Eysenck's (1999) Personality Questionnaire (EPQ)
EPQ is used to measure the extroversion and introversion degree of the subjects. This questionnaire contains 57 questions regarding the way someone behaves, feels, and acts. After each question is a space for answering YES or NO. Participants tried to decide whether YES or NO represents usual way of acting or feeling. Also, those who fill out the EPQ received three kinds of scores: E, N, and Lie. The scores show the degree of extroversion, neuroticism, and social desirability of a given person. E and N scores were computed out of 24 each because each consists of 24 items and the lie score is calculated out of 9. It took only few moments to fill out the questionnaire and researcher used the Persian version provided and validated by Noor institute of Behavioral Science Research in Tallish, Iran (as mentioned in Haradasht & Baradaran, 2012)

Posttest of Vocabulary
The participants in all the groups were asked to have the same 50 multiple choice teacher- made vocabulary test as a posttest in order to assess their development after treatment. It is worth mentioning that this test was piloted before treatment.

Procedure
161 participants out of 250 female intermediate students at Pouyandegan Andisheh Saleh whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean were identified and given the Eysenck's (1999) Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) in order to measure their degree of extroversion and introversion. From among the 161 students who attended the Eysenck Personality Inventory, 120 were chosen based on their scores which were calculated by the test key. Then in order to make sure that there was no significant difference between these groups regarding this variable at the outset before the treatment, their performance on the vocabulary Nelson test was compared. After making sure that there was no significant difference between the three groups' performance on vocabulary section of Nelson test, the treatment was started.

Before focusing on what was presented in the classroom, a brief review of the dynamic assessment model (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005) which was followed in the study seems necessary. The participants were given the required instructions to work with the checklist they received as the means of assessment. Most growth in vocabulary knowledge must necessarily come through reading. At the outset of the each session, the students were asked to pose question whenever they encounter any problem with vocabularies in reading texts. In the self-assessment group, while each participant was performing a reading task, the teacher used to take notes and write down that participant's errors in vocabulary learning. After finishing of the task, the teacher was giving her notes to the participant and asked her to find the correct meaning of the mentioned words and learn their correct form. In the following session each participant had to make a sentence, but with the correct meaning of words. To foster the self-assessment process, the

teacher started to act as a participant who was assigned to assess themselves. She showed how the required errors must be checked to provide feedback. However, in peer assessment group, the peer provided feedback if there were some mistakes and they acted as a mediator while in the self-assessment group, the students practiced self-assessment and were asked to assess themselves at the end of each session of the classroom. The peer assessment group worked in a team frame which included two participants and they corrected each other's error in word meanings. In this group, while one of the pairs was performing the reading task, the other pair had to take notes and find her friend's errors in word meanings. She was also responsible for finding of the correct meaning of the mentioned words and sharing them with her pair. At the end of the term, after giving treatment to the experimental groups, all learners in control and the two experimental groups took the post-test of vocabulary test to test the research hypotheses.

Research Design and Statistical Analysis

This study is a quasi- experimental one, accordingly, the study involved two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables were peer, and self-assessments and the dependent variable was vocabulary learning. Extrovert and introvert personality types were two moderator variables of this study. After collecting the data, some descriptive and inferential data analysis procedures was carried out in order to analyze the data including the descriptive statistical analysis of vocabulary tests and estimating reliability through Cronbach's Alpha method before and after removing the malfunctioning items. Finally, comprehensive comparison of the means of three groups through one way ANOVA was calculated to test the null hypotheses of the study. Moreover, an independent sample *t*-test was run to probe any significant difference between the effect of self-assessment and peer-assessment on EFL learners' vocabulary development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first step to reach a homogenous sample was to administer a proficiency test. The researcher used Nelson test to this end. The test contains 50 multiple-choice questions. On the whole, 250 students participated in the test administration. After the administration of the test, descriptive statistics were conducted just as was done in the piloting phase. Table 1 shows these statistics with the mean of 33.21 and the standard deviation of 4.74.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Nelson Test Administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Nelson	250	20.00	45.00	33.2160	4.74081	-.277	.154
Valid N (listwise)	250						

The next step was to identify extrovert and introvert participants from among the 161 homogenous participants. To do so, the participants were asked to fill in the Persian translation of Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI). In order to make sure that the participants were homogeneous in terms of their vocabulary knowledge at the outset a sample vocabulary test of Nelson was used. The results obtained from the Nelson vocabulary test were used to make sure that the students did not manifested significant difference in terms of their vocabulary

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knowledge. Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of each group's performance on vocabulary knowledge test.

Table 2:Descriptive Statistics of the Groups' Vocabulary Knowledge at the Outset

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Introverts	40	13.8250	1.98569	.31396	13.1899	14.4601	11.00	18.00
Extroverts	40	13.8500	1.92886	.30498	13.2331	14.4669	11.00	17.00
Control	40	13.7250	1.98698	.31417	13.0895	14.3605	10.00	17.00
Total	120	13.8000	1.95151	.17815	13.4472	14.1528	10.00	18.00

As it is evident from table 4.3, the mean of three groups were almost the same. In order to make sure that there was no significant difference between the means, a one-way ANOVA procedure was used. Before running ANOVA, assumption of homogeneity of variance needed to be checked. Table 3 Shows the results of Levene's test of homogeneity of variance.

Table 3: Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance on the Scores of the Groups' Vocabulary Knowledge at the Outset

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.098	2	117	.906

As evident from table 3, ($F_{(2,117)}$ = .098, p=.906 > .05) the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met, running ANOVA was legitimized. Table 4 shows the results of ANOVA.

Table 4: ANOVA; the Scores of the Groups' Vocabulary Knowledge at the Outset
Vocabulary Knowledge Pretest

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.350	2	.175	.045	.956
Within Groups	452.850	117	3.871		
Total	453.200	119			

As it is evident from Table 4 ($F_{(2,117)}$ = .045, p = .8956 > .05), there was no significant difference between the three groups' performance on vocabulary knowledge test, indicating that the participants of groups had no significant difference in terms of their vocabulary knowledge at the outset. After the treatment was done, the pre-piloted vocabulary test was administered to the participants of the four experimental groups and the control group. Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the results obtained by each group in the posttest.

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Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Test Administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Peer-Assessment Extroverts	20	28.00	47.00	37.3000	5.50693	.257	.512
Peer-Assessment Introverts	20	28.00	41.00	34.3500	3.70313	-.170	.512
Peer-Assessment posttest	40	28.00	47.00	35.8250	4.86688	.465	.374
Self-Assessment Extroverts	20	30.00	44.00	35.7500	4.17858	.378	.512
Self-Assessment Introverts	20	29.00	48.00	38.5500	6.23635	.026	.512
Self-Assessment posttest	40	29.00	48.00	37.1500	5.42808	.387	.374
Control Group Extroverts	20	27.00	37.00	32.1500	2.73909	-.021	.512
Control Group Introverts	20	29.00	39.00	33.1000	2.91818	.272	.512
Control Group Posttest	40	27.00	39.00	32.6250	2.83465	.161	.374
Valid N (listwise)	20						

The skewness ratio (skewness/std. error) of all the scores was fallen between plus minus 1.96; thus all data enjoyed normalcy of distribution.

For analyzing the first research question, an independent *t*-test was run to probe the significant effect of self-assessment on EFL learners' vocabulary development. Based on the results displayed in Table 6, it can be claimed that the self-assessment (M = 37.15, SD = 5.42) had a slightly higher mean on the posttest of vocabulary than the control group (M =32.625, SD = 2.83).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Vocabulary by Self-Assessment

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Posttest	self-assessment	40	37.1500	5.42808	.85826
	control	40	32.6250	2.83465	.44820

The results of the independent *t*-test (t (58.79) = 4.673, p = .00).Table 6 indicate that there was a significant difference between those who received self-assessment as their treatment and those who didn't. In other words, it was shown that self-assessment has significant effect on EFL learners' vocabulary development; thus the first null hypothesis was **rejected**.

Table 7: Independent Samples Test, Posttest of Vocabulary by Self-Assessment

		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
Vocabulary Posttest	Equal variances assumed	23.475	.000	4.673	78	.000	4.52500	.96824	2.59739	6.45261
	Equal variances not assumed			4.673	58.799	.000	4.52500	.96824	2.58742	6.46258

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It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met (Levene's F = 23.475, p =.00). That is why the second row of Table 4.7, i.e. "Equal variances not assumed" was reported. For analyzing the second, third, and fourth research questions, a one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) was run to compare the effect of self-assessment on EFL learners' means on the posttest of vocabulary. Before discussing the results it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated (Levene's F (3, 76) = 12.621, p =.00) as reported in Table 8.

Table 8: Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances by Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
12.621	3	76	.000

As the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, robust tests of equality of means, namely Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests, were run to determine if there is any significant difference between the vocabulary knowledge of experimental and control groups (Table 9).

Table 9: Robust Tests of Equality of Means by Self-Assessment

	Statistic[a]	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	7.776	3	40.970	.000
Brown-Forsythe	9.155	3	51.130	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

As it is displayed in Table 9, some differences were identifiable between the mean scores of the participants (Welch's F(3,40.97) = 7.776, p=.000). In order to see where the differences lies, a Dunnett T3 post hoc was run (Table 10).

Table 10: Multiple Comparisons; The effect of self-assessment

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
introvert experimental	extrovert experimental	2.80000	1.67858	.468	-1.8790	7.4790
	introvert control	5.45000*	1.53961	.009	1.0997	9.8003
	extrovert control	6.40000*	1.52307	.002	2.0861	10.7139
extrovert experimental	introvert experimental	-2.80000	1.67858	.468	-7.4790	1.8790
	introvert control	2.65000	1.13966	.142	-.5225	5.8225
	extrovert control	3.60000*	1.11721	.017	.4835	6.7165
introvert control	introvert experimental	-5.45000*	1.53961	.009	-9.8003	-1.0997
	extrovert experimental	-2.65000	1.13966	.142	-5.8225	.5225
	extrovert control	.95000	.89494	.866	-1.5268	3.4268
extrovert control	introvert experimental	-6.40000*	1.52307	.002	-10.7139	-2.0861
	extrovert experimental	-3.60000*	1.11721	.017	-6.7165	-.4835
	introvert control	-.95000	.89494	.866	-3.4268	1.5268

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

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International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 14-28   *Mosavi, H., & Nemat Tabriz, A. R*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

Based on the results displayed in Table 4.13, it can be concluded that self-assessment had significant positive effect on introvert learners' vocabulary development (p = .009); and a significant positive effect on extrovert learners vocabulary development (p = .017). Thus, both second and third null hypotheses were **rejected**. It can also be concluded that there was no significant difference between extrovert and introvert learners' performance on vocabulary development posttest (p = .486), indicating that the fourth null hypothesis **was supported.**

For analyzing the fifth research question, an independent t-test was run to probe any significant effect of peer-assessment on EFL learners' vocabulary development. Based on the results displayed in Table 11, it can be claimed that the peer-assessment (M = 35.825, SD = 4.867) had higher mean on the posttest of vocabulary than the control group (M =32.625, SD = 2.83).

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Vocabulary by Peer-Assessment

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Posttest	peer-assessment	40	35.8250	4.86688	.76952
	Control	40	32.6250	2.83465	.44820

The results of the independent *t*-test (t (62.729) = 3.593, p = .001) indicate that there was a significant difference between those who received peer-assessment as their treatment and those who didn't. In other words, it was shown that peer-assessment has significant effect on EFL learners' vocabulary development; thus the fifth null hypothesis was **rejected**.

Table 12: Independent Samples Test, Posttest of Vocabulary by Peer-Assessment

		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
Vocabulary Posttest	Equal variances assumed	9.966	.002	3.593	78	.001	3.20000	.89053	1.42709	4.97291
	Equal variances not assumed			3.593	62.729	.001	3.20000	.89053	1.42027	4.97973

For analyzing the sixth, seventh and eighth research questions, a one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) was run to compare the effect of peer-assessment on EFL learners' means on the posttest of vocabulary. Before discussing the results it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated (Levene's F (3, 76) = 4.928, p =.004) as reported in Table 13.

Table 13: Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances by Peer-Assessment

Peer-Assessment

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
4.928	3	76	.004

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As the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, robust tests of equality of means, namely Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were run to determine if there is any significant difference between the vocabulary knowledge of experimental and control groups .

Table 14: Robust Tests of Equality of Means by Peer-Assessment

	Statistic[a]	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	5.077	3	41.331	.004
Brown-Forsythe	6.679	3	55.422	.001

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

As it is displayed in Table 14, some differences were identifiable between the mean scores of the participants (Welch's F(3,41.331) = 5.077, p=.004). In order to see where the differences lies, a Dunnett T3 post hoc was run.

