In the Name of God

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Aims of this journal include but are not limited to:

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- Sharing the findings of researchers in the mentioned fields.
- Promoting general and professional knowledge necessary for learning English as an international language among Iranians and international interaction in the future.
- Promoting Iranian culture along with the English.

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Journal article with volume number

Lee, M-B. (2002). A closer look at language learning strategies and EFL performance. *Foreign Languages Education*, *10*(1), 115-132.

Article in a book

Dechert, H. (1983). How a story is done in a second language. In C. Faerch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in inter-language communication* (pp. 175-195). Longman.

Journal Article with DOI

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Direct citation 1
She states, "the 'placebo effect' ... disappeared when behaviors were studied in this manner" (Miele, 1993, p. 276), but she did not clarify which behaviors were studied.

Direct citation 2: Fewer than forty words
Lee (1999) found that "The EAP writing curriculum incorporate reading and analysis of major academic journal articles in the specific field to identify macro-level organization an obligatory 'moves' in conjunction with writing practice." (p. 21)

Direct citation 3: More than forty words
Miele (1993) found the following:
The "placebo effect," which had been verified in previous studies, disappeared when behaviors were studied in this manner. Furthermore, the behaviors were never exhibited again, even when reed rings were administered. Earlier studies were clearly premature in attributing the results to a placebo effect. (p. 276)

One work by two authors
- Smith and Takamoto (1997) argued that. ...
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Previous research (Lass, 1992; Meyer & Sage, 1978, 1980; Nichols, 1987a, 1987b; Oats et al., 1973)...
For works not included in the above examples refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

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Research Article
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A Mixed-Methods Study of the Effect of Using Situation Comedies on Iranian EFL Learners' Critical Reasoning and Action

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study, adopting a sequential explanatory design, aimed to (a) investigate the effect of situation comedies (sitcoms) on Iranian EFL learners' critical reasoning as well as action and (b) explore learners' attitudes about the way sitcoms could influence their critical reasoning and action. In this mixed-methods study, sixty learners were randomly selected and assigned to a control and an experimental group. While the control group participated in regular classes, the experimental group watched sitcoms. Before and after the treatment, the Persian version of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, Form B (CCTST) (Khalili & Hossein Zadeh, 2003) was utilized to measure participants' reasoning skills. To assess critical action, the Activism Orientation Scale (Corning & Myers, 2002) was used. Quantitative data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Some of the participants in the experimental group were interviewed about the way sitcoms affected their criticality. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The result of ANCOVA tests showed a significant difference between the two groups regarding their criticality. In support of quantitative results, the analysis of the interviews confirmed the effectiveness of sitcoms in

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improving learners' criticality. Qualitative findings showed that sitcoms enhanced learners' critical reasoning through inference and evaluation and raised their awareness of social issues and their eagerness to participate in life-changing activities. Integrating findings from the two phases confirmed that sitcoms increased learners' awareness of the world and deepened their understanding of diversities.

Keywords: critical action, critical reasoning, humor, mixed-methods research, sitcoms

Introduction

Second language educators utilize different types of educational resources, such as multimedia tools and applications to find the most appealing and effective way of teaching the second language (Cook, 2016). Van Dam (2002) highlights the role humor can play in encouraging language learners to learn the language through mitigating face threats evident in learning a new language. Similarly, Pomerantz and Bell (2011) state that language learners can often be placed in positions of powerlessness due to face threatening acts in communicative events in second language classrooms and such face threatening exchanges can be prevented or alleviated by humorous performances.

To define humor, Banas et al. (2011), drawing on Martin's (2007) ideas, argue that "there is widespread agreement among scholars that humor involves the communication of multiple incongruous meanings that are amusing in some manner" (p. 117). They suggest that humor refers to both verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviors that critically address social and political issues in a way that leads to laughter and joy. Bell (2009) encourages English language teachers to use humor in their classes. She considers using humor in language classrooms as an educational possibility not only for teaching important components of language, including vocabulary and grammar but also for improving cultural understanding. Furthermore, she refers to jokes as speech acts that can be beneficial in improving language learners' sociolinguistic competence and highlights the importance of "an appreciation and understanding of certain values in American culture, of which the joke is an important conveyor" (p. 89). Also, Washburn (2001) argues that different types of humor like sitcoms or situation comedies should be used as a

source of input to develop learners' communicative ability. Chang (2015) points out that sitcom "can be an effective platform for the language learners to be immersed in the culture or way of life of the target community" (p. 26).

Furthermore, the effect of using sitcoms in language classrooms on promoting language learners' speaking abilities has been confirmed in various studies (see Bacelar da Silvia, 2003; Saito, 2013; Washburn, 2001). Saito (2013) argues that sitcoms, such as *Friends* present better samples of real English conversations than written conversations in ELT textbooks as they offer culturally authentic materials. Also, investigating the effect of using the sitcom *Friends* on teaching the sequence organization such as refusals and invitations, Bacelar da Silvia (2003) suggests that using sitcoms in language classrooms can help L2 learners improve their conversation abilities. As emphasized by Washburn (2001), in comparison to other genres available on television, such as dramas and soap operas, more copious sources of suitable conversational models are presented by sitcoms since they often demonstrate daily speech routines. More recently, analyzing the pedagogical roles of sitcoms in language classes, Larrea Espinar and Raigon Rodriguez (2019) point out that sitcoms offer the possibility of culture learning and improve language learners' intercultural awareness since they concentrate on cultural facts about the English-speaking societies.

Although the aforementioned studies, addressing language learners in various cultural contexts, confirm the educational benefits of sitcoms in enhancing L2 interactional competence and intercultural competence, there is a dearth of studies that investigate the role of sitcoms in improving English language learners' criticality through "holding a fun house mirror to contemporary culture, humor distorts, exaggerates, and reframes in ways that invite audiences to see themselves and society from new vantage points" (Rossing, 2012, p. 46). More importantly, Tsami and Skoura (2021) maintain that humor in language classes enhances language learners' critical literacy by providing a space for them to reflect on the racist or sexist discourse and enabling them to uncover the discrimination embedded in social power relationships.

Yazdan and Rudolph (2018) regard criticality as the core goal of critical pedagogy and state that there is a dire need for broadening the scope of the concept of criticality in English language teaching and learning processes in order to deeply apprehend and probe nativeness, marginalization, identity, and (in)equity, which are important topics of inquiry in this domain of knowledge. According to Barnett (1997), higher education teachers should go beyond the concept of critical thinking in order to cultivate criticality among university students. Broadly speaking, as mentioned by Dunne (2015), "universities thrive on students who are inquisitive, prudent, willing to reconsider their positions, and diligent in seeking relevant information. These qualities are essential tools in the pursuit of truth through critical investigation" (p. 89).

According to Banegas and de Castro (2016), criticality means "considering an issue from multiple perspectives, even when these involve self-critique. Thus, being critical does not mean being negative about other people's or one's own assumptions; it means being able to identify assumptions and evaluate evidence and issues logically" (p. 455). Referring to the importance of criticality in higher education, Barnett (1997) states that a higher education learner as a critical person is nurtured and empowered to reason and act critically. In other words, criticality involves two components: critical reasoning and critical action. Barnett believes that educators should cultivate criticality in their learners by offering spaces for them to think and act critically in order to form "critical persons who are not subject to the world, but to act autonomously and purposively within it" (p. 7). Barnett (2015) explicates that critical reasoning involves knowledge critique, critical thoughts, and reflection on one's own understanding. Indeed, he explains that critical reasoning involves both critical thinking and critical reflection. He conceptualizes critical reasoning as a high level of openness towards various issues, re-evaluation of the existing knowledge claims, and reflection on one's own understandings. He also defines critical action as critique-in-action and maintains that "critical action demands that persons fully inhabit their actions; that they are brave enough to live out their understandings in the world" (p. 68). As Dunne (2015) suggests, critical action represents the way individuals' reasoning and

reflection influence their ability to take action and make decisions. Addressing knowledge and the world as two domains of criticality, he acknowledges that "understanding, therefore, has to be reunited with performance so as to produce action. Critique in the domain of knowledge has to be brought into a relationship with critique in the domain of the world" (p. 65).

However, ignoring critical action as one component of criticality as well as critical reflection as a constitutive component of critical reasoning, Iranian EFL scholars have limited the scope of their studies to critical thinking and explored the way it can be related to other variables such as learners' speaking skills (Bakhshayesh et al., 2023; Kaviani & Mashhadi Heidar, 2020; Malmir & Shoorcheh, 2012), reading comprehension and strategies (Fahim & Sa'eepour, 2011; Marboot et al., 2020; Nour Mohammadi et al., 2012), vocabulary knowledge (Nosratinia et al., 2015), and autonomy and creativity (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2014). Nonetheless, making a distinction between critical thinking and criticality, Canagarajah (2006) argues that critical practice as a feature of being critical is different from critical thinking that is mainly addressed in language education. He explains that critical thinking typically defines thinking as an individual activity and ignores social positioning, whereas criticality examines thinking in relation to one's own biases and positioning.

Accordingly, the present study addressed the two main components of criticality, i.e., critical reasoning and critical action. Indeed, this study aimed at investigating the way humor, especially humor coming from the identification and solution of incongruity, found in jokes, metaphors, puns, and visual representations of sitcoms, can promote the fundamental processes of critical reasoning and critical action among Iranian EFL learners. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach because this approach can offer deeper insights into various levels or units of analysis (Creswell, 2014). As Ivankova et al. (2006) state the sequential explanatory design "implies collecting and analyzing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study" (p. 4). They indicate that, in the sequential explanatory design, the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first phase of the study offers

a general understanding of the topic of inquiry and the collection and analysis of the qualitative data in the second phase, which aims at probing into the participants' views in more depth explicate the statistical findings obtained in the quantitative phase. Accordingly, in the present study, the first phase of the study sought to investigate the effect of sitcoms on Iranian EFL learners' critical reasoning and critical action, while the second phase of the study, in which data were collected through in-depth interviews, explored participants' views about the way sitcoms could influence their criticality.

Relevant Studies on Critical Reasoning and Action in Language Education

In this section, the relevant studies on critical reasoning and action in language education are reviewed. Carrying out a qualitative study, Lin et al. (2016) explored the roles new technologies can play in providing innovative ways to enhance L2 learners' reasoning skills. The researchers selected nine participants from among EFL postgraduates. Before taking part in the research project, they were given a possibility to learn more about the DM tabletop application. In the new atmosphere offered by this application, the participants were allowed to communicate using multimodal codes of communication. Moreover, the DM tasks revolved around the themes of shopping and land use change. Scenarios were created based on the above-mentioned themes and the participants were asked to explicate the reasons for which characters in the scenarios acted in a specific way. Analyzing the communicative events constructed within scenarios with regard to the presence of reasoning skills, Lin et al. (2016) state that the task-based language teaching supported by the use of new technologies can offer an opportunity to enhance language learners' reasoning skills as they are given space to think more logically and articulate their reasoning.