Table 15: Multiple Comparisons; the Effect of Peer-Assessment

Dunnett T3

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
introvert experimental	extrovert experimental	-2.95000	1.48390	.278	-7.0858	1.1858
	introvert control	1.25000	1.05425	.798	-1.6753	4.1753
	extrovert control	2.20000	1.02995	.209	-.6623	5.0623
extrovert experimental	introvert experimental	2.95000	1.48390	.278	-1.1858	7.0858
	introvert control	4.20000*	1.39359	.031	.2814	8.1186
	extrovert control	5.15000*	1.37530	.005	1.2732	9.0268
introvert control	introvert experimental	-1.25000	1.05425	.798	-4.1753	1.6753
	extrovert experimental	-4.20000*	1.39359	.031	-8.1186	-.2814
	extrovert control	.95000	.89494	.866	-1.5268	3.4268
extrovert control	introvert experimental	-2.20000	1.02995	.209	-5.0623	.6623
	extrovert experimental	-5.15000*	1.37530	.005	-9.0268	-1.2732
	introvert control	-.95000	.89494	.866	-3.4268	1.5268

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on the results displayed in Table 15, it can be concluded that peer-assessment had no significant effect on introvert learners' vocabulary development (p = .798); and a significant positive effect on extrovert learners vocabulary development (p = .005). Thus, the sixth null hypothesis **supported** and the seventh null hypothesis was **rejected**. It can also be concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of extrovert and introvert learners,

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who received peer-assessment, on vocabulary development posttest (p = .278), indicating that the eighth null hypothesis **was supported.**

For analyzing the ninth research question, an independent *t*-test was run to probe any significant difference between the effect of self-assessment and peer-assessment on EFL learners' vocabulary development. Based on the results displayed in Table 16, it can be claimed that the self-assessment group (M = 37.15, SD = 5.428) had a slightly higher mean on the posttest of vocabulary than the peer-assessment (M = 35.825, SD = 4.867).

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Vocabulary by Types of Assessment

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Posttest	self-assessment	40	37.1500	5.42808	.85826
	peer-assessment	40	35.8250	4.86688	.76952

The results of the independent *t*-test (t (78) = 1.149, p = .254) indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of self-assessment and peer-assessment on subjects' performance on the posttest of vocabulary. Thus, the ninth null-hypothesis **was supported**.

Table 17: Independent Samples Test, Posttest of Vocabulary by Types of Assessment

		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	
Vocabulary Posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.532	.220	1.149	78	.254	1.32500	1.15272	-.96989	3.6198	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.149	77.089	.254	1.32500	1.15272	-.97032	3.6203	

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's F = 1.532, p =.22).

CONCLUSION
The result of the present study which concluded that self-assessment had significant effect on EFL learners' vocabulary development, is also consistent with the findings of Abbasszadeh (2012) who found that self-assessment significantly improves speaking and writing performance. Moreover, the findings of this study which proved that self-assessment had significant effect on EFL learners' vocabulary development, is in agreement with the results reported by Baniabdelrahman (2010) in which he concluded that student self-assessment had positive effect on students' reading comprehension and he concluded that the self-assessment method was more effective than the traditional method of assessment in improving students' reading

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Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 14-28   *Mosavi, H., & Nemat Tabriz, A. R*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

comprehension and it had positive effects on their performance. In addition, this result is in line with the findings of Shahrakipour (2014) who found that self-assessment had a significant effect on EFL learners' reading. Furthermore, the results of study are in line with the finding of the study of Birjandi, and Siyyari (2010) who came to conclusion in their study that it is the equal positive effect of self-assessment and peer-assessment on improving the rating accuracy of the participants on writing performance and rating accuracy. Moreover, the results of study are in line Sadeghi and Khanahmadi (2011) assessed the effect of dynamic assessment on the development of Iranian EFL learners' grammar and the results of their study proved that dynamic assessment-oriented instruction significantly improved the learning of L2 grammar.

The findings of the present study can also have implications for theorist, teachers, learners, and syllabus designers. According to the findings of this study, using peer assessment is as effective as using self-assessment on vocabulary learning, which simply means teachers should try to make use of both these kinds of assessments so as to help the learners improve their ability to learn vocabulary as well as learning English. One of the fundamental elements of language learning is the opportunity given to learners to assess their own progress and thus help them to focus their own learning (Harris, 1997). It is widely accepted that self-assessment is a key learning strategy for autonomous language learning, enabling students to monitor their progress and relate learning to individual needs (Harris, 1997).The procedure of self-assessment involves students in judging their own learning achievements and process, which would help students actively, assess their own learning performance. Students should receive explanations about the benefits of using peer assessment and self-assessment to be encouraged to become good learners. This can be done and supported by referring to the results of research. Giving more explanations to the learners would make them have a better understanding of the procedures involved in these kinds of assessment. In addition, curriculum developers, by designing and including peer and self-assessment in English textbooks, can accelerate the process of language learning in vocabulary learning. Similarly, in English textbooks, materials developers can include some sections on how peer assessment operates and what its benefits are. In addition, the implication of the findings of this study for teacher educators and teacher trainers is to familiarize teachers with the issue of personality types of the learners and the fact that different personality types have different needs and thus different instructions.

Limitations of the Study
Since the participants of the study are female, the finding of this study may not be generalizable to male learners. Moreover, not every student could catch up with the tone of the class, even their unbalanced level of insight is also a contributing factor to deteriorate the performance of mediation learning of vocabulary. The other limitation contributed to this procedure is the level of learners where the researcher was bound to work just with the intermediates and it deprives the researcher from having the test generalized.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT
Willingness to communicate in second language (L2) has become an essential concept in second language learning and communication due to the growing emphasis of modern language pedagogy on meaningful communication. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and critical thinking (CT) of intermediate and advanced EFL learners. 246 intermediate and advanced English students were selected from four different universities in Zanjan, Iran. From the total participants, 109 were males and 137 were females. Three types of instrument were employed to collect the necessary data, a test on CT, a questionnaire on WTC, and a proficiency test for determining the proficiency level of students. The findings of the study indicated that there is no significant correlation between CT and WTC of intermediate students. However, a moderate positive correlation was found between CT and WTC of advanced students. Further interpretations of the results revealed that some other extraneous factors might directly or indirectly shed some light on WTC. The practitioners, active in increasing WTC, can benefit more from the current study.

KEYWORDS: critical thinking, willingness to communicate, intermediate students, advanced students

INTRODUCTION
The use of the target language is one of the dominant goals in learning a second language (L2) for many L2 learners, and it has mostly been assumed that successful L2 acquisition (SLA) occurs within a context of the use of target language. Researchers have identified that the application of the target language plays an important role in SLA (Seliger, 1977; Swain, 1998).

Long before the advent of communicative language teaching, the primary goal of language learning was to master the structure of the language and to develop linguistic competence. However, in recent years, the goal of teaching English has changed the way from the mastery of structure to the ability to use language for communicative purposes. Therefore, in recent decades, many attentions have been paid to the communication aspect of teaching English.

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According to Swain (2000), language use and language learning co-occur, and it is the language use that mediates the language learning. Thus, it is crucial to determine the factors which both constrain and promote language learners' opportunities to use language to communicate and to acquire language through meaningful interaction and communication. According to MacIntyre and Charos (1996) communication is an important goal in itself which focuses on the authentic use of L2 as an essential part of L2 learning. This authentic use of language has led to a growing amount of research into the willingness to communicate (WTC) which is an important construct in the field of L2 learning.

On the other hand, thinking is a process that we use all the time to make sense of our lives and of the world we live in. Successful thinking makes it possible for us to solve the problems, to make intelligent decisions, and to achieve the goals that give our lives purpose. Thus, critical thinking (CT) is an activity that is crucial for acquiring qualitative education and being successful in developing L2. Lipman (2003) indicated that it was the responsibility of teachers to develop CT in their students other than pushing them from one educational level to the next. Brown (2004) proposed that the objectives of a curriculum in an ideal academic English program ought to go beyond linguistic factors and to develop the art of CT.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Willingness to communicate
Studies of WTC in L1 have established investigation on WTC in L2. Moreover, most of the models of WTC that were applied to measure WTC in L1 are used in measuring WTC in L2 as well. However, there are some differences between WTC in L1 and L2. In L1, WTC was seen as trait variable which was heavily influenced by Socio-Educational model (Gardner, 1985). MacIntyre et al. (2001) defined WTC in L2 as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (p. 375). The choice of speaking or not speaking occurs in specific moments in time and particular situations during communication in L2 among individuals from differing language groups.

Furthermore, the conditions in various contexts have different impact on the individuals' WTC. In the social context in which L2 communication is conducted, psychological (such as individuals' thoughts, feelings, and perspective toward related language) and sociopolitical process will effect on the creation of individuals' WTC. The social context has an essential role in WTC of L2 speakers, such as determining the locally spoken languages, individuals' orientation towards those languages, the demographic and power relationships among groups, and the ethno linguistic vitality of the L1 and L2 (Bourhis, el-Geledi & Sachdev, 2007; Allard & Landry, 1994). Moreover, the extension of WTC to situations of L2 communication indicates that WTC is not just limited to trait-like variable because the application of L2 potentially takes place in an environment with significant situational differences based on wide variations in competence and inter-group relations (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998).

According to Yashima, Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) WTC was a conceptual model in which L2 proficiency was not a goal to be achieved through L2 learning rather it was a means to gain

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interpersonal/intercultural goals. Léger and Storch (2009) acknowledged that perceived communication and communicative anxiety was two early models of WTC. This model indicated high levels of perceived competence with low levels of anxiety resulted in higher WTC and a higher probability of communicative interactions in L2. On the other hand, many factors such as social and individual contexts, affective and cognitive factors, motivational propensities, situated antecedents, and behavioral intention were interrelated to influence WTC in L2 and in L2 use (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Some researchers (e.g., McCroskey &Richmond, 1990) denoted that WTC depended on specific situations; therefore, in order to measure WTC both the personality variables as well as situational variables should be considered.

A recent study by L. McCroskey, Fayer, J. McCroskey, and Richmond (2007) investigated communication traits of learners in Spanish and English in Puerto Rico. It included a discussion about relationship between communication traits in Spanish and English as well as the differences and similarities of these traits in Spanish and English.
Furthermore, Zarrinabadi and Addi (2011) investigated on the relation of the Iranian EFL learners' WTC inside and outside the classroom and their language orientation. The result of their study indicated that language orientations correlated more closely with WTC outside rather than inside the classroom.

Many researchers who have worked on WTC made an attempt to identify effective factors on WTC. Among those researchers was Riasati (2012) who conducted a study on Iranian EFL learners' perception of factors that influenced their willingness to speak English in language classrooms. He found out that factors such as topic of discussion, interlocutor, teacher, class atmosphere, personality and self-perceived speaking ability effected on the WTC of the Iranian EFL learners.

In another study by House (2004), it was revealed that factors such as the role of physical locality, perceived politeness, presence of opposite sex, learners' mood, and topic of discussion influenced the WTC of learners in the environment of classroom.

Cao and Philp (2006) found out four major factors that had effect on WTC of the learners: self-confidence, group size, familiarity with interlocutors, and interlocutor participation in the conversation. In another study, Cao (2009) demonstrated that other factors such as topic, task type (pair, group and team work), interlocutor and teacher also had influence on learners' WTC in classrooms. Baker and MacIntyre (2000) explored the effect of the context on learners' WTC. His study revealed that the context of the study had impact on learners' WTC to a great deal. Along with MacIntyre et al. (1998), many L2 researchers, such as Wen and Clément (2003) have employed more situated variables.

Critical thinking
Thinking plays a crucial role in human life. CT is one of the many ways of thinking. According to Paul and Elder (2008), the concept of CT has its root in Greek: "kriticos" which means

meticulous judgment and "kriterion" which means criteria. Therefore, etymologically, the word refers to the development of "meticulous judgment based on criteria". On the other hand, according to the Webster's New World Dictionary (2003) the concept of CT is defined as "careful analysis and judgment". It is also noted that "critical in its strictest sense implies an attempt at objective judgment so as to determine both merits and faults".

One of the central goals of education is learning to think. Dewey (1910) noted that habits of reflective thoughts were 'not a gift of nature' but could and should be 'cultivated' by education (Dewey, 1910). Dewey's (1910) concept of habits of reflective thoughts was closely related to current concepts of CT, which was defined as "purposeful, self-regulatory judgment, which result in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based". (Facione, 1990, p. 2). The CT of students should foster during education (Bok, 2006; Facione, 1990; Halpern, 1998; Siegel, 1989). However, the CT of the undergraduate students do not seem to improve during their college years (Arum & Roksa, 2011), and subsequently graduate with poor thinking skills (Flores, Matkin, Burbach, Quinn, & Harding, 2012). This is quite problematic, because the development of CT is closely related to being successful in the intricate 21st century world (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). CT enables learners to make sound, logical, and unbiased decisions (Facione, 1990; Paul, 1990), facilitates learning during life (Halpern, 1998), cultivates responsibility and competencies for good democratic citizenship (Nussbaum, 2006), and leads to better learning and transfer (e.g., Helsdingen, Van Gog, & Van Merriënboer, 2010).

However, despite the educators' attempts to foster CT skills in students, most of the higher education graduates demonstrate unsatisfactory improvement in CT. One of the reasons of this phenomenon is inexplicit teaching of CT (Davies, 2013; Paul, 2004). Research has demonstrated that CT skills would not develop as a by-product of education (e.g., Abrami et al., 2008; Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bangert-Drowns & Bankert, 1990; Marin & Halpern, 2011). However, it is still unclear how CT skills can be best taught (e.g., Niu, Behar-Horenstein, & Garvan, 2013). Furthermore, engaging in unbiased reasoning which is one the crucial aspect of CT has received little attention in educational research (West, Toplak, & Stanovich., 2008).

Various studies have demonstrated that CT can be affected by many factors. Moon (2008) investigated the effect of emotion, language, and curiosity on CT. She argued that CT might be affected by emotion which in turn can be affected by the way students work with the materials of learning. Furthermore, she pointed to the crucial role of curiosity in CT. As a matter of fact, curious individuals tried to ask more questions in order to find out about issues. They could not easily accept various ideas. On the other hand, King, Wood, and Mines (1990) demonstrated in their studies that gender was an essential factor in the rate of CT development. They argued that educational experiences led to high motivation in men to develop their CT. Also, educational level was another factor in increasing the CT ability.

According to the investigation of Keeley, Browne, and Kreutzer (1982), it was revealed that the level of college students impact on their CT ability. In another word, seniors performed better

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)
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EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

than fresher in CT. Thus, studying in college was one way of developing CT. The other way to improve CT was the use of meta-cognitive strategies (Ku & Ho, 2010). It was claimed that meta-cognitive strategies assisted the individuals to have control on their behaviors involving CT. Planning, monitoring, and evaluating were three different categories of meta-cognitive strategies. It was also claimed that meta-cognitive skills had positive influence on CT (Magno, 2010).

Many investigations were carried out to discover the relationship between CT and different scope of language. For instance, Mirzai (2008) tried to find out the relationship between CT and lexical inferencing of Iranian EFL learners. The results of this study revealed that students with high CT ability outperformed the students with low CT ability in lexical inferencing.

Additionally, Kamali and Fahim (2011) studied about the relationship between CT ability, resilience, and reading comprehension of texts containing new words. It was concluded that different levels of CT ability impacted on the scores of the participants on the resilience scale and on the participants' comprehension of texts with new words significantly. It also revealed that the levels of resilience had great impact on the participants' comprehension of texts with new words. Also, Myers and Dyer (2006) conducted a study on the impact of learning style of students on CT. To this end, 135 students of agriculture and life sciences leadership courses were chosen from the University of Florida. The Gregorc Style Delineator as well as Cornell Critical Thinking test were administered to assess the preferred learning style of each student and to determine the CT of students respectively. No clear difference of CT was found between men and women. However, students with deeply embedded abstract sequential learning style preferences demonstrated significant high scores in CT. There was no difference in CT ability between students of other learning styles. To date, as of writing this article, no published work has addressed the correlation of WTC and CT.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1) Is there any significance relationship between CT and WTC of intermediate EFL learners?
2) Is there any significant relationship between CT and WTC of advanced EFL learners?

METHODOLOGY
Participants
In order to gather the required data and meet the goal of the present study, 246 EFL learners ranging in age from 18 to 30 were selected from among males and females studying English as a foreign language at different universities in Zanjan, Iran. These participants were selected through Nelson proficiency test. Concerning the obtained results from the proficiency test, they were divided in to two groups. 123 of the participants were intermediate and the other 123 of them were advanced students. The participants' mother tongues were Turkish and Persian language.

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
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Instruments
In this study one questionnaire named willingness to communicate was applied which has 27 Likert Scale items. The participants express their belief about their desire to communicate through reading, speaking, and writing. They also indicate the degree of their comprehension. The Likert Scale items will use a scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This questionnaire had an index reliability of Cronbach's Alpha =.79

Moreover, a test called California Critical Thinking Test (CCTST) is applied in order to measure the CT of the participants. This test is a standardized, norm-referenced test that assesses CT skills in authentic problem solving situations (Facione, 1998). The skills that are examined in this test are based on an interdisciplinary definition of CT by the Delphi research project (Facione, 1990). These skills are inferences, deduction, interpretation, evaluation of argument. The reliability of the test was established with a Kuder Richardson value of 0.75.

Moreover, Nelson Test is applied in order to estimate the language proficiency of the participants. This test includes 50 items which is a widely used standardized instrument. The language proficiency of the participants in vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension are examined through multiple choice questions which have four options each. The reliability of the test was established with a Kuder Richardson value of 0.79.

Procedure
A group of university students were selected by Nelson proficiency test in order to participate in the current study. Then, participants were asked to answer 27 items of MacIntyre's two parts WTC questionnaire carefully. The items were ranging from 1 to 5 (almost never willing- almost always willing). Participants indicated that how much they were willing to communicate in class tasks concerning all four language skills. At last, California Critical thinking test was conducted among participants in order to collect the required data on critical thinking.

Moreover, the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaires with great care. Before administering the questionnaires, the participants were provided with some general information about the aim and importance of the research. Additionally, the researcher provided the participants with descriptions about the unclear or difficult items in order to prevent the probable misunderstandings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The present research had two main hypotheses:
H01. There is no significance relationship between CT and WTC among intermediate EFL learners.
HO3. There is no significant relationship between CT and WTC among advanced EFL learners.
In order to confirm or reject each of these hypotheses, they are attempted separately.

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Testing the First Research Question

The first question of the current thesis tackle the issue that if there is any relationship between CT and WTC among intermediate EFL learners. In order to answer this question, the Pearson product-moment correlation is run to detect the kind and degree of the relationship between the CT and WTC among the intermediate students.

Table 1: Two-Tailed Pearson Correlation between Scores of WTC and CT

		Intermediate CT	Intermediate WTC
Intermediate CT	Pearson correlation	1	.052
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.789
	N	123	123
Intermediate WTC	Pearson correlation	.052	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.789	
	N	123	123

As the output illustrated, the significance was (0.789) which is more than (0.05) (p value > 0.05). Therefore, there was no significant relationship between these two variables. In other words, there was no association between CT and WTC among intermediate participants. Accordingly, the first null hypothesis was confirmed.

Testing the second Research Question

The second question is that if there is any significant relationship between CT and WTC among advanced EFL learners.

Table 2: Two-Tailed Pearson Correlation between Scores of WTC and CT

		Advanced CT	Advanced WTC
Advanced CT	Pearson Correlation	1	.403
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	123	123
Advanced WTC	Pearson Correlation	.403	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	123	123

Table 2 illustrated that there was a moderate relationship between CT and WTC among advanced participants because the significant level was 0.033 which is less than 0.05 (p value < 0.05). Moreover, as the correlation coefficient equaled to 0.403 (r=0.403, n=123, p=0.033), there was a moderate positive correlation between CT and WTC advanced participants. Accordingly, the third null-hypothesis tackling the relationship between CT and WTC among the advanced participants was rejected.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main concern of the current study was to investigate the strength and direction of the relationship between CT and WTC among intermediate and advanced EFL learners. The outcomes indicated that there was no significant relationship between CT and WTC among intermediate EFL learners. Moreover, the results indicated that there was a moderate positive

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relationship between CT and WTC in advanced group of participants. Using the results of this study, EFL teachers will be able to apply the capability of their learners in CT in order to increase the learners' WTC. Learners' WTC is an essential factor in initiating and maintaining communication. Additionally, in learning a foreign language, the need to increase WTC in learners becomes more apparent. Thus, CT can be employed as a tool to achieve this goal. However, teachers should be aware of the begging time of teaching CT. According to the findings of this study, it became clear that advanced learners employed their CT in a way that their WTC increased. Therefore, CT instruction in advanced level will enhance the capability of language learners in initiating communication.

Moreover, the findings of this study can be applied in designing curriculum, syllabus, and materials of education in a way that make them more effective. Also educational plans as well as teaching-learning activities can be altered to enhance their quality.

Also, the findings can be extended not only in oral communication but also in written form communication. Teachers can also increase the skills of the learners through communication. Teachers can make the language learners think critically about the sentences, grammars, vocabularies, spelling, and meanings while they tend to initiate a communication. When the learners feel that their face is secure during communication, they will more eager to initiate a communication. The finding of this study can be very motivated for those adult people who think that they cannot learn a language anymore or it is very difficult to learn a foreign language in their age. They can advantage CT in learning the rules and employ it in communication.

Finally, this study might yield a new insight about nature of CT as well as WTC for the researchers. Employing the results of this study and similar studies in this field, researchers can develop the body of knowledge in this domain and produce new ideas. In a nut shell, findings of this research can act as background information for those who desire to do innovative investigations in this realm.

Moereover, in most of survey studies, the participants of studies required sufficient time to respond the offered questions. Applying CCTST along with WTC questionnaire as data collection tools in this study forced the researcher to specify adequate time for the participants to answer the questions. However, it was quite a challenge for researchers to ask the professors of universities to give full-time of their classes to administer the tests and the questionnaire. Their professor did not accept to ignore a session of their classes because they claimed that they did not have enough time to cover the syllabuses. When the professors permitted the EFL learners to participate in the study, some of them gave back the questionnaire and test papers to the researcher immediately because they were not in mood of responding to them. Therefore, these questionnaires were put aside because they could not to be the representative of CT and WTC of the participants.

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International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 29-39   *Riahi, S., et al*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

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TEACHER'S CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY AND EFL LEARNERS' DISCOURSE COMPETENCE, ANY INTERACTION?

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ABSTRACT

In the process of learning, one of the initial aims of education is to foster important skills such as critical thinking (CT) to achieve a reasonable understanding. Studies have shown that critical thinking ability is emphasized in English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' education. In doing so, the crux of the matter of this study was to explore interaction between teacher's critical thinking ability and EFL learners' discourse competence. For this purpose, two questionnaires for measuring teacher's critical thinking ability (CTQ) and discourse competence (DCQ) were respectively given to 30 EFL teachers and 120 learners. To fulfill the objective of the study, independent samples t-test and Spearman correlation co-efficient were applied to study any significant relationship between the variables. Results revealed that there was significant correlation between the ability of teacher's critical thinking and EFL learners' discourse competence. This study can be utilized with other language skills such as listening and writing proficiencies. The results and findings of this study could be beneficial for the teachers, learners, and material designers in EFL context and contribute to the wider range of studies in this realm.

KEYWORDS: Critical Thinking, Discourse Competence, EFL Learners, Education, Teacher

INTRODUCTION

People need to consider new ways of problems solving with the new methods of knowledge and technology, they need to connect the new knowledge to their background information, and apply their achieved information in new positions. In the world today, a critical thinker inquiries relevant questions, collect data, and can reach to the proper results. Critical thinking plays an essential role in the construction of basic principles and concepts of learning. Education and learning have undergone dramatic changes for the plenty of information in the last decades.

As many have noted, critical thinking concepts are significant in the process of learning, whereby those concepts or principles are implemented effectively throughout the learning process. Some researchers have carried out some inquiries about critical thinking, and also how this ability in education has upgraded or even indicated its shortcomings. For example, Zivkovic (2016) expressed that, it is needed to prepare students to be creative, and to think critically and analytically in order to be able to solve real world problems.

Critical thinking has been couched in different terms in education. Terms are expressed by some important skills. These skills will help teachers to understand reliability and validity the sources of information. The central point of critical thinking is to focus on deciding what to do or what to believe in.

Some researchers have carried out   some investigations in the field of critical thinking. For instance, Dewey (1910) quoted that "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conditions to which it tends" (p. 6). Critical thinking (CT) practice can result in productive, ethical, satisfying, successful, and fulfilling life (Ellis, 2003).

Huang et al. (Huang, Lindell, Jaffe, & Sullivan, 2016) defined it "as the ability to apply higher cognitive skills like analysis, synthesis, and reflection in deliberate or inadvertent actions". John Dewey (1933) alluded to critical thinking as reflective thinking; and recommended that it would be one of the points of education. Moore (2004) stated that critical thinking is more than simply "a loose category in diverse modes of thought".

Facione (2011) mentioned that critical thinking is one of the main objectives of the contemporary curricula. According to Cottrell (2011), Reasoning is the integral part of critical thinking process. He added that, people start reasoning which include: having reasons for what we believe and do, assessing our beliefs and actions critically and having ability to present the reasons of our beliefs and actions to others.