Likewise, Nunn et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study to describe and demonstrate principles of critical reasoning and reflection within project-based learning for undergraduate education. They stated that a holistic approach is required to comprehensively consider the wide range of skills and knowledge that contribute to academic competence. They used excerpts from

recordings of groups of students doing projects over the course of a semester and samples of students' written work on those projects to examine their critical reasoning skills. Furthermore, they made comments on the videotaped evidence of the principles of reasoning that were shared during the project's group discussions. Extensive excerpts from video-recorded data showed the interactive process in which students took part throughout the project. Generally speaking, it was revealed that project-based learning provides continuous opportunities for students to practice assessment skills. They would be encouraged to use evaluation skills in the early stages of their projects when they need to decide what specific issues to address in their project. This would help students to talk about different challenges that they or those around them encounter. The fact that they worked in a group made them assess alternative ideas presented by the group members.

In another qualitative study, Yoedo and Mustofa (2022) investigated how primary school teachers use Indonesian folklore in English classes to help students improve their analytical and critical reasoning skills. Researchers used images from folktales to show to the participants and received their direct responses. In addition, the visual culture theory was used as the conceptual framework through which the data from interviews were examined. It should be added that the participants of the study consisted of five English language teachers. These five teachers believed that using Indonesian folklore in their classes enhanced their students' analytical and critical reasoning skills because folktale texts moderate foreign language readers' or learners' understanding of how cultural issues play a role in the everyday life, make them more eager about English lessons, familiarize them with their daily environment, and encourage them to learn a foreign language while developing their analytical and critical reasoning skills.

In their quantitative study adopting an ex-post facto design, Mathews et al. (2022) investigated the reciprocal relationship between critical action and ethnic–racial identity exploration among Black college students through a longitudinal project. Data for their study came from the Minority College Cohort Study, a longitudinal investigation of 533 Black and Latin students. Only the

students who were identified as Black or African American were selected for inclusion in this study. Findings of the study revealed that critical action and ERI exploration had mutual relationships with one another during the college transition. In fact, it was shown that critical action was positively related to ERI exploration. In addition, it was revealed that the mutual relationships between critical action and ERI exploration remained stable over time, as the two processes, most probably, improved one another among Black students within predominately White institutions. Reviewing the above-mentioned studies indicated that the existing studies on critical reasoning and critical action in English language education mainly adopted a qualitative method of research and focused on a small sample of participants. However, the present study adopted a mixed-methods design not only to explore the effect of sitcoms on Iranian EFL learners' critical reasoning and action, but also to probe their attitudes about the way sitcoms could affect their critical reasoning and action. Accordingly, the current study sought to answer the following research questions.

1. Does the use of situation comedies in language classes improve EFL learners' critical reasoning?
2. Does the use of situation comedies in language classes improve EFL learners' critical action?
3. How can situation comedies used in language classes improve EFL learners' critical reasoning?
4. How can situation comedies used in language classes improve EFL learners' critical action?

Methodology

Research Design

The present study utilized a mixed-methods research strategy in which the data were collected sequentially. The sequential explanatory strategy was used as the quantitative data collection and analysis were followed by the qualitative data collection and analysis in order to further explain and interpret the results of the quantitative method through the qualitative method. To be

more specific, we should add that, after the quantitative phase of the study that involved a pre-test post-test control group design, some of those who participated in the experimental study were interviewed to share their views about the way sitcoms could affect their critical reasoning and action.

Participants of the Study

a) Quantitative Phase. For the purpose of the present study, nested sampling as a point of interface was used to choose the participants. That is, the sample members selected for the qualitative phase involved a subset of the participants, who were selected for the quantitative phase of the study. Therefore, for the quantitative phase, 60 intermediate language learners studying at private language institutes were randomly selected. Before carrying out the treatment, the participants were given the standardized 200A test of Nelson English Tests (Fowler & Coe, 1976) to ensure their homogeneity. These learners were randomly assigned to a control and an experimental group.

b) Qualitative Phase. Furthermore, the participants selected for the second phase of the study, that is, the qualitative phase, included a subset of the learners (10 learners) in the experimental group, who were selected using convenience sampling. Indeed, some of the learners in the experimental group who were available for inclusion and were volunteered for in-depth interviews were chosen.

Instruments

a) Quantitative Phase. The first instrument that was used in the quantitative phase was the Persian version of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, Form B (CCTST). This instrument was utilized to measure the participants' core reasoning skills, which were required for reflective and critical thinking processes. This test is composed of 34 multiple-choice questions on five critical thinking skills: analysis, evaluation, inference, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning. The original version of the questionnaire was translated into Persian by Khodamorady et al. (2005) who confirmed its construct validity and reliability. Khalili and Hossein Zadeh (2003) argued that the CCTST is more comprehensive than other measuring tools of critical thinking skills because it is mainly based on the APA Delphi

consensus conceptualization of critical thinking. Also, in the present study, Cronbach's alpha formula was employed to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The result indicated a moderately strong reliability (r =. 79).

To assess the second quantitative variable of the study, that is, critical action, the researchers used the Activism Orientation Scale developed by Corning and Myers (2002). As Corning and Myers confirm, this instrument was also found to have adequate construct validity, discriminant validity, convergent validity, and test-retest reliability. Cronbach's alpha formula was also employed in the current study for this test items and the result showed a strong level of reliability (r =. 81).

b) Qualitative Phase. For the qualitative phase of the study, semi-structured interview was utilized to examine the attitudes of the participants of the experimental group in the quantitative phase towards the use of sitcoms for improving their critical reasoning and action. The interviewer asked open-ended questions about the way sitcoms could influence the critical reasoning and action of the participants, who received the treatments.

Procedures

a) Quantitative Phase. This mixed-methods study sought to (a) explore the effect of situation comedies (sitcoms) on Iranian EFL learners' critical reasoning and action and (b) probe the learners' attitudes about the way sitcoms could influence their critical reasoning and action. To this end, for the quantitative phase, 60 intermediate-level learners of English, who studied in language institutes in Lorestan were selected. These learners were randomly assigned to a control and an experimental group. Each group included 30 learners. Both groups took the same course and were taught by the same teacher. Before the experiment, all participants were pretested. First, the CCTST was utilized to measure the participants' critical reasoning skills. The second instrument was the Activism Orientation Scale (AOS) that was used to assess critical action. While learners in the control group participated in a regular class, the learners in the experimental group received the treatments. The main purpose of the current research was to investigate the effect of sitcoms such as

the Top Notch fundamental short movies, Stand Up comedies, some parts of Friends' Series, some parts of TED speech comedies or any short comedies which could promote the fundamental processes of critical reasoning and action among Iranian EFL learners. At the beginning of the semester, the researchers informed the students that they were required to watch the short comedy clips. The researchers created a joyful atmosphere and the students were strongly encouraged to express their views on such clips critically. They eagerly followed the funny movies. They were also asked to write funny stories, funny jokes in English and perform them in front of the class. In fact, watching funny clips were considered as a part of their regular class requirements. All participants in the experimental group were asked to practice a kind of stand-up comedy and perform it in English. Also, they could write their ideas critically about different issues in the class and society. The purpose of this activity was to provide an opportunity for learners to express their views critically on different topics covered by comedies during the semester. Learners could ask their own questions, have interactions together, and air their comments when they felt it was necessary. At the end of the treatment, in order to examine the effectiveness of the treatment by comparing the learners in the control and experimental groups with regard to their criticality, all participants were post-tested by using the CCTST and the AOS once more. To analyze the quantitative data and examine the difference in the mean values of critical reasoning and critical action that were related to the impact of the independent variable of sitcoms, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used.

b) Qualitative Phase. For the second phase of the study, that is, the qualitative phase, 10 learners from the experimental groups were selected. These learners were interviewed using the semi-structured interviews and were invited to express their views about the way the use of sitcoms in their classes affected their criticality. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were also analyzed using deductive content analysis through which the components identified for critical reasoning and action in the two quantitative methods of data collection were re-examined. As Elo and Kungas (2008) explain, deductive content analysis as one of the methods used

to analyze the qualitative data, which aims at re-examining the existing categories, involves the preparation of the categorization matrix based on the existing theories and models. They stated that when the categorization matrix is prepared, the existing data are analyzed and coded for correspondence with the identified categories.

Results of the Study

Initially, the data collected through the pre- and post-tests were subjected to descriptive statistics measures. The results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Critical Reasoning and Action

	M	SD
Critical reasoning pretest	19.26	5.33
Critical reasoning posttest	22.23	5.85
Critical action pretest	43.91	11.25
Critical action posttest	72.96	21.66

Findings Related to the First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question and examine the impact of using sitcoms in language classes on language learners' critical reasoning, a one-way between groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used. As Leech et al. (2014) explain, ANCOVA can be utilized when there is a pre-test and post-test design in order to control pre-existing differences between groups by considering pre-tests as covariates. In this analysis, pretests of critical reasoning served as the covariates. Moreover, the treatment used in the study, that is, using sitcoms in language classrooms, was the independent variable. The post-test that was used for assessing language learners' reasoning was the dependent variable. As Pallant (2010) explains, to run ANCOVA, the following pre-assumptions should be observed:

1) Data should be normally distributed.
2) Slope of regressions should be homogeneous.
3) Variances should be homogeneous.

To check the normality of data distribution for the pretest and post-test related to the first research question, the researchers measured the Shapiro-Wilk test, whose result is presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

Statistics	Df	Sig
	60	0.12
	60	0.06

Based on the findings shown in the table above (p 1 = 0.12, p 2 = 0.06), the normality of the data distribution is confirmed. In order to measure the homogeneity of variance, the Levene's test of equality of error variance was checked, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig
6.234	1	58	0.06

The result confirmed the homogeneity of variance (F = 6.23, p = 0.06). In order to check the homogeneity of the slope of regression, the test of between subjects-effect was run, the result of which is shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Methods*Pretest1	15.09	1	15.09	3.51	0.06

As data in Table 4 show (F = 3.51, p = 0.06), the homogeneity of the slope of regression was verified. Then, ANCOVA was run to answer the first research question. The results of this test are shown in Table 5:

Table 5

Results of ANCOVA for the First Research Question

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	F	Sig	Partial Eta	Effect Size Squared
Methods	72.42	1	16.17	0.00	0.52	0.22
Error	1883.25	57				
Total	26487.00	60				

As the result of ANCOVA for the first research question shows [$F_{(1, 57)}$ = 16.17., p = 0.00 < 0.05], sitcoms could highly improve the participants' critical action. In order to understand which group had performed better with regard to the variable of critical reasoning, marginal mean score was calculated (Table 6), which shows the adjusted means on the dependent variable for each of the existing groups. Based on following table, the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Table 6

Marginal Mean Score

		95%Confidence Interval		
Methods	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
New	22.34	0.38	20.57	23.12
Old	19.15	0.38	18.37	19.92

Findings Related to the Second Research Question

In order to answer the second research question and investigate the effect of using sitcoms on language learners' critical action, another ANCOVA test was used. The post-test that was used for assessing language learners' critical action was the dependent variable. Before calculating ANCOVA, the three pre-assumptions for this test were taken into account: normality of the distribution of data, homogeneity of the slope of regressions, and homogeneity of variances. In order to check the normality of data distribution for the posttests related to the second research question, the Shapiro-Wilk test was

used (Table 7).