This multiplicity of meanings was thought to have important implications for university teaching and learning. In spite of various views, most scholars seemed to agree that critical thinking is about using thinking ability. It is also thought to embody the dispositions or formed habits. "Critical Thinking involves recognizing and researching assumption that undergird thoughts and actions" (S. D. Brookfield, 1991; p. 17). Paul (2012) defined that developing critical thinking ability is essential in all education setting. Therefore, critical thinking can be considered as an open-minded process of finding out, understanding and analysis of higher-orders thinking skills. Regarding the importance of critical thinking in the routine life of each person, it is needed to find whether there is any relationship between teacher's critical thinking ability and EFL learners discourse competence which is regarded as a significant part of this study.

Communication depends on realizing the meaning of the words, but distinguishes what speakers mean. Discourse competence should be an aim for all those who want to teach English as a second language. Learners need to have the knowledge of invisible meaning. According to Yule

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(2010), discourse competence is defined as "language beyond the sentence". Discourse competence is one of the essential components of communicative competence, and it consists of conventional rules of language which are manifested in the production and interpretation of utterances.

In particular, it helps the speakers analyze the conditions that make the utterances acceptable in some situations. To arrive at the telling our massages, people rely on what they know about the form and structure of the language. Yet there are so many forms of how to communicate for EFL learners, these forms are based on the function of language rather than correct grammatical structure. Levinson (1983) said that discourse competence (DC) deals with the study of relationship holding between linguistic forms and the human beings who use these forms. All negotiation of speech acts is related to the context, whatever we have done or thought.

As it was mentioned above, discourse competence involves a science which considers between the utterance and the utterer. Thus, discourse competence is concerned with listener and speaker who attempt to convey their idea to one another. Therefore, it is assumed that communication can be successful between the speaker and the hearer.

The analysis of discourse competence can be based on communicative competence. H.G. Widdowson (1989) described communicative competence as the matter of adaptation and knowing formulaic languages refer to the rules which are regulative and integrated. It is a sort of tool to use for communication. By applying discourse competence, the learner will be able to communication more fluently, and accurately.

Significance of CT in Education
Critical thinking remained exceptionally valued in all fields of study. Social orders for the most part, yet particularly those in the West, would like their instructive organizations to create people with critical thinking capacities. Most instructors saw critical thinking as an essential point of training. In higher education, teachers attempt to apply the new methods of teaching in the classroom. Currently, these methods refer to the use of different devices. According to Dewey (1910), learning should involve reflective thought. Reflective thought might be related to any human activity, behavior, and belief which arises from psychological areas.

Beliefs might be derived from some personal experience, and technical viewpoint, (p.6). Dewey (1910) mentioned that the element of reflective thinking as: "i) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt, ii) an act of search or investigation directed toward brings to light future facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief" (p.9). Instructive practices are tied to higher-order learning to become a critical thinker. Previous studies have identified control, critical, reflection, and responsibility as three important dimensions of self-direction, (S. Brookfield, 1985; Candy, 1991; Garrison, 1993; Mezirow, 1985). Dewey's collaborative constructive approach to education and learning through reflective thought is discernible in his view that the individual and society cannot exist separately, that learning takes place in both our social, and personal world (Dewey, 1933).

Nonetheless, an examination of parts of critical thinking in language learning began sooner than that, in the late 1970s when the open methodology was acquainted with the field of English language teaching. Critical thinking in the ELT literature may have emerged, at any rate incompletely, from the way that there were presently extensive quantities of universal understudies examining in English talking nations. With more linguistic and rhetorical convention to consider, the utilization of EFL learner to convey can be extremely trying for students. English instructors frequently hear international students complained that they comprehended what to say yet can't place it into English. Although pupils may have a wide knowledge of vocabulary, and a vast amount of information in different fields, they might not be able to apply in a sentence. To discriminate critical thinking in EFL learner might oblige that one modifies one's methods for saying things. In short, it required both lexicon-syntactic skill and socio-psychological ability.

CT in EFL

Critical thinking has been couched in different field of education. However, it seems to be overwhelming consensus that critical thinking has a role to play. In particular, the function of language is seen to be more influential creating the conception of critical thinking. Thus, what critical thinking might be needed to develop the role of language is to determine discourse analysis as the subject matter. Devin et al. (Devin, Ghahramanlou, Fooladian, & Zohoorian, 2012) in their study titled as "Critical Thinking: Frameworks and Models for Teaching", made an effort to represent a comprehensive model of CT for educators drawn on the contemporary literature in order to indicate a uniform delineation of the construct and to offer a comprehensive model of CT for the intention of boosting learners' capability of CT possible.

Learners usually feel that classes are too separated from the real world. Therefore, the question of how to help learners acquire effectively the technical, and subject-specific knowledge of critical thinking again is remained. Birjandi and Rezaei (2010) expressed that "there is relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and their Professional Success". Birjajandi and Rezaei (2010) aimed at substantiating the relationship between EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and their student-evaluated professional success. Teachers often perceived that critical thinking skills needed to be taught; however, research has shown that they may not know how to do this effectively. Therefore, critical thinking as an important part of education should be taken into consideration. Barnett (2015) argued that critical thinking is not just a way of thinking: it is a way of being and acting. Luke (2004) explained:

"we can think of the critical thinking, then, in at least two ways as an intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analysis task and as a form of embodied political anger, alienation, and alterity". (p.26)

To answer the pertinent question about "how to teach these abilities to the learners?" significantly, critical thinking can be inculcated in the process of learning at any phases of education from primary school to the higher position. Gibbs (2013) reported that the most attempts to each learning skills out of context have met with very little success. Learning of content will happen when a learner fabricates in his/her mind the basic concepts, and then

attempts to use these concepts. Floyd (2011) examined how critical thinking in a second language can be affect performance specially in a critical thinking tests. Some researchers (Floyd, 2011; Lun, Fischer, & Ward, 2010; Paton 2005) claimed that some of the shortcomings in critical thinking ability manifested by international learners can be attributed to their having to us and EFL learners in which they may not be as proficient compared to their native counterparts. Besides, the core concepts critical thinking is fixed in the content of each theme.

Critical thinking belongs to the higher level of understanding. The most important part of education is "what needs to be taught, but first and foremost who should teach it". Finally, when students receive knowledge based on the fact that they learn "how to think", and "what to think", they can apply these abilities to solve their problems. Therefore, all negotiation of speech acts relates to the context, which means, all speech acts should occur across a wide range of texts in different forms in order to communicate.

Teachers' CT

Critical thinking skills, that is to say higher-order thinking skills applied for teaching students to make better logical decision, and so forth. Thought is intertwined with the domain of knowledge, and without background knowledge, people are not able to achieve their goals. Alhasan Allamnakhrah (2013) examined students' perception of learning critical thinking in secondary pre-service teacher education programs in Saudi Arabia. The initial aim was to compare the effects of problem-based learning and traditional teaching methods on the critical thinking dispositions and perceptions of problem-solving ability of pre-service teachers, when implemented in the process of teaching.

When the ability to think critically is an important purpose of education, teachers attempt to teach students to think critically by developing their curriculums. Nonetheless, these curriculums do encourage students better understand what can be thought. Unfortunately, people engage in this ability (CT) without any training. Willingham (2008) stated that the ability of critical thinking should be taught in the context of subject matter. The question is what kind of pedagogical can be effective to develop critical thinking ability? Teachers should acquire advanced subject-matters for teaching this ability, then they might help learners to identify the problem which may manifest in the process of education. Actually, critical thinking ability should take into account by the teachers to establish a link between students and their ability in the classroom. Finally, when students receive knowledge based on the fact that they learn "how to think", and "what to think", they can apply these abilities to solve their problems.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study the following research questions is proposed as is follows.

Is there any interaction between the teachers` critical thinking ability and EFL learners' discourse competence?

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 40-52   *Rousta, N., et al*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In this research, to provide a reasonable and data-based answer to research questions, 30 EFL learners and 120 EFL learners studying at IAU, Kish and Tehran branches participated. All the participants would be homogenized by TOEFL. After administration of the TOEFL, those learners whose score fall within -1 SD and +1 SD of the mean score were selected as the main participants of the study.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study and in order to investigate the hypotheses, one Oxford Placement Test (OPT), and one questionnaire for teacher's critical thinking ability was designed, and also one questionnaire for EFL learners discourse competence was implemented to determine the level of their proficiency. The instruments were explained as follow: Oxford placement test (OPT), Critical thinking questionnaire (CTQ), discourse competence test (DCT).

The oxford placement test (OPT) consisted of 60 multiple-choice items and quickly measured at the level of the student's general language ability so the researcher could place him or her into the appropriate level class for a language course. Oxford placement test (OPT) was given to 147 participants to select homogeneity upper intermediate ones.

The reliability index for the oxford placement test (OPT) was assessed in a pilot study with 30 upper intermediate EFL learners who shared the same features with the main sample of the current study and it turned out to be 0.91 using KR-21 method which is an acceptable value of reliability. In Table 1: the content validity of the oxford placement test (OPT) was accredited by three experienced EFL teachers.

Table 1: Results of Reliability for OPT

No. of items	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
60	KR-21	0.90

Besides, as represented in Table 1, the reliability of the critical thinking questionnaire (CTQ) was assessed 0.90 via KR-21 in the pilot phase of the study done on 30 upper intermediate EFL learners who shared the same characteristics with the main population of the study.

Teachers' critical thinking ability questionnaire

The second instrument in this study was Peter Honey's (2005) critical thinking questionnaire. This instrument was applied to investigate the mentioned English teachers' critical thinking abilities (CTA). It contained 30 multiple choice items exploring what a person might or might not do when critically thinking about a subject. Critical thinking questionnaire includes 5-point continuum ranging from 1 'Never' to 5 'Always'.

Table 2: Results of Reliability for Critical Thinking Questionnaire

No. of items	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
30	Cronbach's Alpha	0.81

In addition, three experts in TEFL approved the face and content validity of the critical thinking questionnaire (CTQ). As appeared in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the critical thinking questionnaire (CTQ) was assessed 0.81 in the pilot study.

Discourse competence test (DCT)

A multiple choice discourse completion test (DCT) developed by Birjandi and Rezaei (2010), measured learners' discourse competence and checked their use of speech acts. Twenty situations were explained and learners' use of speech acts and type of discourse reflect their discourse competence. Three knowledgeable EFL university teachers accepted the face and content validity of the discourse competence test (DCT).

Table 3: Results of Reliability for Discourse Competence Test

No. of items	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
20	Cronbach's Alpha	0.80

Table 3: This table indicates that the reliability index of the discourse competence test (DCT) was measured 0.80 in the pilot study conducted with 30 upper intermediate EFL learners who had almost the same characteristics with the main sample of this study.

Design

The design of this study was ex-pose facto a non-experimental research technique in which preexisting groups were compared on some dependent variable because there was no treatment and the main aim was to explore relationship between variables. It can masquerade as a genuine experiment. The assignment of participants to the levels of the independent variable was based on events that occurred in the past, this was where the name is derived from.

This non-experimental research was similar to many studies that illustrated descriptive research as an investigation attempts to describe accurately and truly of the phenomenon. In so doing, case studies are examples of descriptive research, and correlational research as a research which is examined the relationship between two variables. This study was run based on quantitative analysis. The responses of the questionnaires of critical thinking ability, discourse competence were analyzed by using the 20th version of SPSS and found out the answer of the research questions of the study. The three assumptions about interval scale, test performance, and normal distribution were checked (Mackey & Gass, 2015).

The first stage was concerned the selection of the participants. The researcher selected the teachers with high and low levels of critical thinking based on the critical thinking ability. Before administering the required instruments for this study, the researcher conducted a pilot study with 30 upper intermediate EFL learners who had similar characteristics with the main sample of the present study and the reliability indices were computed.

The first and foremost fact which should be observed, was the condition of homogeneity of the students participating in this study. The researcher decided to use the oxford placement test (OPT) and administrates it in all the classes considered for this study. Based on the result of the test, those students ($N = 100$) whose score were one standard deviation plus and minus the mean score were chosen from among 147 learners for carrying out this research. The learners with the teachers of high critical thinking ability were considered in high critical thinking group and the learners with the teachers of low critical thinking ability were assigned in high critical thinking group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
After analysis of the data, these results were found: as figure 1 showed, in order to illustrate the results graphically, a box plot (Figure 1), was drawn. The box plot shows that the mean score for the high critical thinking group was largely greater than that of the low critical thinking group concerning discourse competence.
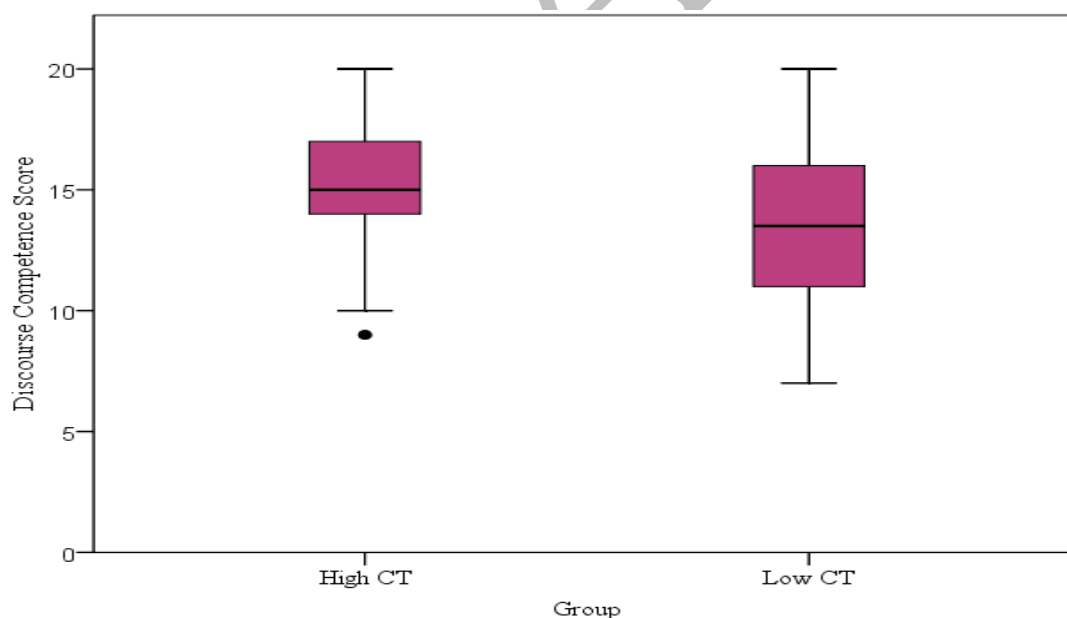
Figure 1: High & Low critical thinking groups' discourse competence sores

OPT was given to 147 participants to select homogeneity upper intermediate ones. The descriptive statistics, as manifested in Table 1, showed that the mean, median, and mode of the (OPT) scores were 43.37, 43, and 43 respectively. The central parameters were almost the same indicating that the scores

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were normally dispersed around the mean.   Based on the results of the oxford placement test (OPT), represented in Table 4, those 100 students whose scores were one standard deviation plus and minus the mean were chosen as homogeneous upper intermediate participants for the present study.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for OPT

N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness Ratio	Kurtosis Ratio
147	43.37	43.00	43	4.108	.150	-.423

Based on the results of the oxford placement test (OPT), represented in Table 4, those 120 students whose scores were one standard deviation plus and minus the mean were chosen as homogeneous upper intermediate participants for the present study.   Moreover, according to Table 4, the oxford placement test (OPT) scores have normal distribution because the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are not beyond the ranges of +/- 1.96. The normal distributions of the oxford placement test (OPT) results were shown in Figure 2.
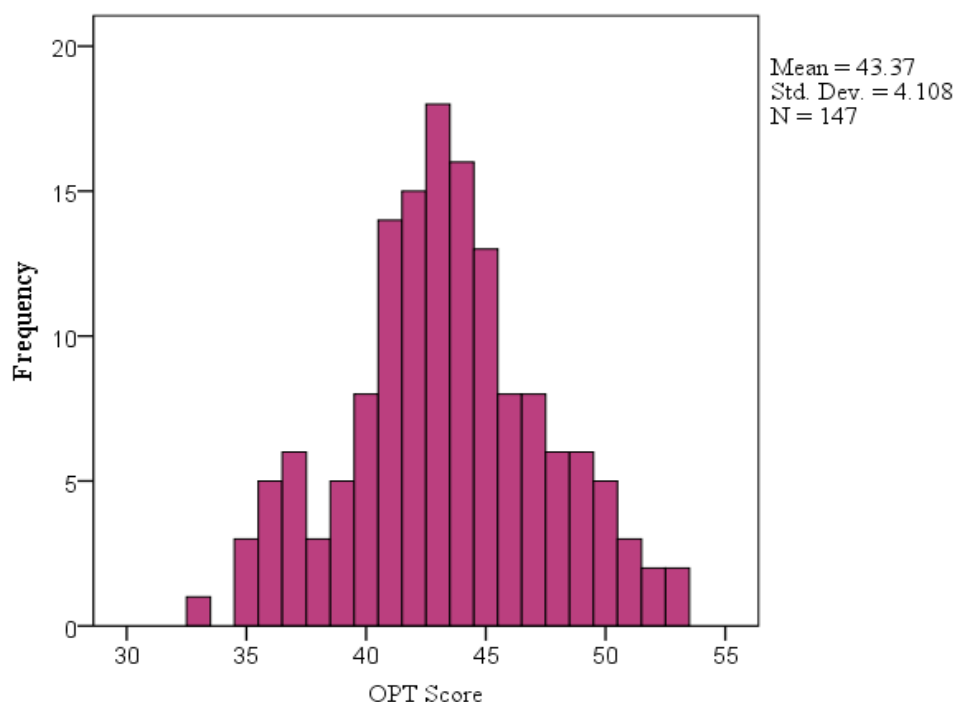
Figure 2: Distributions of (OPT) results

The purpose of this study was to find out whether there is an interaction between the teachers' critical thinking ability and EFL learners' discourse competence. With the intention of examining this research question, independent samples *t*-test and Spearman correlation

coefficient were applied. The related descriptive statistics in Table 5 were presented before explaining the results of independent *t*-test and Spearman correlation. Table 5, was a display of the mean, standard deviation, and number of students with teachers of high critical thinking (CT) ability ($\bar{x}$ = 15.00, *SD* = 2.87, *n* = 50) and low critical thinking ability ($\bar{x}$ = 13.40, *SD* = 3.34, *n* = 50) on the discourse competence test (DCT).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Discourse Competence of Learners' with Teachers' of High and Low Critical Thinking Ability (Scores out of 20)

Group	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
High CT	50	15.00	2.871	.406
Low CT	50	13.40	3.338	.472

Before applying parametric independent samples *t*-test, four assumptions (i.e., interval data, independence of subjects, normality and homogeneity of variances) should be observed (Field, 2009). Moreover, as Bachman (2005, p. 236) mentioned, the assumption of independence of subjects is met when "the performance of any given individual is independent of the performance of other individuals". Besides, the third assumption is about the normality of the data which was checked using one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Table 6).

Table 6: *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for Discourse Competence Scores in the Two Groups*

Group	*N*	Kolmogorov-Smirnov *Z*	Sig. (2-tailed)
High CT	50	.990	.281
Low CT	50	.607	.855

As it is observable in Table 6, the discourse competence scores for both high critical thinking group (*p* = .28, *p* > .05) and low critical thinking group (*p* = .85, *p* > .05) meet the normality assumption. Therefore, the researcher of the current study was justified to perform independent samples *t*-test, which is a parametric statistical test instead of Mann Whitney *U* test.

Independent *t*-test (Table 7), revealed a statistically significant difference (*t* (98) = 2.57, *p* = .01, *p* < .05) in discourse competence measures for the high critical thinking group ($\bar{x}$ = 15.00) and low critical thinking group ($\bar{x}$ = 13.40), in which the *t*-observed (2.57) was more than the *t*-critical of 1.98. likewise, Spearman correlation (Table 7 below) detected a significant positive relationship (*r* (100) = .25, *n* = 100) between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and learners' discourse competence at the significance level of .01 < .05, with high levels of teachers' critical thinking ability correlated with high levels of learners' discourse competence.

Table 7: Correlation between Teachers' Critical Thinking Ability and Learners' Discourse Competence

		Discourse Competence
Critical Thinking Group	Correlation Coefficient	.247*
Spearman's rho	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	100

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

As a result, the null hypothesis of the present study stated that "There is no significant relationship between teachers' critical thinking ability and EFL learners' discourse competence" was rejected and it was claimed that there was a significant positive relationship between teachers' critical thinking ability and EFL learners' discourse competence.

This study focused on the interaction of teachers' critical thinking with some learners' features. Critical thinking is one of the most important issues in language learning and teaching. Recently proper attention has been given to the ways that learners and teachers think and now teaching is more characterized as a thinking activity. This study made an effort to probe the interaction of teachers' critical thinking with some characteristics in learners.

CONCLUSION

This current study dealt with investigating the interaction of teachers' critical thinking with some learners' features. As it mentioned, the ability of thinking critically is one of the most important issues in the process of language learning and teaching. This study made an effort to probe the interaction of teachers' critical thinking ability with in learners. The ability of critical thinking consists of some skills such as being able to having a focused view on the problems, identifying the assumptions which underlie the problem, giving some reason and judge the validity and reliability of assumption and source of information. It is the ability to apply higher cognitive skills like analysis, synthesis, and reflection in deliberate and in deliberate actions. As an active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make EFL learners' sense of the world and clarify and improve understanding, it consisted of some important factors such as analysis, evaluation, inference, interpretation, explanation and self-regulation. This ability of critical thinking can combine different activities such as conversation, and has a role to play in the foreign language. Teachers should be aware of the participants' individual differences learners' diversity in their language. Findings proposed that activities such as pair work, project work, group problem solving, and linguistic intelligence through activities like note taking and debate can help learners process more efficiently the pragma-linguistic and sociolinguistic input from the implicit and explicit tasks presented in language classes.

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 40-52   *Rousta, N., et al*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

The present study, like any other studies, suffers from some limitations and confronts some delimitation. Limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study. Because the university is co-educational system, the learner's sex is not considered as a variable, so both males and females participate in the study. The researcher had to narrow down the scope of study to only one location (EFL teachers and learners at Kish Language Center). It can be added that there is not a complete control over the selection and manipulation of this study. Language institutes are usually the place where learners of different ages participate in classes, therefore, the age of the subjects ranged from 14 to 30. Another limitation was that all the participants are Iranian EFL teachers and students, so obtained results cannot be overgeneralized to all EFL contexts. Communication received an important role in this world. Teaching English language; as an international language, tends more toward communicative approach and scholars pay more attention to language use. Although, there was no treatment in the current study, effective factors in improving EFL learners' discourse competence, and learners can communicate more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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A TEACHERS' SURVEY ON LINGUISTIC SEXISM IN IRANIAN EFL SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to investigate the Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' opinion on linguistic sexism in Iranian EFL school textbooks. Therefore, in order to achieve these objectives, the number of 40 English language teachers from junior high and high schools in Tehran participated in this study. The data were gathered using a questionnaire which was previously piloted. Findings indicate that all of the teachers are aware of linguistic sexism in the current EFL school textbooks and also believe that the books do not represent both genders equally. The findings also show that the teachers detest linguistic sexism and would like to eradicate sexism from textbooks. In addition, they think textbooks need to be revised to represent both genders equally. According to the results of the current study, teachers are aware of what actually happens in the educational contexts. This awareness of reality in the textbooks makes them frame and reframe new attitudes towards teaching which needs to be publicly announced. The principle implications of the study are for the EFL policy makers and textbook writers in general and the realm of teacher education in particular.

KEYWORDS: Linguistic Sexism, EFL Textbooks, Gender Equality

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks and learning materials have the power to transmit knowledge, build skills, and shape the way learners interact with the world. From basic mathematics to physics, in classrooms, libraries and other learning centres around the world, textbooks and learning materials not only form an authoritative source of information, but also function as primary tools for shaping attitudes and behaviors. These attitudes and behaviors accompany the students throughout their lives and form their personality and stereotype character. "At any level, in every subject area, textbooks can be important vehicles for promoting human rights, including the principles and practices of non-violence, gender equity and non-distinguishing characters." (UNESCO 2005).