Table 7

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

Statistics	Df	Sig
.0947	60	0.06
.0918	60	0.07

The result indicates that the data distribution was normal (p 1 = 0.06, p 2 = 0.07). In order to check the homogeneity of variance, Levene's test of equality of error variance was run. The result of the test is shown in Table 8:

Table 8

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig
.291	1	58	.59

The result of the analysis shown in Table 8 (F = 0.29, p = 0.59) shows that the homogeneity of variance was confirmed. In order to check the homogeneity of the slope of regression, the test of between subjects-effect was run (Table 9):

Table 9

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Methods*Pretest1	748.44	1	748.44	2.38	0.12

After obtaining homogenous variances (Table 9), the ANCOVA test was employed to answer the second research question (Table 10):

Table 10

Results of ANCOVA for the Second Quantitative Research Question

Source	Sum of squares	Df	F	Sig	Partial Eta	Effect Size Squared
Methods	85550.45	1	26.5	0.00	0.31	0.77
Error	18324.63	57				
Total	347148.00	60				

As the result of ANCOVA for the second research question shows (Table 10), sitcoms could highly improve the participants' critical action [$F_{(1, 57)}$ = 26. 59, p = 0. 00 < 0.05]. In order to understand which group had significantly performed better with regard to the variable of critical action, marginal mean scores were calculated (Table 11), which show the adjusted means on the dependent variable for each of the existing groups. As Table 11 shows, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group.

Table 11

Marginal Mean Score

		95% Confidence Interval		
Methods	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
New	85.44	3.34	78.74	92.15
Old	60.48	3.34	53.78	67.19

Findings of the Study Related to the Qualitative Data

The rationale for the mixed methods approach taken in this study was that the results of quantitative data analysis can offer a general understanding of the research problem, while the analysis of qualitative data can elaborate on the statistical results by probing into participants' views through interviews. During interviews carried out in the qualitative phase of the present study, the participants in the experimental group were asked to share their ideas about the way the use of sitcoms in language classes could improve their critical reasoning and critical action. The content analysis of the interviews showed that two notions were noteworthy in participants' comments as is shown in Table 12:

Table 12

Noteworthy Notions Identified Using Content Analysis

Critical Reasoning	Critical Action
Inference	Being informed of social and political issues
Evaluation	Eagerness to take part in life-changing activities

The two main notions related to the role of sitcoms in improving the participants' critical reasoning were inference and evaluation. Inference involved the attempts made by learners to reach a conclusion through the collection of data and recognition of conditions and facts. Facione (1990) defines inference as the ability to reach a conclusion after reasoning, gathering evidence, and recognizing conditions and facts. The following examples extracted from the data set show the importance of the notion of inference. One of the learners of the present study indicated:

> *We watched sitcoms in the classrooms and were given the chance to talk about what we had watched. You know, getting the jokes and understanding the meanings required the ability to analyze the situations in the sitcoms and recognize the events and facts on which joking scenes were formed.*

She also explained:

> *Some scenes were really about bitter facts, although we were watching comedies. To deeply understand sitcoms, we should have enough information about events and characters to form an opinion.*

The second example extracted from the qualitative data set also refers to the improvement of the inference-making ability in language learners after watching sitcoms in language classrooms:

> *Analyzing sitcoms in every class was really challenging. To understand the jokes and humor in the films, we tried to focus on the clues and our own experiences. Also, we had to work hard to connect information across different scenes.*

Moreover, the second noteworthy notion observed in the participants' comments was evaluation, which is defined as evaluating the credibility of the sources which are used to collect data and information for assessing the quality

of inferences and arguments (Facione, 1990). One of the learner participants explained:

> *After watching sitcoms, our teacher asked us to talk with each other about the movie. It was really interesting and made us think. She asked us to judge characters and joking scenes. We shared our ideas. I could listen to my friends' ideas. This helped me think carefully about different ideas and make more appropriate judgements about the meanings of jokes.*

The second extract taken from the qualitative data indicating the improvement of the evaluative thinking through the treatment used by their teacher is presented below:

> *We could talk with each other about the sitcoms we watched in the class. I think understanding comedies is really hard and we need to think. When we talked with each other, we could hear different things from each other. Listening to each other, we could check our own understanding once more because we received new evidence.*

The analysis of the transcription of the participants' interviews with regard to the way the use of sitcoms could improve their critical action skills led to the identification of two important notions: being informed of social and political issues and eagerness to take part in life-changing activities. One of the participating learners explained:

> *When our teacher asked us to watch such programs and discuss about their important points, I didn't know how they could change my views about the world. Now, we've got familiar with many problems in our society and are able to think about them. Before these classes, I was blind and was not aware of social issues.*

The second learner participant also suggested:

> *Because of the content of such comedies that are about the bitter events of the society, we could learn many things about our social life. I think my political literacy has improved. I can participate in political discussions with my friends*.

Another participating learner spoke of the eagerness to take part in life-changing activities and said:

> *I have learned many new things. This made me ready to be an active member of the society and become a member of many social groups that are formed to help people and make a better society. I am ready to invest my time and energy to participate in such groups and activities that result in a better life and more effective society*.

Discussion

Findings of the present study revealed that sitcoms used in language classes could significantly improve Iranian EFL learners' critical reasoning and action skills. Also, analyzing learners' attitudes about the way sitcoms improved their criticality resulted in the identification of noteworthy themes such as inference, evaluation, being informed of social issues, and eagerness to take part in life-changing activities. In a similar way, Chabeli (2008) points out that the use of humorous practices promotes thinking skills, although Chabeli specifically addresses the use of humorous practices in higher education systems in South Africa. Indeed, Chabeli indicates that using humor "can challenge learners to engage in problem-solving activities, the resolution of contradictions, and the justification of their views" (p. 55). She also argues that using humor offers a space to learners to pay deep attention to various alternatives to the solution of the problem. Indeed, she explicates that using humor in educational contexts encourages learners to think about various issues, re-evaluate their understanding, and re-examine their reasoning, which result in the improvement of critical reasoning skills. Broadly speaking, as Ryoo (2019) states, "playfulness encouraged through pedagogies of humor and joy lead to ways of thinking differently and communicating those different ideas in exciting ways" (p. 189). Similarly, elaborating on the way sitcoms could improve their criticality, the participant learners stated that sitcoms helped them evaluate various viewpoints on a subject which enhanced their critical reasoning skills. This point was consistent with Hložková's (2014) interpretation of the role of sitcoms in language classes, indicating that

watching sitcoms provides a space for language learners to become familiar with various attitudes and beliefs towards social and cultural issues. Likewise, Mudawe (2020) acknowledges that sitcoms in language classes familiarize students with alternative perspectives on various issues beyond the restriction of textbooks and course materials. Additionally, sitcoms are abundant with contextual cultural information, which, as Yoedo and Mustofa (2022) state, can help students "build a sense of connection to their local culture while also developing their critical reasoning skills" (p. 110).

In addition, humorous practices presented in sitcoms enhance learners' critical action skills as they mainly aim at de-constructing and re-defining the existing dominant discourse when they address controversial and thought-provoking societal issues (Kypker, 2017). According to Rossing (2012), humorous practices are representation of a critical project as well as a novel possibility for meaning-making through which a solution can be offered to the existing deadlocks on social issues such as race and racism. Furthermore, he points out that humor "directs attention back to often overlooked discrepancies and social failings" (p. 45). Ferguson (2019) maintains that humour should be regarded as a critique of taken-for-granted norms through the subverting power that involves "the ability to say the unsayable, to confront hypocrisy, to kick the pricks" (p. 247). As Wagg (2004) explicates, comedies, including situation comedies, draw the attention of the audience to the social differences people experience with regard to their biological, social, or cultural features, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and nationhood. However, Wagg explains that comedies provide opportunities to question and change the existing power relationships in society. The findings of the present study showed that the use of sitcoms in language classes could relate the context of the language class to the social context. Having this function of sitcom in language classes in mind, we can relate this instructional strategy to critical pedagogy (see Akbari, 2008). Akbari maintains that the discourse of critical pedagogy is "the discourse of liberation and hope; it is the discourse of liberation since it questions the legitimacy of accepted power relations and recognizes the necessity of going beyond arbitrary social constraints" (p. 277). Therefore, it can be concluded

that the use of situation comedies in language classes can lead to the creation of the discourse of hope and liberation.

Conclusion

The present research was an attempt to examine the impact of using sitcoms in language classes on language learners' critical reasoning and action skills and to explore learners' own attitudes about the way sitcoms could influence their criticality. While the majority of the studies within ELT have focused on the educational benefits of sitcoms in enhancing L2 interactional competence, this study showed the effectiveness of sitcoms in improving English language learners' criticality, and it specifically addressed the two main components of criticality, that is, critical reasoning and critical action. It is noteworthy that this study specifically focused on Iranian EFL learners at private language institutes. Yazdan and Rudolph (2018) consider criticality as the main goal of critical pedagogy and state that there is an urgent need to expand the scope of the critical concept in the processes of teaching and learning English language. The present study provided new perspectives towards criticality in language education in light of the conception of criticality proposed by Barnett (1997) and Dunne (2015), which involves two components: a) critical reasoning as a concept composed of critical thinking and critical reflection, and b) critical action. Though the findings of the present research are not conclusive, they could be employed by practitioners in the ELT and SLA domain, especially in the Iranian context. Material and curriculum developers and language teachers can employ the principles of critical reasoning and action through humor in both macro- and micro-levels of second language development among Iranian students. English language teachers are encouraged to help learners develop critical reasoning and action strategies and provide an opportunity for learners to express their views critically on different topics covered by comedies. Learners can ask their own questions, have interactions together, and air their comments when they feel it is necessary. In fact, EFL teachers can integrate humor, especially sitcoms as one of the sub-classes of humor abundant with daily speech routines and cultural

references, into their lesson plans and course activities in order to raise their learners' awareness of thought-provoking societal issues and help them reflect on their own understanding. Also, humorous cartoons or scripts that include a series of humorous situations can be integrated in teaching and learning materials.

However, the scope of this study was delimited to Iranian EFL learners studying at private English language institutes. Accordingly, carrying out studies on the effectiveness of sitcoms in improving language learners' criticality in the context of Iranian schools and higher education can shed more light on the pedagogical roles of sitcoms in language education in Iran. While learners' attitudes towards the role of sitcoms in enhancing their critical reasoning and action skills were explored in the qualitative phase of the present study, further studies are needed to probe Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards the role of humor in general, and sitcoms in particular, to provide the opportunity for a comparative analysis of learners' and teachers' attitudes.