Sexism as defined by Holmes (1986: 336) is: "the ways in which language conveys negative attitudes to women". In this study, by sexism the researcher means: giving priority to one gender and making it the main focus. Despite efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, there are

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occurrences of sexism, i.e., prejudice or discrimination based on gender (Bahiyah, 2002; Bahiyah, 2003) in school textbooks. Also, both genders are treated and represented unequally through language which can be termed "linguistic sexism" (Bahiyah, 2002; Bahiyah, 2003 as cited in Bahiyah et al. 2008). Linguistic sexism has been a prominent issue in gender studies because when "one gender is favored over the other makes the classroom context disharmonious" Recently, Iran has a high percentage of young generation compared to other countries, i.e. more than 60% of the population is below 30 years of age. Meanwhile, the number of females compared to males is increasing which necessitates gender studies. With the popularity of feminism and increasing public awareness of gender inequality in Iran, some scholars and intellectuals have started investigating the gender status. One of the main areas of gender studies is linguistic sexism in textbooks which has drawn the attention of a number of researchers in Iran. (Amerian, 1987; Feiz Mohammadpour, 1999; Kheibari, 1999; Shahedi, 2001; Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Yarmohammadi, 2002; Ansary, & Babaii, 2003; Amalsaleh, 2004; Razmjoo, 2007; Atashpanjeh & Keshavarz, 2009; Ghorbani, 2009; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Alemi & Jafari, 2012; Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012a; Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012b; Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Kazemi, Asadi Aidinlu, & Hasannejad, 2013; Tahriri & Moradpour, 2014; Hall, 2014; Vahdatinejad, 2016) All of the above mentioned studies have found the EFL school textbooks sexist which do not represent both genders equally. However, in the research area there has been no study to investigate the teachers' opinion about existence or impacts of sexism in the textbooks on students.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As it was mentioned earlier, there has been no survey on teachers' opinion regarding sexism in EFL textbooks. However, here are some of the studies confirming that linguistic sexism exists in the textbooks. Feiz Mohammadpour (1999) examined the old version of the Iranian English language school textbooks in sexism. She found the Iranian textbooks sexist and masculine. Her findings showed that in terms of occupation, men dominated 80% of the jobs compared to 20% for females. With regards to the adjectives men received 78% and women 22%, and for positive characteristics men received 93% and women 7%, number of use of men names to women names is 2.6 times more. Ansary and Babaii (2003) examined the manifestation of sexist attitudes and values in two textbooks (Right Path to English I & II) that are locally designed to cater for and respond to the English language needs of Iranian students at secondary schools. They found the books sexist which do not represent both genders fairly.

Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012a) examined Iranian EFL high school English textbooks, which are currently being taught in the Iran, to find out whether they are sexist or not. The linguistic analysis revealed that males had dominated the communicative positions of the clauses in the textbooks. Also the frequencies of males for different participant's roles were more than that of females. Thirty males played the role of actors whereas only twenty females were in the position of actor throughout the text of these textbooks.

Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012b) examined four English textbooks currently taught in the Iranian high schools. They analyzed the content and then calculated the frequency of each category to

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 53-66   *Vahdatinejad, Sh., & Abdul Hamid, B*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

compare with one another. Also as a qualitative analysis, the inferences underlying messages of text based on the presence or absence of some evidence in the text were put forward. Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012b) qualitative analysis consisted of chi-square test indicated that there is a significant difference between the frequencies of male and female for different categories of their study. Women were less visible than males both in texts and pictures. Males work in more diverse occupational roles than females as represented by the textbooks. Women tend to be stereotyped in a limited series of roles: mothers, housewives, tailors and nurses.

Amini and Birjandi (2012) examined the extent and types of gender bias in two of the Iranian EFL textbooks at the high school level (grades II and III). The findings reinforce the assumption that women are underrepresented in terms of visibility in number in Iranian high school EFL textbooks in a way that does by no way reflect the reality. And in Book III, the ratio of appearance of females to males in both texts and illustrations was 3 to 13.

Hall (2014) investigated gender representation in current EFL junior school textbooks (Right Path to English I and II) that are designed locally and taught as an obligatory subject in Iranian secondary schools. The findings revealed the degree of imbalance in gender representation in these textbooks.

Vahdatinejad (2016) examined all junior high and high school EFL textbooks which are currently being taught in the Iranian public schools. His findings proved manifestation of sexism in all aspects (visibility, firstness, generic masculine constructions, sex-linked occupations and activities) mentioned in Bahiyah et al. (2008) and the textbooks do not represent the genders equally.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researchers have represented the following research questions:
1- Have the Iranian EFL teachers noticed linguistics sexism in the EFL textbooks?
2- Does linguistic sexism in the textbooks contexts have any effect on students' social life or their future?
3- Do the Iranian EFL teachers feel necessary to conduct research on gender equality?

METHODOLOGY
Participants and Setting
The sample population is an Iranian EFL school teachers. This sample consists of 40 school teachers who were teaching at public junior high or high schools in Iran at the time of survey. The sample population consists of 20 male and 20 female teachers for each cycle. 10 people (50%) were teaching at junior high school level and the other half (50%) were teaching at high school level. These teachers were selected as that teaching experience exceeded 5 years and had used the series of school textbooks under study.

Instrument

The survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed by the researcher, checked by a reviewer and then piloted. Further, there is more elaboration on testing the reliability and validity of the questionnaires and piloting procedure (Figure 1). the internal consistency reliability estimates of the test were checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it was found that the scale received the Cronbach's alpha of 0.8579.

The objective of the study is to identify teachers' perceptions toward linguistic sexism and sexism in the images of the EFL school textbooks which is being conducted in Iran for the first time. The survey questionnaire consists of 15 questions. In order to keep up with the uniformity, the researcher decided to use a printed form of questionnaire as one of the research tools to gather data. The questionnaire sought quantitative data. There are two sections in the used questionnaire: Section A: Personal Details, Section B: Survey on linguistic sexism in the EFL school textbooks. The first part (section A) of the questionnaire aimed to collect individual information like: gender, age; this is to find out whether age is a distinguishing factor for identifying sexism. In other words, sexism is a new issue which is mostly highlighted by the new generations or even the older teachers, who have been teaching the textbooks at school for a long time, have noticed the problem or not.

Question number 3 in section A asked whether the respondents have a computer at work or not and if yes it is connected to the Internet or not. In question number 4, participants were asked whether they have a personal computer/laptop at home or not and if yes, do they have access to the Internet or not. This is to investigate whether teachers have a computer and the Internet at home and could have been exposed to bias free textbooks and articles.

Question 5 of section A asks the number of years that the participants have taught English at school. It was to distinguish between those who have taught the current books more than the others and those who have taught the previous old type of textbooks. In question number 6 of Section A in the teachers' questionnaire, the participants were asked about the number of hours they teach English at school per week.

In question number 7 of Section A the participants were asked about the grades (in junior high school there are 3 grades and in high schools there are 4 grades) that they taught English at school. This is to investigate whether they have been exposed to one book only or to more school English language textbooks and also to classify the teachers whether they teach at junior high school or high school.

In section B there are 15 questions which sought agreement on four-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', to 'strongly disagree'. In section B, there are fifteen questions which are sub-categorized into 3 different groups. This is the first time that a study investigates EFL teachers' opinion toward linguistics sexism in the EFL textbooks and the negative effects of it on students' future and their life. The first five questions (questions 1 – 5) seek the participants' opinion about linguistic sexism presence awareness in the contexts of their EFL schools textbooks. This is to find out whether participants have noticed such a problem or

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they have just taken it for granted as a social norm (Table 2). The second group of questions (questions 6 – 11) investigates whether sexism in the textbooks contexts has any effect on their social life or their future (Table 3). And the third group of questions (12 – 15) highlights the participants' desire to conduct research on gender equality (Table 4).
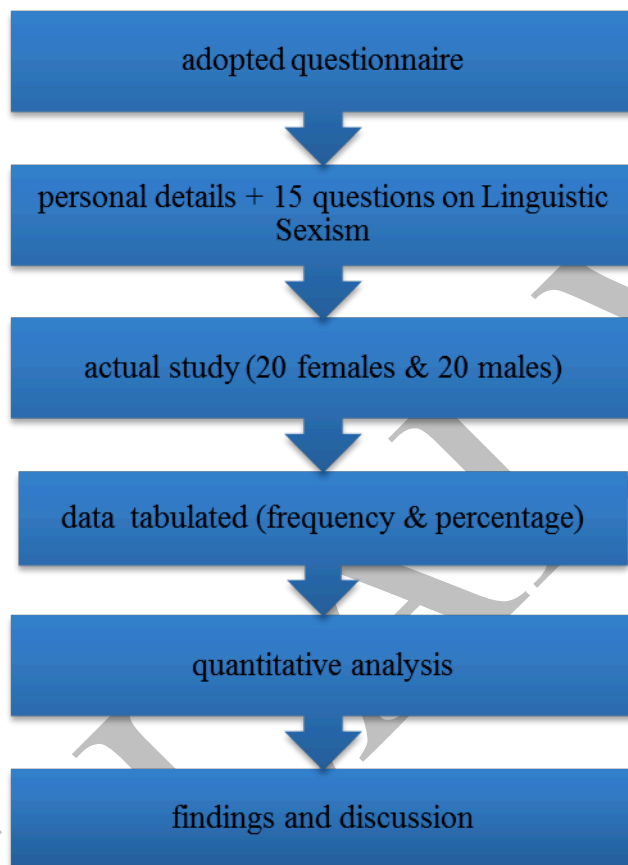

Figure 1: Procedure to achieve the research objective

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This is the first time in sexism literature that a study investigates EFL teachers' opinion toward sexism in EFL textbooks and its effects on their life and their future. For this reason a group of experienced English language teachers were selected who are teaching at schools in Iran at the time of the study. Their teaching experience must exceed 5 years as they must have taught the current series of school textbooks long enough to have a bright view toward the issue.

Personal Details
The first part (section A), which has 7 questions, is aimed at collecting individual information like: age. As Figure 2 indicates majority of the teachers (82.5%) are more than 25 years old which was a good opportunity for the researcher to find out whether age is a factor in identifying sexism in textbooks or not. On the other hand, the findings can show whether the two teaching generations share the same opinion toward sexism in the Iranian EFL school textbooks or not.
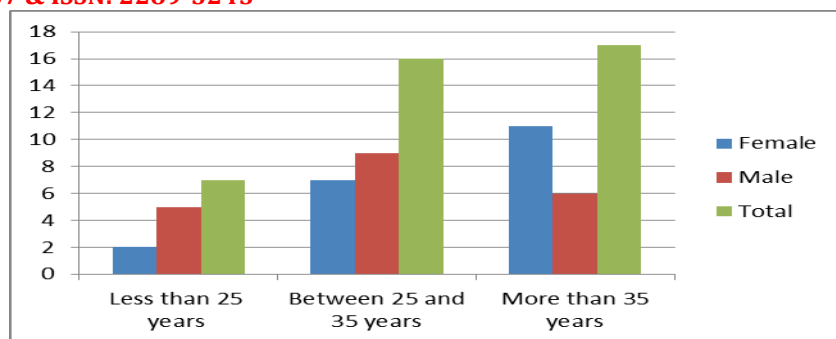
Figure 2: Respondents' Age

In the 3rd question of section A teachers were also asked whether they have a computer at work and whether it was connected to the Internet or not. Regretfully, almost none of the teachers had a computer at work or have access to the Internet. They replied no to both part of the question 3 as it is indicated in Figure 3. This may be due to several cultural or financial reasons that is out of the objectives of the current study.
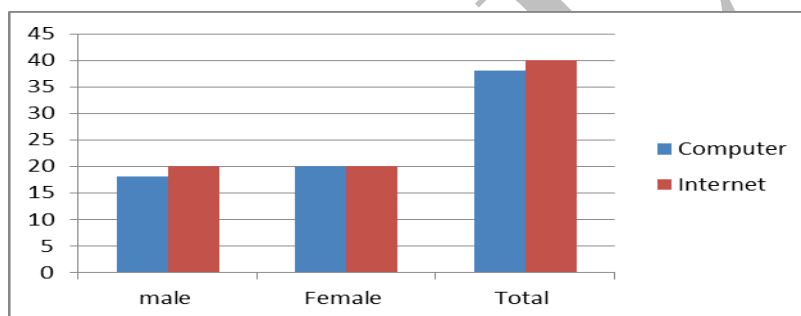

Figure 3: Not having a computer and access to the internet at work

In the fourth question, participants were also asked whether they have a personal computer/laptop at home or not and if yes, whether they have access to the Internet or not (Figure 4). As it was expected by the researcher, they all own a personal computer and have high-speed access to the Internet at home. The only 10% (2 of the male participants) who do not own a personal computer use their children computers at home. Therefore, as highlighted by Figure 3 as compared to Figure 4, all the participants had access to a computer and the Internet at home and could have been exposed to bias free textbooks and articles. This would enable them to have a rough idea of how a non-sexist textbook would look like and what criteria it could have.

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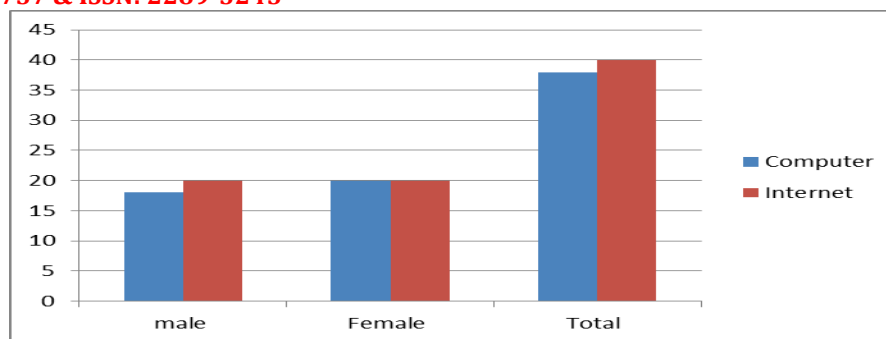
Figure 4:   Having a computer and access to the internet at home

Question 5 of section A asks the number of years that the participants have taught English at school. It was to distinguish between those who have taught the current books more than the others and those who have taught the previous old type of textbooks. As highlighted in Figure 5, the distribution was even among the gender of the participants where as the number of years they had taught was different among them. As indicated in Figure 5, most of the participants (31 people, 87.5%) were highly experienced teachers.
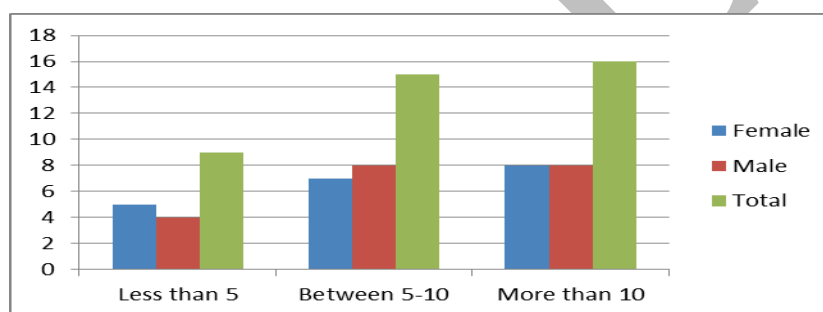
Figure 5: Years of Teaching English at school

In the 6th question of Section A of the teachers' questionnaire, the participants were asked about the number of hours they teach English at school per week. All of the participants (100% regardless of their gender) have highlighted that they teach English between 12 and 20 hours at school weekly. The other component is the grades (i.e. in junior high school there are 3 grades and in high schools there are 3 to 4 grades) that they teach English (Table 1) at school. This is to investigate whether they have taught one book only or more school English language textbooks and also to classify the teachers whether they teach at junior high school or high school. In the next item the teachers are asked is the number of years they have taught English at school (to highlight the importance of the sexism problem through these many years of direct contact with English language textbooks), and number of hours they English per week at school (to underpin how much they were exposed to the material per week to draw a conclusion on its effects on their opinion on sexism norms).

In Iran English teachers usually teach all the grades in school. For instance a junior high school teacher teaches all 3 grades during a semester and it is the same for the high school teachers. Therefore, the researcher requested the participants to focus on one of the school textbooks which

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they would prefer and wish. Then they were asked to complete this section of the questionnaire. Table 1 highlights that there is a normal percentage of distribution among their preference. As mentioned earlier there were 40 teachers (20 female and 20 male). Among the 20 same sex participants, the researcher tried to have equal number of teachers who were teaching in junior high school (10) and high school (10). Therefore, for high school, there are 20 teachers (10 male and 10 female) and the other 20 for junior high school. That is the reason that the percentage for each group (junior and high school) is measured as 100%. It is necessary to mention that in high school section majority of the teachers preferred to focus on the last year textbook which is called pre-university (*Pish-Daneshgahi* in Iran).

Table 1: Grades They Teach

Grades	Junior High			High School			
	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Grade4
Female	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)
Male	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)
Total	5 (25%)	7(35%)	8(40%)	4(20%)	4(20%)	4(20%)	8(40%)

Survey on Linguistic Sexism in the EFL School Textbooks

As indicated in Table 2, all the teacher participants (100%) have noticed more males than females in the contexts (q1). As it is shown in the Table (2), all of the participants have strongly agreed with the statement. This can highlight that the sexism phenomena is so obvious and clear that all of the answers are the same.

Table 1: Participants Awareness of Linguistic Sexism in the EFL Textbooks

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have noticed more males than females in the contexts.	Female	20 (100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	18 (90%)	2(10%)	0%	0%
		Total	95%	5%	0%	0%
2	I have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the contexts.	Female	18 (90%)	2(10%)	0%	0%
		Male	16 (80%)	3(15%)	1 (5%)	0%
		Total	85%	12.5%	2.5%	0%
3	I have noticed that females are less important (focused) in the contexts.	Female	18 (90%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	0%
		Male	15 (75%)	3(15%)	2 (10%)	0%
		Total	82.5%	10%	7.5%	0%
4	I have noticed that males outnumbered females in the contexts.	Female	20 (100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	18 (90%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	0%
		Total	95%	2.5%	2.5%	0%
5	I have noticed that even in written exercises males are more than females.	Female	17 (85%)	2(10%)	1 (5%)	0%
		Male	15 (75%)	3(15%)	2 (10%)	0%
		Total	80%	12.5%	7.5%	0%

Table 2 also shows that all the participants (97.5%) have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the contexts (q2). Only 1 male participant (2.5%) disagrees with the statement while the rest have strongly highlighted their positive view. Following this question, surprisingly participants' range of variety of replies to the next question is so different.

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As indicated by Table 2, most of the participants (92.5%) have noticed that females are less important (focused) in the contexts (q3) whereas 7.5% (1 male and 2 female) participants have not noticed that females are less important in the contexts. Comparing to the answers of question 2 of the questionnaire, interestingly they have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the contexts but they do not believe that females are less focused. As shown by Table 2, all of the participants (97.5%) have noticed that males outnumbered females in the contexts (q4) and only 1 male (2.5%) disagreed with the statement. He is the one who has not noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the contexts. As indicated by Table 2, vast majority of the participants (92.5%) have noticed that even in written exercises males are more than females (q5). Meanwhile, 3 (1 female and 2 males) of the participants (7.5%) disagree with the statement and have not noticed that even in written exercises males are more than females. Overall, as highlighted in Table 2, all the teacher participants are aware of the existence of sexism in EFL school textbooks and have noticed that during the years that they have been teaching English at school. In the second sub-category the researcher would like to investigate the participants' opinion about the effects of sexism on social life and their future plans (Table 3). As shown by Table 3, all of the participants (100% regardless of their gender) think that having a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders (q6). None of the participants disagrees with the statement. The same result goes for question 7 of the questionnaire. All of the teacher participants (100%) think that a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders.

Table 3: Effects of Linguistic Sexism on Social Life & Future

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	I think having a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	0%	0%
		Total	97.5%	2.5%	0%	0%
7	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	18 (90%)	2(10%)	0%	0%
		Total	95%	5%	0%	0%
8	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	17 (85%)	1(5%)	2 (10%)	0%
		Total	92.5%	2.5%	5%	0%
9	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) view toward life. (E.g. males are more useful).	Female	11(55%)	5 (25%)	0%	4(20%)
		Male	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
		Total	62.5%	20%	5%	12.5%
10	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) self-confidence.	Female	15 (75%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	0%
		Male	17 (85%)	1(5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
		Total	80%	10%	7.5%	2.5 %
11	I think having a lot of males with specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job.	Female	18 (90%)	2(10%)	0%	0%
		Male	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	0%	0%
		Total	92.5%	7.5%	0%	0%

Table 3 shows, 95% of the participants think that a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females (q8). Only 5% of the teacher participants (2 male participants) do not agree with statement and do not think that lot of males in the contexts can influence students' social behavior toward females.

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Regarding question 9, as shown in Table 3, 82.5% of the participants think that a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) view toward life. (E.g. males are more useful). Meanwhile Table 3 indicates that 17.5% of the participants (4 female and 3 male respondents) do not think that a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' view toward life. It is also indicated in Table 3 that 90% of the participants think that a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' self-confidence (q10). On the other hand, 10% (2 male and 2 female participants) of the respondents disagree with the statement. Table 3 also shows that all of the participants (100%) think that having a lot of males with specific jobs can influence students in selecting their future job (q11). It is important to notice that even those who disagreed with the influence of sexism on students' self-confidence and their view toward life, all (100%) believe that having a lot of males with specific jobs can influence students in selecting their future job.

The respondent teachers, all believe that linguistic sexism has a direct effect on the future of students and their life. Portrayal of limited jobs for females in the textbooks can have a negative effect on the students' job and study field selection. Since the females are mostly portrayed doing house chore (Vahdatinejad 2016), the students' mind can be set to frame it as a norm in their society and life. This is one of the reasons that Linguistic Sexism must be banned and textbooks must portray both genders equally and bias free. In the third sub-categorization of section B of the questionnaire, the researcher is to find out whether the respondents believe in the importance of conducting research on sexism or not. Interestingly, all the participants want and desire to encourage studies on sexism. Table 4 shows, all of the participants (100% regardless of the gender) strongly agree with the statement that they would like to have an equal number of both genders in the texts (q12). The same percentage (100% regardless of the gender) goes for question number 13 of the questionnaire that they think this kind of research on gender equality in the contexts can be helpful in the future. Table 4 also indicates that all of the participants (100%) would like to have an equal number of both genders in written exercises (q14) and they think it is important to know the reason(s) (q15). Table 4 shows that all of the participants (100%) know the importance of the importance of conducting research on sexism or not. All the participants want and have the desire to encourage studies on sexism.

Table 4: Importance and Desire to Have Gender Equality

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the texts.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
13	I think this kind of research on gender equality in the contexts can be helpful in the future.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
14	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in written exercises.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
15	I think it is important to know the reason(s).	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%

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CONCLUSION

Therefore, the findings from this questionnaire indicate that all of the teacher; are aware of semiotic sexism in their books; believe that it can have negative effects on their students' mindset and treatment of the other gender in future; and would like to ban linguistic sexism, and have equality in all the aspects of a textbook. Since the number of male and female students who are studying at schools in Iran is almost equal, teachers would like the textbooks to represent this equality in the context of the textbooks.

Having an equal society should be one of the biggest goals for any government. Gender discrimination prevents a society from being fair. In order to avoid gender discrimination, EFL policy makers must start with our education system because it essentially constructs the mind and mentality of the people who are going to be the future of our society (i.e. students). To do so, we need to rethink about the school textbooks that we use which are a major source of information for students by eradicating linguistic sexism.

Textbooks writers need to note that textbooks linguistically need to be gender bias free. In order to show a clear and fair view of the society, in which they are eventually going to step out into, textbook writers have a huge responsibility. This responsibility includes displaying a society that will provide equal opportunity for both of them. This would not happen unless they experience an equality in the textbooks that unfortunately does not exist in the current textbooks. Therefore, the negative effects of linguistic sexism and gender-biased textbooks can influence students' lives and mindsets forever.

Riazi (2003) highlights that the teacher is the first in the class, and in control of everything. Despite the fact that the current Iranian EFL textbooks are sexist (Vahdatinejad 2016), teachers have a more important role and need to euphemize the textbooks in the class in a way that students would not realize the negative effects of gender bias textbooks.

There are several variables and factors which were not regarded in the present study and required further studies. Based on the title, only EFL teachers were involved in the survey and other subjects such as Literature, Physics etc. need to be investigated as well. Considering the participants of this study, further research on different participants may yield different results. Also the participants of the study were limited to EFL teachers not learners. This requires further studies on EFL students's opinion toward sexism in their school textbooks. One of the most problematic parts of this study was to contact and to physically enter female schools in the research area. As it is forbidden for men to enter the female school premises, data collection for the female EFL teachers seemed extremely difficult. Based on the limitations of the study and the problems that the researchers encountered future studies are needed.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire on Sexism

Dear Teachers,
This survey questionnaire is designed to identify your opinions on sexism in the English Language School Textbooks. Thank you for your cooperation.

Signature ……………………..

Section A: Personal Details
Kindly, tick the answer which best suits your personal details.
1. Gender: ☐ Male   Fem☐e
2. Age:
☐ Less than 25
☐ Between 25 - 35
☐ More than 35
3. Do you have a computer at work? If yes, do you have access to the Internet at work?
Yes ☐   No ☐   Yes   No ☐   ☐
4. Do you have a computer at home? If yes, do you have access to the Internet?
Yes ☐   No ☐   Yes   No ☐   ☐
5. State the number of years you have taught English at school
☐ Less than 5 years
☐ Between 5 and 10 years
☐ More than 10 years
6. State the number of hours you teach English language per week at school
☐ Less than 12 hours
☐ Between 12 - 20 hours

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☐ More than 20 hours

7. State the Grades that you teach English language at school

☐ Junior High school……………….   High☐hool …………………

Section B: Survey on Linguistic Sexism in EFL Textbooks

Please select the responses from *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree* that best describe your feeling toward the sentences by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate boxes. Please choose only one answer for each question.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have noticed more males than females in the contexts.				
2	I have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the contexts.				
3	I have noticed that females are less important (focused) in the contexts.				
4	I have noticed that males outnumbered females in the contexts.				
5	I have noticed that even in written exercises males are more than females.				
6	I think having a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders.				
7	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders.				
8	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females.				
9	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) view toward life.(e.g. males are more useful).				
10	I think a lot of males in the contexts can influence students' (people's) self-confidence.				
11	I think having a lot of males with specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job.				
12	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the texts.				
13	I think this kind of research on gender equality in the contexts can be helpful in the future.				
14	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in written exercises.				
15	I think it is important to know the reason(s).				