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Choice Theory-Based Instruction and Clinical Supervision Training Program for EFL Teachers: The Impact on Their Learners' Reading Comprehension and Autonomy

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision for EFL teachers on their students' autonomy and reading comprehension. To this end, a sample of 30 Iranian EFL teachers, selected based on their willingness to participate, were divided into two groups of 15: one group participated in a choice theory-based instruction program while the other underwent a clinical supervision program. In addition to the teachers, a sample of 445 intermediate EFL learners taught by the teachers participated in the study – 225 learners were taught by the teachers who underwent the choice theory-based instruction while the other 220 learners sat in the classes of the teachers undergoing clinical supervision. The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ) was used both as a pretest and posttest to measure the autonomy of the 445 learners before and after they were taught by the 30 teachers. In addition, a sample Preliminary English Test reading paper was administered to the

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learners prior to their classes (i.e., a general English class instructed through a commonplace task-based procedure) as a pretest and they also took another sample reading test as the posttest. The inferential statistics run in this study comprised two ANCOVAs with the results revealing that the learners being taught by the teachers who underwent the choice theory-based instruction outperformed the learners taught by those teachers who participated in the clinical supervision program in terms of both their autonomy and reading comprehension. The pedagogical implications of these findings are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: choice theory, clinical supervision, learner autonomy, reading comprehension

Introduction

Educational systems establish the ultimate goal of instilling the components of basic skills in learners to achieve success, develop actively, and strive for excellence in the learning process. To this end, the EFL literature is replete with various practical methods and innovative initiatives aimed at enhancing EFL learners' ability in all language skills. One such skill is reading comprehension which is generally considered to be one of the utmost important language skills proven to be challenging in EFL classrooms (Crossley & McNamara, 2016).

Accordingly, "Proficiency in reading is a key target of schooling and a major prerequisite for learning, both within and beyond the context of education" (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007, p. 70). It is probably true to assert that teaching reading comprehension requires more time and energy than any other skill (Nunan, 2001) while remaining cognizant of the fact that reading comprehension is one of the problematic areas for L2 learners (Dreyer & Nel, 2003); this is specifically why reading comprehension skill captures the attention of so many scholars and teachers in the process of language learning and language teaching with the trend of such studies being reported in the field not getting any fewer over time (e.g., Cain & Oakhill, 2009; Chen, 2018; Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Marashi & Mehdizadeh, 2018; Marashi & Rahimpanah, 2019; Nazari & Bagheri, 2014; Ravand, 2016).

The ultimate goal of any reading course is of course very much the

same as any other ELT course, that is the enhancement of autonomy among EFL learners, thus enabling them to continue improving their process of learning more independently. Broadly defined, learner autonomy is "the capacity to take control over one's own learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 2). Knowles (2001) further asserts that a specific goal of the educational setting is effecting change in individuals' attitudes in order to conceptualize learning as a lifelong process and self-directed skill.

Furthermore, Little (1995) argues that autonomous learners who accept responsibility for their own learning are more likely to achieve educational goals in such settings. In other words, autonomous learners are able to solve their learning problems and internalize language complexities (Sockett & Toffoli, 2012; Zarei et al., 2016). Given the significance of the construct, it is no surprise then that ample studies have been conducted on learner autonomy globally (e.g., Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Barrantes et al., 2013; Humphreys & Wayatt 2014, Lightbown & Spada, 2013, Sapan & Mede, 2022) and also within the context of Iran (e.g., Farivar & Rahimi, 2015; Gholami, 2016; Marashi & Khosh-Harf, 2020; Nazari, 2014; Shirzad & Ebadi, 2019).

Alongside the sizeable bulk of studies conducted on the effect of different methods and techniques on learners' achievement, teacher training courses designed to fulfill the latter goal are also extensively emphasized in the literature. One such procedure which is still very much innovative and novel in the ELT domain is choice theory-based instruction. Proposed by the renowned American psychiatrist Glasser (1998), choice theory which is a way to understand human personality and motivation tries to explain why people behave as they do and how they establish a relationship of trust with the people who are important to them. This psychological model is architected upon the premise that the human brain serves a primary function as a monitor which continually gets our feelings under control to determine whether our basic needs are met (Burdenski & Faulkner, 2010).

In this theory, Glasser (1998) postulates that behavior is a choice based on the five basic needs including survival, love and belonging, power,

freedom, and fun. Hence, the feelings of every individual are not entirely controlled by external circumstances. Accordingly, the power within each person enables them to respond to the physical and social environment and sheds light on people's behavior as they behave differently and attempts to elaborate on strengthening positive relationships with the people who seem highly important to them (Tracy, 2017). Choice theory has been applied in many studies around the world mostly with a psychological and psychotherapy orientation (e.g., Beebe & Robey, 2011; Cervantes & Robey, 2018; Fereidouni et al., 2019; Hosseini et al., 2017; Peterson, 2000).

Another rather innovative approach designed to improve teachers' classroom performance is clinical supervision which again has its roots in domains other than ELT. As a directive and nontraditional approach, clinical supervision goes through the three main steps of planning conference, classroom observation, and feedback conference (Acheson & Gall, 1992) where the clear reflections of the collected data during observations help teachers improve instructional practices and thus the quality of teaching (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Quite a considerable number of studies have been conducted on clinical supervision from a diverse range of backgrounds (Daresh, 2001; Faas et al., 2018; Gürsoy et al., 2016; Ibrahim, 2013; Kahyalar, & Yazici, 2016; Kayaoglu, 2012; Ozdemir, & Yirci, 2015; Papa, 2017).

Review of the Related Literature

Reading Comprehension

The reading skill is one of the fundamental functions of language learning in all human populations. It is considered as a mental process in which learners go through internally and it cannot be studied directly (Chen, 2018). Accordingly, readers construct meaning dynamically through the process of reading which is considered as a communication way (Sheng, 2000) with the writer and the prime goal is comprehension (Pressley, 2002).

Matas (2020) considered reading as a mode of nonverbal communication established between writers and readers through the interpretation, perception, and realization process. To this end, writers provide

readers with much opportunity to interact through printed materials (Hardy, 2016). In effect, people can obtain different information by reading different texts since this is the actual process of interacting between readers and writers over the nature of the psycholinguistic process of reading (Tanaka, 2017).

It goes without saying that reading is a multifaceted process and that readers need to scrutinize several different processes involved in reading in order to understand the text (Benson, 2009). In addition, reading as a complicated process encompasses a wide range of other processes (Hedge, 2000). It is no surprise then that traditional teaching techniques in reading comprehension do not necessarily solve learners' reading comprehension problems (Grabe, 2009; Hudson, 2007).

Learner Autonomy

Generally, the basis of learning is interaction with interdependence (Little, 2022). As Benson (2000) has pointed out, learner autonomy receives considerable impetus for teachers to attempt to create freedom of action in the learning environment. Therefore, teachers who recognize the importance of cooperation and developing goodwill in the learning context create an effective learning environment (Silver, 2010). Accordingly, scholars recommend that teachers give learners regulatory authority by assigning part of the class responsibility to them in order to have more active learners in the class (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003).

The concept of learner autonomy has been defined differently by various scholars throughout the times (Ramires, 2014; Reinders, 2016). Autonomous learners generally require to be reflective, self-aware, motivated, and proactive (Little, 2022). Furthermore, Demirtas and Sert (2010) mentioned that, "The autonomous learner is one who has the capacity to monitor their learning process and to achieve this, they can determine their own goal and define and follow the path toward them" (p. 160).

Moreover, autonomous learners can also be named as active learners who engage enthusiastically in the whole process of learning and indicate increasing willingness to take complete responsibility for their own learning (Little, 1995). To this end, Egel (2009) defines autonomous learners as active

agents willing to interact with the world and not those who simply allow the world to lay an impact on them. At the same time, teachers can play a decisive role in enhancing learner autonomy by adopting an autonomy-supportive style in the teaching environment rather than a controlling style; such an approach can serve instrumentally to foster learner autonomy (Katz & Shahar, 2015).

Choice Theory

Choice theory posits that all living organisms have a purpose internally driven by genetic instructions (Glasser, 1998). Elaborating on this internal motivation, Holmes (2008) maintains that all human behavior is chosen to meet one or more of the five basic needs (as discussed earlier: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun). To this end, choice theory is set versus external control psychology that explains human behavior as response to external stimuli: "The operating premise of external control psychology that applies would read: punish people who make wrong, so they do what we say it is good; then reward them to continue to do what we want them to" (Glasser, 2000, p. 15).

The human behaviors and the choices they make are aimed at aligning experiments with the *quality world* which is created in every human mind as an album of intellectual pictures about what they wish from birth to death (Wubbolding, 2010). Generally, one of the major concepts in choice theory is an emphasis on this quality world which is an important component of our perceived world. Our quality world as a unique and personal sphere is a type of mental mosaic in our minds to satisfy our basic needs and make us feel better (Peterson, 2000). This quality world contains pictures of things, people, activities, beliefs, and values that are most crucial to us (Glasser, 1999). To this end, the quality world is shaped, developed, and reconstructed in every individual's memory throughout their lives. It portrays the optimal path to satisfy one or more of those basic needs (Wubbolding, 2010).

Certain scholars claim that choice theory can be used as a framework to manage and modify people's challenging behaviors (e.g., Bechuke & Debeila, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 2000). To this end, choice theory has been employed by researchers to address such contexts, a few examples of which include: Holland

and Walker (2018) for conflict resolution, LaFond (2012) for improving unfavorable decisions, Valinezhad et al. (2015) for divorced women's self-efficacy, and Farhadi et al. (2020) on newly married women's marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction.

Other scholars have adopted choice theory in educational environments. For instance, Irvine (2015) reported a successful example of choice theory application among third-grade students while Badrkhani (2015) found that applying choice theory significantly increased adjustment among students. In turn, Kianipour and Hoseini (2012) showed the effectiveness of this theory on teaching and the improvement of students' academic qualification and Hardigree (2011) used choice theory to boost first-year biology students' motivation and engagement. In another study, Mirzaee Fandokht et al. (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of control and choice theory training on the reduction of high school students' academic burnout. Furthermore, Goguen (2017) developed the first online basic intensive training course to reach the global community in the realization of teaching the world choice theory.

Clinical Supervision

In a seminal work, Goldhammer (1969) – arguably the pioneer of clinical supervision – established a directive approach that meets all the characteristics required for responsibly and efficiently monitoring the work of teachers. Accordingly, clinical supervision can be defined as the phase of "instructional supervision which draws its data from first-hand observation of actual teaching events, and involves face-to face (and other supervision associated) interaction between the supervisor and teacher in the analysis of teaching behaviors and activities for the instructional improvement" (Goldhammer et al., 1980, p. 19).

As Smyth (1985) states, the importance and worth of each individual teacher is considered as the main value of the clinical supervision process and it is of crucial importance for teachers to participate in this process willingly and voluntarily to ascertain collaboration of teachers with supervisors. It is thus perhaps rightly emphasized that open, trusting, and flexible supervisory

relationships need to be sought among them in order to establish favorable moral integrity (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Through this modality, ultimate responsibility rests with the organizational leader-supervisors so as to create such relationships: "Leadership, then, is not mobilizing others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed" (Fullan, 2001, p.3).

Furthermore, Jones (1995) asserts that the clinical supervision cycle is generally considered as an in-service supervisory approach that in fact is a cyclic framework encompassing all the supervisory practices; formative teacher evaluation and observation, discussion and constructive feedback, and planning for improvement. Hence, rather than simply adhering to the praxis of scrutinizing and critiquing teachers, the clinical supervision cycle is a well-thought-out and purposeful intervention into the instructional process with the aim of enhancing teaching performance and quality in the working setting (Farhat, 2016).

The literature is perhaps replete with studies on the application of clinical supervision in educational settings. For instance, Nolan and Hoover (2004) reported the effectiveness of such a program in promoting reflection while Holland and Adams (2002) showed that the practice of clinical supervision improved teacher development considerably. Kholid and Rohmatika (2019) demonstrated the impact of clinical supervision on teacher performance. Interestingly, it is not just teachers who benefit from clinical supervision; Kayıkçı et al. (2017) and Khaef and Kariminia (2021) *inter alia* have reported the positive views of educational supervisors too regarding this mode of supervision.

Purpose of the Study

It is an indisputable given that ongoing research – both theoretical and practical – is an inevitable necessity to enhance EFL learners' reading skill and autonomy in the classroom environment. To this end, novel procedures seeking the aforesaid goal need to be investigated continuously thereby enabling an increasing awareness on the efficacy of these procedures. Such studies of course comprise a multiplicity of domains including teaching techniques,

learner styles, materials preparation, assessment, etc. One such domain bearing paramount importance is teacher education due to not only its immense practical effect on the learners' learning (Kehrwald, 2005) but also the general well-being and subsequently efficacy of teachers themselves (Pillay et al., 2005; Sharplin et al., 2011).

As detailed in the literature review section, choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision have been very scarcely applied within ELT. This scarcity is vividly observed more in the Iranian context as, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, only four studies have been reported on clinical supervision (i.e., Beh-Afarin & Dehghan Banadaki, 2013; Khaef & Kariminia, 2021; Marashi & Bani-Ardalani, 2017; Mehrabian et al., 2023) while two studies on choice theory-based instruction in ELT have been carried out: one by Marashi and Erami (2021) showing that this method could be applied to boost learners' vocabulary achievement while Naderi et al. (2018) concluded that this method enhances learners' self-efficacy. Accordingly, it appears that there is a need to conduct a study aiming at the comparison of the impact of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision for EFL teachers on learners' reading and autonomy.

With respect to the aforementioned purpose of the study, the following two research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a significant difference between the effect of clinical supervision and choice theory-based training program for EFL teachers on the autonomy of their learners?
2. Is there a significant difference between the effect of clinical supervision and choice theory-based training program for EFL teachers on the reading comprehension of their learners?

Method

Participants

This study consists of two categories of participants: teachers and the learners being taught by those teachers. In the first category, a total of 30 female university professors at Tehran's Alzahra University teaching general English courses who expressed an interest in participating in the program were

selected as the participant teachers of this study; these teachers had at least five years of teaching experience and held graduate/doctoral degrees in majors related to English. The 30 teachers aged 26-42 were divided into two groups of 15, each of whom underwent either of the treatments, i.e., choice theory-based instruction or clinical supervision.

In addition to the teacher participants, a sample of 445 female intermediate EFL learners taking general English courses at the same university and studying in the classes taught by the 30 teachers with their ages ranging from 18 to 20 participated in the study. These participants were selected through nonrandom convenience sampling. Out of the above total, 225 learners were taught by the 15 teachers who had undergone the choice theory treatment while 220 learners participated in the classes held by the 15 teachers receiving the clinical surveillance program. The assignment of both the teachers and the learners into the groups was done randomly.

Instrumentations and Materials

Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ). In order to measure the degree of the student participants' autonomy in learning both prior to the study and after the treatment as a posttest, the Zhang and Li (2004) questionnaire including 21 questions in the Likert scale (1 = Never True, 2 = Rarely True, 3 = Sometimes True, 4 = Mostly True, 5 = Always True) was used by the researchers. This is a highly valid instrument (Dafei, 2007) tapping general autonomy. The time allotted to complete this instrument was 15 minutes.

Reading Pretest and Posttest. A sample Preliminary English Test (PET) reading paper was administered to EFL learners participating in this study as the pretest. This test included 35 items in five parts and the time allotted was 40 minutes which was used to determine the learners' reading ability at the outset. Another sample PET reading paper was administered as the posttest.

Procedure

Choice Theory-Based Instruction. The 15 teachers who comprised this experimental group underwent four 90-minute training sessions on choice-theory based instruction. The goal of this treatment was for the teachers to

become acquainted with this mode of instruction and consequently apply it in their own classrooms. It has to be noted that the model of the instruction employed in this study was adopted in its entirety from Marashi and Erami (2021) with only few minor alterations.

In the opening session, the trainer – one of the researchers – explained to the 15 teachers the importance of making a list of objectives for the course based on mutual goals in order to cater for the learners' needs of power and belonging. In this way, they would collaboratively develop a holistic long-term lesson plan for the whole semester so that the learners would feel involved. In addition, the teacher would have to work to expand the lesson plan into a more detailed format for each session. During this session, the trainer explained the concept of Glasser's (1998) quality world to the teachers and told them how they need to convey to the learners that part of all individual or group assignments is assessing the quality of their work. As Glasser (2000) suggests, students' learning activities in the classroom starts from internal locus rather than external control. In this view, learning becomes part of their quality world.

In the second session, the trainer provided the 15 teachers with the concept of the real world (reality) and the perceived world (perception) and demonstrated how it would give them a true understanding of the value of things that have been learned. This discussion guided them in the development of holding better perceptions of the real and the perceived world. Beside the two mentioned worlds, this session prepared the teachers to comprehend a process that happens continuously in the brain which is labeled the comparing place. Life experience allows a constant comparison between what the individual wants with what they actually have. Accordingly, they would learn to create a balance between these two in order to feel fine and satisfied in any environment.

In the third session, the trainer introduced the concept of total behavior to the teacher participants so that they would understand how four components (thinking, feeling, acting, and body physiology) are active and present all the time by teaching them that each behavior is a choice. They went through the related activities to be applied in the classroom considering the five

basic needs described below. It is highly recommended by Glasser (1998) that the learning context should provide learners with some classroom activities so as to meet their basic needs as a source of all human motivation.

- *Fun:* The learners' need for fun should be met in the learning context. In order to bring laughter and fun to the learning context, the teacher can use different games (e.g., those presented at http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Jones-LessonslntoGames.html) to teach them the text each session.
- *Power:* Power is defined as the sense of competence, achievement, and the need to be listened to and have a sense of self-worth (Glasser, 2000); accordingly, the teachers were advised to make a list of objectives with the learners in each class to display competence and achievement and also to have a sense of self-worth. In this case, a reading text would be assigned to learners by the teacher and the learners would assess each other's comprehension and assess its quality through peer-scaffolding.
- *Love and belonging:* The need for love and belonging includes building relationships between the students and the teacher, social connections, reciprocal affection, and being part of a group. Engaging the learners in team building activities so as to feel being part of a group would be an example of a caring learning environment. While these tasks would be in process during teamwork, the students would validate each other's work and feelings by addressing problems.
- *Freedom:* The essence of the need for freedom is making wise choices (Glasser, 1998). To help learners feel autonomous, two metacognitive strategies based on Lovett's (2008) classification including planning success and setting goals and monitoring would be introduced.
- *Survival:* In order to prevent neglecting the learners' need for survival which includes not only physical comfort but also psychological component needs, the teacher would allow them to have light snacks and drinks whenever they wished inside the class. Also, the learners could be allowed to stand up in class whenever they feel tired provided

that they would not block anyone's view.

During the fourth session, there was an open discussion among the trainer and the teachers regarding any point needing further clarification and disambiguation. There were also further hints and points on how to develop and utilize choice theory-based instruction and strategies to be used in their classrooms.

Clinical Supervision. The other 15 teachers who comprised this experimental group underwent the clinical supervision program by the trainer (one of the researchers) while they were teaching their classes comprising the 220 learners who were part of the learner participants in this study. The goal of this treatment was to investigate how such a supervision would impact the learning outcomes of the learners in their own classrooms. It has to be noted that the model of clinical supervision employed in this study was adopted in its entirety with few minor alterations from Marashi and Bani-Ardalani (2017).

At the beginning, the trainer – who served as the supervisor of the 15 teachers in this program – explained the three steps of pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation feedback conference of the program. The teachers were briefed about the purpose and procedure of each step of the observation sessions to record every single event happening in the class to be analyzed and interpreted with the aim of helping the improvement of their teaching habits.

The supervisor/researcher subsequently created a group on WhatsApp to manage the teachers and their observation schedules. Furthermore, relevant ELT articles, books, teaching tips, short clips on different teaching areas, and helpful strategies were uploaded. The teachers were also asked to share their ideas, teaching experiences, problematic areas in and outside the class, and feelings about the whole process of clinical supervision in an anxiety-free ambience. This group made them feel as if they were members of a family where they could share with no fear of being screened or judged.

Based on the arrangements made in the WhatsApp group, the researcher/supervisor created a timetable for observing the teachers' classes. Prior to the observations, the pre-observation conferences were held for each

teacher individually. The length of these pre- observation conferences ranged from 20 to 30 minutes. During these pre-observation sessions, an atmosphere of teacher empowerment and support was created. The teachers were the leaders and the researcher/supervisor acted as a facilitator and both collaboratively agreed upon the method and what to be observed. The researcher/supervisor also asked some questions to clarify what the teacher had in mind for the observation session. These questions referred to the type of the data to be recorded such as students' behaviors and movement patterns, methods of recording the data, and steps to be taken in the following post-observation session.

For a period of 12 weeks, the researcher/supervisor observed the 15 teachers. Three observations were done for each teacher and three feedback sessions were held individually after each observation session. The researcher/supervisor recorded the voice of the class of the teachers with their consent in order to have a clearer picture to be discussed in post-observation sessions. The teachers were fully aware that some of the information of these recordings would be transcribed and were used only for the purpose of analyzing the working environment. During the observation, the supervisor/researcher also took some notes of the areas to be discussed in the post-observation conference.

Following each observation session, the researcher/supervisor analyzed the data collected and developed a plan to be discussed by her in the post-observation conference. The researcher/supervisor highlighted the most important concerns to be addressed in the conference through preparing the following questions:

- How do you feel about your working environment? Does it affect your working life?
- What kinds of situations do you find particularly emotionally demanding in teaching and in what ways?
- Can you give an example of a difficult interaction with a student or other teachers?
- Have you ever been subjected to verbal abuse by a student, parent, or

other teachers?

- Is there anything outside of the working environment that affects your working life?
- Do you feel burdened by preparing for classes?
- Have you experienced any physical symptoms that might relate to your daily working life such as tiredness?

During the post-conference sessions, the researcher/supervisor and each teacher critically examined and discussed the problems related to the students (mentioned earlier) to determine an approach which could reduce the burden of the problems. The length of these sessions ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. In these post-conference sessions, the teachers' needs were addressed through a mutual understanding of the problems and also the reflection process.

Participant Teachers' Instruction. As noted earlier, the 30 teachers who underwent either of the two treatments also taught a total of 445 learners. The learners in both groups sat for the two pretests – autonomy and reading – as described earlier before they were taught by the 30 teachers. All the classes were taught through a conventional task-based teaching program in line with the policies of the educational establishment. At the end of this instruction period, all the 445 learners sat for the autonomy and reading posttests (again as described earlier).

It should be noted here that the instruction procedure of the aforesaid learners was not the focus of this study; rather, the two programs of clinical supervision and choice theory were the independent variables. To this end, the researchers deliberately avoided any intervention regarding the actual teaching of the teachers as the latter was not the independent variable and thus not the treatment in this study. As explained earlier, this research was designed and implemented to investigate the impact of the two programs for teachers on the reading performance and autonomy of the EFL learners that they taught.