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THE EFFECT OF RAISING EFL LEARNERS' AWARENESS REGARDING FORMULAIC SEQUENCES ON THEIR WRITING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of raising EFL learners' awareness regarding formulaic sequences on their writing performance. Therefore, the researcher selected a homogeneous sample of 40 M.A. students majoring in TEFL at the Islamic Azad University – Bandar Abbas Branch, Iran, as the participants of the study based on their performance in Nelson English Language Test. The selected participants were randomly assigned into control and experimental groups. The experimental group underwent treatment (i.e., instruction of formulaic sequences) whereas the control group followed a conventional method of writing instruction. At the end of the treatment, the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of writing performance. Raising EFL learners' awareness regarding the use of formulaic sequences results in development of the writing performance and accordingly can prove helpful for language teachers, learners, and textbook designers in paving the way for improving the participants' writing skill. The advanced writing course designers and teachers, as well as language experts determine the great significance of formulaic sequences and attempt to develop research-based educational packages suitable based on the student's particular target context.

KEYWORDS: Formulaic Sequences, Awareness Raising, Writing Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill receives great significance in higher education and being considered as a member of the disciplinary community of expert writers is one of the desires of many learners in almost any

International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World
(IJLLALW)
Volume 14 (1), January 2017; 67-75   *Afraz, Sh., et al*
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245   *www.ijllalw.org*

field of study. For this purpose, learners should attempt to exploit those word combinations that pertain to the disciplinary conventions, which are typically implemented by recognized academics (Cortes, 2004; Hyland, 2008a).

Formulaic sequences, also going by the name of lexical chunks or clusters (Hyland, 2008a), are a kind of word sequences which have recently been introduced and are specified as the most frequently happening sequences including three or more words. The formulaic sequences have often neither idiomatic nor complete structural units but, most of the time, have strong grammatical correlates (Biber, 2006). Instances of formulaic sequences involve expressions such as *on the other hand*, *the end of the*, and *it is important to*.

Since formulaic sequences are very frequent in language, it might be supposed that they will naturally and effortlessly be learnt. But as Biber and Barbieri (2007) and Cortes (2006) note, the acquisition and appropriate use of these expressions does not seem to naturally occur. Although expert academic writers in various disciplines and genres make use of a wide diversity of formulaic sequences to construct their arguments and convince the readers, many formulaic sequences preferred and applied by specialists are never or quite rarely applied by learners in various fields and at various levels of proficiency (Cortes, 2004; Hyland, 2008a).

Most studies concerning formulaic sequences take a corpus-based approach and concentrate on determining the sequences used in a given discipline and on the differences or the similarities in the type and frequency of the formulaic sequences used across various disciplinary fields, registers, genres, and different degrees of writing proficiency (e.g., Biber et al., 1999; Cortes, 2013).

There are also studies proposing various ways of introducing learners to the use of frequently recurring lexical bundles. Lewis (2000) introduces many novel ways of instructing formulaic sequences. Pang (2010) also mentions several strategies and techniques that will make second/foreign language students able to broaden their collection of academic rhetorical features to involve these multi-word sequences.

Very few explorations have considered explicit teaching and practical implementation of formulaic sequences (Cortes, 2006). Jones and Haywood (2004) taught a group of university students who were all non-native speakers of English on the use of particular word combinations during a 10-week period. Their results indicated minor increase in the production of formulaic language after the teaching but they indicated high motivation and tendency towards the use of these expressions by the students in their study. They also highlighted that students' insufficient use of formulaic expressions in their academic writing may lead to undesirable writing. In another study, Cortes (2006) found her five 20-minute sessions of formulaic sequences instruction to a group of university students in a writing-intensive history class excessively short to make significant variations between pre- and post-teaching production of formulaic sequences but they revealed a raise in students' awareness of and interest in these expressions.

To the researchers' best knowledge, up to the present time, very few studies have explored the effect of teaching advanced EFL learners on the use of formulaic sequences in writing in the field of applied linguistics, more particularly in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Advanced TEFL learners are assumed to have few problems in the understanding of formulaic sequences since these expressions are so common in the field. But it is not clear if these learners can use formulaic sequences in writing without trouble and if providing them with a list of most related, most regular, and functionally significant formulaic sequences in the field can promote their writing ability.

The study may have both theoretical and practical implications to the field of applied linguistics. Theoretical to the sense that it may contribute to re-specifying the features of a good writing class and practical in the form of suggestions to EFL learners and novice writers as well as to writing course teachers about the significance and usefulness of formulaic sequences in developing learners' ability in writing. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of teaching formulaic sequences on fostering the students' writing ability.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The widespread use of formulaic sequences in natural language performance gives it an essential role in language acquisition, processing, and application (Ellis, 1996; Millar, 2010; Wray, 2002). Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) emphasize the paramount role of these readymade chunks on the acquisition of a language by mentioning that a large amount of language that people encounter every day is very habitual and predictable. The significance of multi-word lexical clusters is also highlighted by Wood (2002) that formulaic language is essential to language development, processing, production and learning.

Among their principal functions in language learning and construction, formulaic sequences are known to lower the cognitive load and facilitate the language processing burden as they are stored in and recalled from memory as unanalyzed pieces (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Wei & Ying, 2011). There are several studies acknowledging that formulaic sequences have processing benefits. For example, Conklin and Schmitt (2008) attempted to explore whether the formulaic sequences are useful in terms of processing by comparing the time spent on reading formulaic sequences with their non-formulaic equivalents by native and non-native speakers. It was found that formulaic sequences were processed more rapidly than non-formulaic language by both groups showing that formulaic sequences have a noteworthy remarkable advantage over non-formulaic language in terms of language processing. The study performed by Underwood, Schmitt, and Galpin (2004) to examine how formulaic sequences are processed also confirmed the claim that formulaic sequences speed up language processing.

Another function of formulaic sequences that has an essential effect on language development is their role in easing communicative functions. Even when students lack adequate linguistic knowledge, they can obtain their interactional objectives and become prosperous communicators by using formulaic sequences (Wei & Ying, 2011).

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The main purpose of language instruction is to make students understand the significant effect of linguistic items in discourse on communication and that it can be considered by having them learn form/function combinations that are called sequential clusters (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Formulaic sequences have an essential role as a guide in showing the discourse structure (Li & Schmitt, 2009), and in fact, one of the most significant functions of it is that of discourse organization including the use of discourse markers (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Formulaic sequences, regularly used in academic language (Hyland, 2012), are fundamental elements of written register (e.g., Li & Schmitt, 2009) and writing well demands using them properly (Li & Schmitt, 2009). They result in pragmatically effective communication, and in academic discourse often serve as the structuring frame of discourse by directing readers through a text (*in the next section, as shown in figure*) or by connecting ideas (*is due to the, in contrast to*) (Hyland, 2012).

RESEARCH QUESTION
Based on the purpose of the study, the following research question was proposed and corresponding hypothesis was investigated:

RQ: Does raising EFL learners' awareness regarding formulaic sequences significantly affect their writing performance?

METHODOLOGY
Participants
Forty M.A. students majoring in TEFL at the Islamic Azad University – Bandar Abbas Branch, Iran, took part in the present study. All the selected participants were B.A. graduates of different sub-fields of English including TEFL, linguistics, and translation. The selection of the participants was based on their scores in a Nelson English Language Test. It mean that from initial 73 students, 40 students who could get scores in the range of one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected to participate in the study.

Instruments
In order to collect the needed data for the present study, the researcher used the following instruments:

1.   *Nelson English Language Test*: a test in the advanced level – 400B – was used to select a homogeneous sample for the study. The selection criterion was obtaining scores in the range of one standard deviation minus and plus the mean.

2.   A writing task which was repeated two times as pre-test and post-test before and after the treatment, respectively. These written products were scored by two independent raters and the inter-rater reliability index was calculated as 0.79.

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Procedure

In order to have a homogeneous sample of the participants, the researcher distributed the Nelson English Language Test to all M.A. students (n =90) majoring in TEFL at the Islamic Azad University – Bandar Abbas Branch, Iran. From among them, 40 students whose scores were in the range of one standard deviation minus and plus the mean have been selected and randomly assigned to two groups and one of them was taken as experimental group and the other as control group. The study was performed in eight sessions of one hour and fifteen minutes length.

In the first session, a topic was given to the participants in the two groups to write an essay about it. This essay was considered as their pre-test. In the subsequent sessions, a topic was given to the groups to write essays about them. The only difference between the procedures taken in the two groups was that in the experimental group, at the start of each session, 10 frequently used formulaic sequences based on corpus studies (Jalali, Eslami Rasekh, & Tavangar Rizi, 2008; Hyland, 2008a, 2008b) were taught to the participants and then they started to write on the proposed topic. The teacher advised the participants to use the formulaic sequences in their essays; but, in the control group, there was not such an instruction and the participants only wrote an essay in each session on the given topic.

In the last session, the students were asked to write another essay on the topic given in the pre-test to measure the degree of progress in two groups from pre-test to post-test. The students' essays in pre- and post-test were scored by two independent raters based on the Jacob et al.'s (1981) writing scoring rubric, out of 100, and the average of the scores given by the two raters was taken as the participants' scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the descriptive and inferential statistics based on the variables and research question posed in the study.

The Results of the Selection Test

As Table 1 shows, the mean of 75 initial participants' average scores was 34.12 with standard deviation of 5.323.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Selection Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nelson	73	34.12	5.323

Those students whose score was between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean have been selected as the participants of the main study and others have been left out. It means that 40 students whose scores were between 29 and 39 were selected.

The Results Regarding the Research Question

In order to determine whether there was any significant difference in the writing pre-test scores between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 2 reports the results of this analysis.

Table 2: Writing Pre-test Difference

		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
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.059	.809	.713	38	.480	1.600	2.243	-2.941	6.141
	Equal variances not assumed			.713	37.993	.480	1.600	2.243	-2.941	6.141

As indicated in Table 2, the Levene's test for equal variances yields a p-value of 0.809. This means that the difference between the variances is not statistically significant and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first row, the p-value is equal to 0.480 which is above 0.05 and indicates that there is not a significant difference in the pre-test scores of the control and experimental groups.

To explore the effect of raising EFL learners' awareness regarding formulaic sequences on their writing performance and determine the difference in the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups, another independent samples t-test was run. Table 3 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 3: Writing Post-test Difference

		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	.130	.720	-3.759	38	.001	-9.400	2.501	-14.463	-4.337
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.759	37.999	.001	-9.400	2.501	-14.463	-4.337

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Table 3 shows that the Levene's test for equal variances shows a p-value of .720. This means that the difference between the variances is not statistically significant and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first row, the p-value is equal to 0.001 which is below 0.05 and reveals that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. In other words, raising EFL learners' awareness regarding formulaic sequences significantly affects their writing performance and improves it.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicated significant points concerning the advantages of formulaic sequences in promoting Iranian advanced EFL learners writing performance. The findings were all in support of the positive effect of formulaic sequences on participants' writing ability. Although the period of time devoted to instructional program was short, unlike other similar studies (e.g., Cortes, 2006; Jones & Haywood, 2004), based on the results of pre- and post-test and the statistical analyses, the participants of the present study could significantly increase their scores in writing after being taught to use formulaic sequences.

This outcome may be due to the fact that the participants in the present study were all M.A. students majoring in TEFL who mostly have the ability to acquire the bundles and just need some practice to improve their awareness of and attention to these overlooked, but paramount, discourse elements and use them properly to develop their quality of writing.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that Iranian EFL learners, even those majoring in TEFL, are not familiar with these repeated clusters of words and that they get very little, if any, instruction about formulaic sequences. While this is the case, almost all of the students ascribe great value to formulaic sequences and feel the severe need to get thorough understanding of this significant and almost completely ignored aspect of foreign language learning.

The present study was only conducted on TEFL university students and the generalizability of its findings to other EFL students is a matter of question. Furthermore, the number of the taught formulaic sequences was limited. This may be another drawback to the generalizability of results.

Based on these findings, it is important that advanced writing course designers and teachers, as well as language experts, determine the great significance of formulaic sequences and attempt to develop research-based educational packages suitable based on the student's particular target context. There should be situations for students in writing courses, as well as in EAP courses, particularly in advanced levels, to get accustomed to and use those word clusters that are more relevant to their target genres and are used by skillful writers in the field. Regular contact with reading materials, lists of sequences, noticing (Cortes, 2004, 2006), consciousness-raising tasks (Lewis, 2000), concordances (Hyland, 2008a), activities like item recognition and matching, and also activities which makes students generate the items in their writing can be among many other techniques which teachers can use with their students.

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