Results

Pretests

Prior to the commencement of the treatment for the teachers, two

pretests were administered to the learners who were to participate in those teachers' classes. The descriptive statistics of these administrations appear in separate sections below.

Learner Autonomy Pretest. Once the two experimental groups of the EFL learners participating in the classes taught by teachers who had undergone the choice theory-based instruction (CT) and the teachers under the clinical supervision program (CS) were put in place (225 in the CT group and 220 in the CS group), the learner autonomy questionnaire was administered as the first pretest in this study. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for this pretest administration. The mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 64.89 and 3.33, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 63.64 and 3.17, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (0.146 / 0.162 = 0.901 and 0.082 / 0.164 = 0.500). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.89 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CT group	225	29	87	64.89	3.327	.146	.162
CS group	220	35	88	63.64	3.167	.082	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Learners' Reading Pretest. Following the administration of the learner autonomy pretest, the reading comprehension test was administered as the second pretest. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for this pretest. The mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 17.02 and 3.10, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 16.84 and 3.02, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (1.704 and 0.982). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this

administration was 0.91 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CT group	225	10	27	17.02	3.100	.276	.162
CS group	220	9	25	16.84	3.019	.161	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Posttests

Following the termination of the classes taught by the teachers, the two posttests were administered to the learners with details of the descriptive statistics presented below.

Learner Autonomy Posttest. As displayed in Table 3, the mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 73.65 and 3.87, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 64.46 and 4.41, respectively. The skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range (1.741 and 0.414) too.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CT group	225	31	90	73.65	3.868	.282	.162
CS group	220	37	89	64.46	4.411	.068	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.88 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Learners' Reading Posttest. The final administration in this study was the reading comprehension posttest for the learners in both groups. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for this administration: the mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 25.80 and 3.28, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 20.82 and 3.22, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range (-0.883 and 1.317). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.91 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CT group	225	16	35	25.80	3.276	-.143	.162
CS group	220	13	30	20.82	3.219	.216	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Following the administration of the posttests as detailed above, the researcher set out to test the two null hypotheses of the study, each of which is discussed separately below. As this study adopted a pretest-posttest design, both hypotheses were tested through an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for each.

Testing the First Null Hypothesis. In order to test the first null hypothesis, i.e., whether there was a significant difference in the degree of the two groups of learners' autonomy as a result of the treatment for their teachers, another ANCOVA was run on both groups' scores on the autonomy pre- and posttest. First, the prerequisites for running this parametric test are discussed.

To begin with, all sets of scores of course enjoyed normalcy as demonstrated earlier (Tables 1 and 2); hence, this prerequisite was met. Secondly, the Levene's test was run and the variances were not significantly different [$F_{(1,443)}$ = 68.291, p = 0.224 > 0.05]. Thirdly, as one covariate is being investigated (autonomy pretest), the third assumption of the correlation among covariates did not apply in this case. As for linearity, Figure 1 demonstrates that the general distribution of the scores is very much linear.

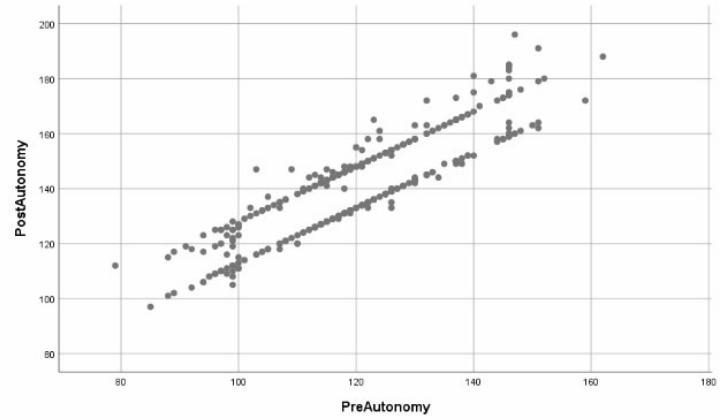

Figure 1

Scatterplot of the Linearity of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Pretest and Posttest

Finally, Table 5 shows that the interaction (i.e. Group * Autonomy Pretest) is 0.176 which is larger than 0.05 thus indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes has not been violated in this set of scores.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	124864.803[a]	3	41621.601	6871.292	.112	.979
Intercept	1362.588	1	1362.588	224.949	.000	.338
Group	92.026	1	92.026	15.193	.099	.033
Pretest	98914.541	1	98914.541	16329.757	.000	.974
Group * Autonomy Pretest	105.082	1	105.082	17.348	.176	.038
Error	2671.277	441	6.057			
Total	8992356.000	445				
Corrected Total	127536.081	444				

[a]. R Squared = 0.979 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.979)

With the above assumptions in place, running an ANCOVA was legitimized. According to Table 6, the autonomy pretest scores (the covariate in the model) were significant (F = 15778.830, p = 0.0001 < 0.05) thus demonstrating that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their autonomy. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (the autonomy pretest) and the dependent variable (the autonomy posttest) while controlling for the independent variable (F = 4515.996, p = 0.0001 < 0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference between the impact of clinical supervision and choice theory-based instruction for EFL teachers on the autonomy of the EFL learners' participating in those teachers' classes was rejected with those in the CT group who gained a higher mean (Table 3) bearing a significantly higher degree of autonomy than those in the CS group. Furthermore, the effect size was 0.911 which is reckoned a strong effect size by Larson-Hall (2010).

Table 6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	124759.722[a]	2	62379.861	9930.955	.000	.978
Intercept	1344.282	1	1344.282	214.012	.000	.326
Autonomy Pretest	99109.612	1	99109.612	15778.380	.000	.973
Group	28366.578	1	28366.578	4515.996	.000	.911
Error	2776.359	442	6.281			
Total	8992356.000	445				
Corrected Total	127536.081	444				

[a]. R Squared = .978 (Adjusted R Squared = .978)

Testing the Second Null Hypothesis. In order to test the second null hypothesis, i.e., whether there were a significant difference in the degree of the two groups of learners' reading comprehension as a result of the treatment for their teachers, another ANCOVA was run on both groups' scores on the reading pre- and posttest. Again, the prerequisites for running this parametric test are discussed. First and foremost, all sets of scores of course enjoyed normalcy as demonstrated earlier (Tables 2 and 4); hence, this prerequisite was met. Secondly, the Levene's test shows that the variances were not significantly different: $F_{(1,443)} = 2.973$, $p = 0.085 > 0.05$.

Similar to the previous case, as one covariate is being investigated (reading pretest), the third assumption of the correlation among covariates did not apply in this case. Regarding linearity, Figure 2 demonstrates that the general distribution of the scores is again very much linear.

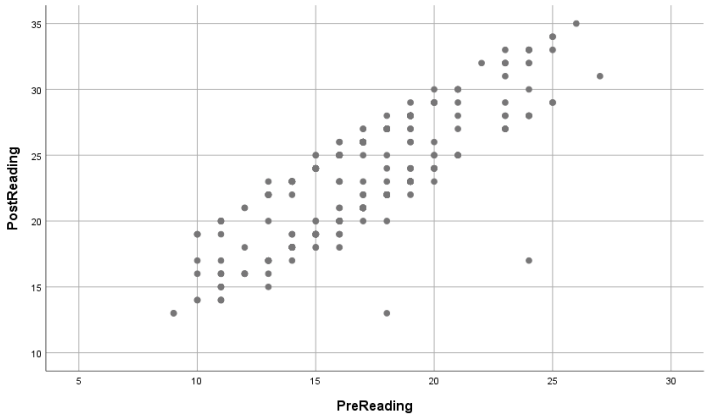

Figure 2

Scatterplot of the Linearity of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Pretest and Posttest

Lastly, Table 7 shows that the interaction (i.e. Group * Reading Pretest) is 0.581 which is larger than 0.05 thus indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes has not been violated in this set of scores.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6949.236[a]	3	2316.412	2128.762	.000	.935
Intercept	553.738	1	553.738	508.880	.000	.536
Group	70.624	1	70.624	64.903	.000	.128
Pretest	4184.246	1	4184.246	3845.284	.000	.897
Group * Reading Pretest	.332	1	.332	.305	.581	.001
Error	479.874	441	1.088			
Total	249738.000	445				
Corrected Total	6949.236[a]	3	2316.412	2128.762	.000	.935

[a]. R Squared = 0.935 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.935)

With the above assumptions in place, running an ANCOVA was legitimized.

Table 8

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6948.904[a]	2	3474.452	3198.018	.000	.935
Intercept	553.438	1	553.438	509.406	.000	.535
Reading Pretest	4193.117	1	4193.117	3859.505	.000	.897
Group	2555.377	1	2555.377	2352.067	.000	.842
Error	480.206	442	1.086			
Total	249738.000	445				
Corrected Total	7429.110	444				

[a]. R Squared = .935 (Adjusted R Squared = .935)

According to Table 8, the reading pretest scores (the covariate in the model) were significant (F = 3859.505, p = 0.0001 < 0.05) thus demonstrating that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their reading. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (the reading pretest) and the dependent variable (the reading posttest) while controlling for the independent variable (F = 2352.067, p = 0.0001 < 0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference between the impact of clinical supervision and choice theory-based instruction for EFL teachers on the reading comprehension of the EFL learners' participating in those teachers' classes was rejected with those in the CT group who gained a higher mean (Table 4) bearing a significantly higher degree of reading comprehension than those in the CS group. Furthermore, the effect size was 0.842 which is reckoned a strong effect size by Larson-Hall (2010).

Discussion

In recent years, there have been studies demonstrating that choice theory generally bears a positive impact on the outcomes of learning and

therapy treatments (e.g., Beebe & Robey 2011; Bilodeau, 2010; Mateo et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2011; Valinezhad et al., 2015). Additionally, numerous studies have indicated the positive impact of choice theory on learning achievements and the improvement of students' academic qualification (e.g., Glanz 2018; Holland & Walker 2018; Irvine 2015; Mirzaee Fandokht et al. 2014; Naderi et al., 2018).

As shown through the above data analysis, applying choice theory-based instruction had a significant effect on EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension. In other words, the application of choice theory in the educational context, applying the caring habits fully described in detail earlier, catering for learners' basic needs in the classroom and establishing need-satisfying activities so as to meet their quality world in real life, as well as using the axioms of choice theory improved EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension.

A plethora of studies have been conducted in the field of psychology and application of choice theory-based instruction in different environments with positive reported results. One such study was conducted by Bechuke and Debeila (2012), who concluded that the challenging behaviors of learners can be managed and modified through the application of choice theory. In another study, Badrkhani (2015) states that using choice theory is effective in increasing learners' adjustment in group counseling and their emotional, social, and general transitions. Furthermore, Shafi Abadi et al.(2010) indicated that using choice theory has positive results on enhancing learners' adjustment.

The findings of this study also proved that clinical supervision of teachers enabled them to enhance EFL learners' autonomy and reading (albeit to a lesser degree compared with choice theory-based instruction). This result is perhaps consistent with that of many studies, such as those reported earlier in this paper demonstrating the positive impact of clinical supervision in both psychological and educational in contexts (e.g., Abbott & Carter, 1985; Alba Papa, 2017; Gürsoy et al., 2016; Kahyalar & Yazici, 2016; Rodgers & Ketl, 2007). To this end, Marashi and Bani-Ardalani (2017) reported that clinical supervision lowered significantly EFL teachers' level of burnout. Beh-Afarin

and Dequan Banadaki (2013) also demonstrated that teachers' sense of efficacy was significantly enhanced as a result of implementing a clinical supervision program. The consistency perhaps lies in the fact that clinical supervision is conducted in an interactive manner in comparison with traditional methods of supervision.

The findings of the present study are supported by Marashi and Erami (2021) who suggest that choice theory-based instruction had a significantly positive effect on EFL learners' vocabulary. Applying choice theory in the classroom creates a supportive, stimulating, and protected environment for learners in which EFL learners demonstrate a sense of competence, assume power, achieve freedom, and enjoy themselves in a safe, comfortable, secure, and friendly environment as well as increasing the level of learning and being able to connect closely. The rationale underlying this fact is that perhaps choice theory-based instruction is designed to facilitate the grounds for the learners to exchange their ideas to achieve their stated goals in a nonthreatening setting.

Furthermore, Hardigree (2011) suggested that student motivation and engagement will increase with the application of choice theory in the classroom while Moshiri Farahi et al. (2014) stress that choice theory has an important role in effective learning because of considering need and relationships in all human activities. Choice theory approaches contribute to the promotion of EFL learners' immense success in the learning environment while also exerting autonomy support and major achievement; Baezzat and Motaghedifard (2019) assert that learners' autonomy is increased as a result of applying choice theory in group sessions.

It may be safely concluded that since learners' basic needs of freedom, power, belonging, and fun were met in the classroom through a choice theory-based instruction, their autonomy and reading comprehension improved considerably. Additionally, this theory assists learners with feeling self-satisfied when they meet their basic needs, foster friendship, and build a sense of community in the classroom and thus promote the quality of classroom activities.

The fact of matter is that perhaps choice theory-based instruction

provides an environment in which learners feel comfortable and actively engaged in comparison to many other instructions of the teaching process to be followed by the teachers. The researchers vividly observed in the classes throughout the instruction period that choice theory-based instruction goes through a step-by-step process to help learners be able to accomplish the tasks successfully, to facilitate the learning process effectively, to take control over their learning, and to become responsible for their own learning. Additionally, in the investigation led by Kianipour and Hoseini (2012), it is expressed that removing the existing psychological and emotional barriers in the classroom is of crucial importance due to its effect on learners' achievement and success. It remains imperative that teachers handle this difficult role well by carrying out challenging tasks for real life activity.

In sum, the attitude and practice of the teachers who underwent the choice theory program encouraged the learners to feel that their teachers are supporting, motivating, listening, accepting, trusting, and respecting so they put them in their quality world as the most important people and build and develop relationship with them so as to learn and achieve their basic needs. Consequently, more willingness to learn and satisfy basic needs, growing satisfaction among learners, and mutual trust were witnessed among this group of learners. The foundational tenets of choice theory-based instruction including identifying relationship problems, understanding diverse viewpoints, participation in group activities, and feeling belonged to a group were taken into consideration in the case of EFL learners to take charge of their learning; applying and using the above principles and methods in the process of teaching could enhance students' alacrity and participation in the learning process as well as encouraging them to feel involved and valued which noticeably increased their confidence in producing the language.

Conclusion

The present study has implications in several aspects regarding the productive application of choice theory in the educational environment. The findings of the study can, to a large extent, contribute to both teachers as well

as syllabus designers' effective use of choice theory in their teaching program in practice.

The environment of a choice theory-based class provides a need satisfying atmosphere to meet their basic needs. Teachers can benefit from the findings of the study as they can implement choice theory-based instruction to foster learners' autonomy, leading to more achievement in the classroom. Since most teachers are aiming at better teaching, they can apply choice theory-based instruction in their classes to boost the learners' achievement, involvement, and practice in the classroom which may help the learners become autonomous and creative.

Choice theory could be introduced into the ELT programs of teaching training centers so as to familiarize teachers with its concept, techniques, and methodology. Such training could be done for teachers who are engaged in the teaching and learning process in the form of in-service courses as well as those who are being trained to become teachers. In addition, this specific psychological approach to teaching suggests greater involvement in the decision-making process in class and need satisfying.

Furthermore, teachers can benefit from the positive results of this study as they can apply this psychological theory in their classes to observe the learners' willingness to participate in classroom activities, to share their feelings openly, to involve them in lesson plan designing, and to facilitate interaction through which effective learning would occur. Teachers who join the choice theory program experience a good relationship with their students as these programs allow teachers to care and to satisfy basic needs. As a result, they benefit from specific patterns of interaction in the classroom.

Syllabus designers are also the beneficiaries of the present study. In fact, they can incorporate choice theory principles and axioms to develop and design the course syllabus according to its approaches to be applied by English teachers. Materials could focus on methods to meet learners' basic needs, to foster learners' interaction and their engagement which can be fulfilled by the application of choice theory-based instruction in the syllabus. Syllabus designers could also use choice theory programs in designing training courses

and curricula for teachers and trainers to establish a positive relationship between teachers and students and promote learning in EFL contexts. These courses can also build up complete trust among students. In addition, teaching courses based on choice theory instruction encourages teachers to work on caring habits in their classes to get better results. Also syllabus designers may design *seven* caring habit courses as well as *seven* deadly habit courses (Glasser, 1999) which could help both teachers and students recognize and cope with their strange behavior practically.

In the process of conducting this study, certain limitations were at work; accordingly, the researchers suggest the following studies to possibly address those limitations thereby expanding the power to generalize the findings.

1) Male language learners can also be studied to investigate the effect of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision on EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension.
2) This study can be conducted on other language proficiency levels of EFL learners.
3) This research was focused on only one component of the language, namely reading. To, this end, the study could be conducted on other language skills and components to see whether the same positive outcomes would be obtained or not.
4) The learners in this research were aged 18 to 20. The same study can be carried out with different age cohorts to see whether age is also a variable or not when it comes to assessing the efficacy of choice theory-based instruction.
5) Learner autonomy is a construct which by its very nature develops over a relatively long period of time. To this end, studies with a longer duration than one-semester interventions could be conducted to see whether the results would be different.

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EFL Learners' Goal Orientation, Willingness to Communicate, Listening Anxiety, and Listening Comprehension Ability: Path Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigated the interrelationship among EFL learners' goal orientations, willingness to communicate (WTC), listening anxiety, and listening comprehension. Two-hundred participants, selected through convenience sampling procedure from private language institutes, completed the following questionnaires: Goal Orientation Questionnaire section of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1991), WTC Questionnaire (Cao & Philip, 2006), and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (Kim, 2000). The listening section of the IELTS exam was also utilized for measuring the participants' listening comprehension ability. First, a hypothesized model was tested through the AMOS program. The results revealed that all the variables in the study were positively correlated with L2 listening comprehension except for L2 listening anxiety and performance goal orientation, which were negatively correlated with L2 listening comprehension. Moreover, it was found that mastery goal orientation was the strongest predictor of the dependent variable. Then, the revised model for the

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interrelationship among the variables was presented. The results showed that both psychological and cognitive variables could have crucial roles in EFL learners' success in learning listening comprehension ability. The implications of the study are discussed in the text.

Keywords: goal orientation, listening anxiety, listening comprehension, WTC

Introduction

Listening comprehension is a fundamental skill in the process of language learning. It empowers learners to comprehend the spoken discourse of the target language and contributes to the development of other language skills (Rost, 2002). However, despite the complicated nature of listening comprehension, it has remained one of the most underexplored areas of investigation (Vandergrift, 2007).

Recently, researchers in the field of second language (L2) learning have focused on understanding the factors underpinning successful L2 listening comprehension (e.g., Wallace & Lee, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2020). According to Rubin (1994), there are five groups of factors that subserve L2 listening comprehension: Text characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, and listener characteristics as well as process characteristics. Considering the significance of learners' individual differences (ID) in L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2005), this study aims to explore learners' IDs in listening comprehension. Research in this area of inquiry has remained largely underexplored compared with studies on IDs in other skills, such as reading comprehension (Andringa et al., 2012). Still another factor that motivated us to conduct the current study was the fact that improving L2 listening comprehension has been shown to be quite challenging for EFL learners.

In the process of listening comprehension, several factors, including ID factors, such as goal orientation, WTC, and listening anxiety have been found to be influential (e.g., Ballesteros Muñoz & Tutistar Jojoa, 2014; Geitza et al., 2016; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2021). Goal orientation, in particular, has shown to be an essential factor in academic performance (Hulleman et al., 2010) that might illuminate psychological processes that generate achievement behavior. It can also encourage educators to develop proper practices in the classrooms to

promote the learning process. In fact, goal orientation in its hierarchical conceptualization has been defined by Elliot and Church (1997) as, ''cognitive-dynamic manifestations of two underlying competence-relevant motives – the need for achievement and the need to avoid failure'' (p. 219).

Also, WTC has been identified to be the first priority over other goals of language instruction (MacIntyre et al., 1998) because higher levels of WTC help language learners to interact more, and thus this increased interaction leads to the development of language learning (Kang, 2005; Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008). In conceptualizing WTC, McCroskey and Baer (1985) made a distinction between trait level and situational level WTC. The trait level WTC indicates individuals' stable personalities without any change in different contexts, while the situational level WTC is considered to be a situation-specific factor that is based on a specific context that fluctuates in various situations (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Among various ID factors involved in L2 listening comprehension, listening anxiety in particular seems to have been of paramount importance (Gregersen, 2005; Oxford, 1999) and the relationships between listening anxiety and listening comprehension have been of concern for decades. However, regarding the relationship between listening anxiety and listening comprehension, contradictory results have been observed (Xu & Huang, 2018; Wang & Cha, 2019; Liu &Yuan, 2021; Zhou, 2021). Zhang (2013) suggested that such discrepant findings could be attributed to the situation-specific nature of listening anxiety.

One of the merits of the present study that distinguishes it from previous studies is that while the majority of previous relevant studies are simple correlational studies in nature, the current study employed SEM, which is a more sophisticated statistical technique for data analysis. This is particularly important since advanced statistical modeling techniques can better reveal the underlying structural interrelationships among ID variables and listening comprehension ability.

Still more, only a limited number of previous studies have investigated the simultaneous correlation among the aforementioned variables with EFL

learners' listening comprehension abilities. Thus, the general purpose of this study was to fill this gap and to explore the potential association of EFL learners' goal-orientation, WTC, and listening anxiety with listening comprehension using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

Literature Review

Goal Orientation

Achievement goal is an important factor in academic performance and has been taken into serious account in educational research (Hulleman et al., 2010). This concept has been defined and classified by several researchers. For instance, Hulleman et al. (2010) defined it as "a future-focused cognitive representation that guides behavior to a competence-related end state that the individual is committed to either approach or avoid" (p. 423). There are two main types of goals that individuals pursue in any learning environment: mastery goals and performance goals (Ames & Ames, 1984). A mastery goal is pertinent to the individuals' tendency to master new skills and develop their competence. However, students with performance goals try to present their competence to other individuals. Elliot and McGregor (2001) further proposed a multifaceted approach to goal orientation in which mastery goal orientation is divided into mastery approach and mastery avoidance. Similarly, Elliot and Trash (2001) suggested a 2 × 2 conceptualization, i.e., mastery-approach, mastery- avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goals. Mastery-approach goal orientation refers to trying to enhance skills, abilities, and learning while mastery- avoidance goal orientation prevents a decline in skill. Likewise, performance-approach goal orientation refers to the demonstration of higher ability to others while performance-avoidance goal orientation prevents worse performance (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

Totally, it can be claimed that goal orientation is the primary lens through which teachers can observe students' progress (Meece et al., 2006). Goal orientation is also regarded as an essential factor in determining tasks for learners (Geitza et al., 2016). According to Geitza et al. (2016), when assigning

learning tasks to students, teachers should consider students' goal orientation for obtaining skill and knowledge since it is one of the crucial conditions for effective learning.

To explore the relationship between SMART goal setting (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based) and learning English regarding foreign language learners' self-efficacy belief in listening, Ballesteros Muñoz and Tutistar Jojoa (2014) studied seventh and ninth grade students of two schools in Colombia. The findings of the study illustrated that self-efficacy was highly linked to goal setting, which, in turn, improved learners' listening comprehension and motivation; therefore, it was recommended that goal setting training be incorporated into the EFL learners' syllabi.

Moreover, employing a sample of 88 university students, Pulkka and Niemivirta (2013) examined the correlation among goal orientations, course evaluations and performance. The results obtained from their study indicated that there was a positive relationship between mastery-intrinsic goal orientation and students' course evaluations. However, no significant correlation between mastery-intrinsic goal orientation and performance was revealed. It was also found that performance-approach orientation had a negative correlation with students' course evaluations. In sum, their study found that goal orientations influenced both course evaluations and performance.

More recently, Karbakhsh and Ahmadi Safa (2020) explored the association of the structural patterns of cognitive and psychological factors, such as basic psychological needs satisfaction, goal-orientation, WTC, learning strategy use and self-efficacy with L2 achievement. The findings revealed a correlation between goal orientation, learning strategy use, self-efficacy, and L2 achievement. Additionallly, goal orientation was found to be the strongest predictor of L2 achievement. In another study, Fang et al. (2019) investigated the effect of performance goal orientation on competence restoration. The results revealed that performance-oriented individuals had lower autonomous motivation to fulfill the task. This finding indicates that higher performance-oriented individuals might prevent competence restoration. Moreover, Magni

et al. (2021) explored the correlation between goal orientation and performance and self-efficacy as a mediator of the reciprocal relationship. The findings revealed positive reciprocal correlations between goal orientation and performance and that self-efficacy moderated the related reciprocal relationship.

Also, Janke (2022) explored the association of basic psychological needs with the development of learning goal orientation through a longitudinal survey study. Parallel-process modeling showed stable associations between need satisfaction and students' learning goal orientations.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

WTC has been defined as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). L1WTC is claimed to be a stable construct, whereas L2WTC is said to be a flexible one that constantly changes (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). L2WTC is generally under the influence of communicative competence and communicative apprehension. Communicative competence is pertinent to an individual's own self-confidence in L2 communication which has a strong positive relationship with WTC (Öz, et al., 2015). Communicative apprehension, on the other hand, is related to the level of anxiety in the process of L2 communication which is negatively correlated with WTC (Yashima, 2012).

Although WTC itself might be affected by other variables like types of feedback (Ghahari & Piruznejad, 2016), it could play a key role in the ability to communicate in L2 learning. In the field of L2 learning research, WTC has been extensively studied as an essential factor that is involved in the L2 learning process (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). Bernales (2016), for instance, did a mixed-method investigation to explore a more extensive understanding of students' WTC in the classroom. He collected data through a survey questionnaire, classroom observation, and an interview with students for 15 weeks. The statistical analysis showed that the average percentages for TRC-P (thoughts related to the class that students predicted they would articulate) increased while the average percentages for TRC-A (thoughts related to the class that students reported to have articulated) decreased from classroom

meeting 1 to classroom meeting 4. The results of the qualitative analysis showed that a decrease in the articulation of classroom-related thoughts might be associated with the increase in the reported articulation of thoughts in the L2. In other words, the increase in L2 articulation during the semester was attributed to L2 speaking goals and self-confidence.

Additionally, Zangoei and Derakhshan (2021) studied the role of language proficiency, self-regulated learning in listening (SRLL), and WTC in Pragmatic Listening Comprehension (PLC). In order to conduct the study, a group of 269 upper-intermediate and advanced level Iranian EFL learners were requested to answer the 40-item pragmatic multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT), as well as the valid and reliable questionnaires of SRLL and WTC. The findings indicated that PLC was significantly correlated with language proficiency, SRLL, and WTC. Also, these findings were confirmed in the path analysis model that indicated language proficiency, SRLL, and WTC were significantly predicted PLC.

However, in another study carried out by Joe et al. (2017) to investigate the correlation among the social climate of the classroom, motivation, WTC, and L2 achievement, it was shown that L2 achievement could not be predicted by WTC. Furthermore, Zhou et al. (2020) focused on the correlation between L2 competence and WTC on the one hand, and the moderating effect of foreign language anxiety (FLA) on the relationship between L2 competence and WTC on the other hand. The results showed that there was a strong correlation between L2 competence and WTC and that FLA moderated the relationship between WTC and L2 competence. In the Iranian context, Mahmoodi and Moazam (2014) investigated the association of WTC and L2 proficiency among Iranian students learning Arabic as a foreign language and showed that there was a significant correlation between participants' Arabic proficiency levels and their WTC.

Additionally, Wang et al. (2021) investigated the structural correlation between class social climate, language mindset, academic emotions (i.e., enjoyment, pride, anxiety, and boredom), and L2WTC in and out of classroom. The findings showed that the effects of classroom social climate on L2WTC

were mediated by the four academic emotions (i.e., enjoyment, pride, anxiety, and boredom). Soyoof (2022) also explored factors that have influenced Iranian EFL learners' WTC in an extramural digital (ED) context through interview. In this study, four broad sources, including educational practices, interpersonal variables, affective variables, and social variable were all found as factors influencing students' L2WTC.

Listening Anxiety

Foreign Language Anxiety is defined as "…fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language" (Oxford, 1999, p. 59). Additionally, it is possible to define L2 anxiety with reference to the language skills, i.e. reading, writing, etc. Although listening plays a crucial role in achieving mutual understanding because one cannot sustain a conversation without understanding what s/he is being said, listening may also lead to high levels of anxiety. Krashen (1985) states that listening is often referred to as an anxiety-provoking skill, particularly when the text is incomprehensible to the listener. Accordingly, L2 listening anxiety is the listener's apprehension and uneasiness as a result of not being able to understand what has been uttered during the listening process (Tayşi, 2019).

In an attempt to detect the source of listening anxiety, Vogely (1998) conducted research and found that listening anxiety appeared to be correlated with the types of listening input, listening process (strategies and time), and instructional factors (in-class practices and test). Furthermore, the sources of listening anxiety might be attributed to the problematic nature of listening, including level of difficulty, nature of the speech, lack of visual support, lack of repetition, lack of clarity, spontaneous speech, fast speech, and unfamiliar accents (Vogely, 1998). Different factors, such as listening materials, learners' listening abilities, and teachers may also affect listening anxiety (Pan, 2016).

It is a common belief among L2 teachers and learners that listening anxiety can also affect overall L2 performance. Regarding the impact of anxiety on foreign language learning, there are two types of anxiety, i.e., facilitative and debilitative. Facilitative anxiety can motivate learners while debilitative can disrupt language learning process (Zhang & Zhong, 2012).

Recruiting 402 Chinese EFL test-takers and using path analysis to analyze their data, Xu and Huang (2018) explored the mediating effect of listening metacognitive awareness from listening anxiety to listening test score, as well as from test anxiety to listening test score. The result of the study showed that listening metacognitive awareness mediated the structural path from listening anxiety to listening test score, as well as from test anxiety to listening test score. Also, it was found that listening metacognitive awareness mediated between listening anxiety and listening test score in the low listening proficiency group but it did not mediate the relationship between test anxiety and listening test score in both groups. Furthermore, Wang and Cha (2019) conducted a study to investigate the effects of foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) on listening performance in both low and high-proficient EFL listeners on a sample of 39 participants. The results indicated that listening anxiety and the (lack of) self-belief were strong predictors of poor listeners. However, FLLA could not predict the high-proficient group's listening performance. In another study, Liu and Yuan (2021) investigated the effects of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and listening anxiety (FLLA) on Chinese undergraduate students' English proficiency over a semester in the COVID-19 context. The results revealed that FLCA and FLLA were positively correlated and significantly related to students' self-rated proficiency in listening and speaking English.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Considering the reviewed literature, and motivated by the dearth of research investigating the simultaneous interrelationship among goal orientations, WTC, listening anxiety, and listening comprehension, the present study aimed at investigating the relationship among these variables on Iranian EFL learners, using a path analysis method. Therefore, the current study was guided by the following 4 research questions:

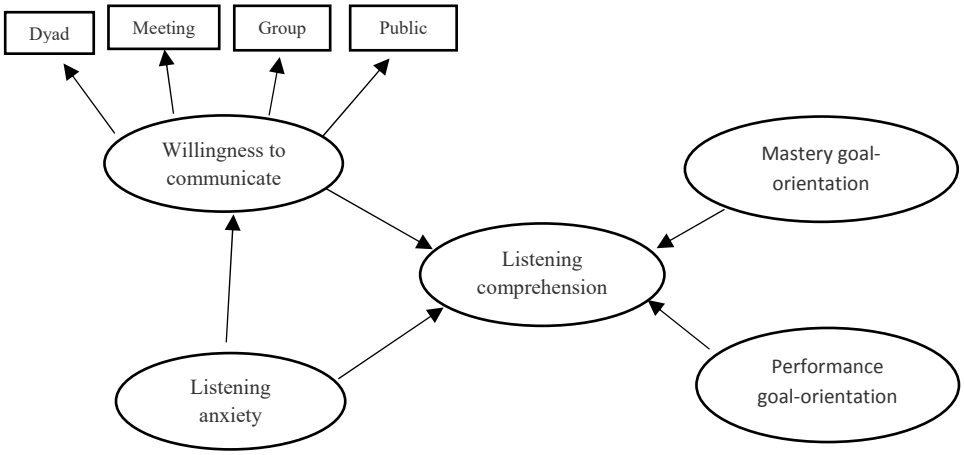
1. Do goal orientations (mastery and performance) significantly predict L2 listening comprehension ability?
2. Do WTC and its subcomponents significantly predict L2 listening comprehension ability?

3. Does level of listening anxiety significantly predict L2 listening comprehension ability?
4. What is a valid model of the interrelationship between these variables and L2 listening comprehension ability?

In order to investigate the relationship between the above-mentioned variables, first, a model was proposed based on the previous research findings. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that mastery and performance goal orientations would predict EFL learners' listening comprehension (Karbakhsh & Ahmadi Safa, 2020; Magni et al., 2021). It was also hypothesized that individuals with higher WTC would have higher levels of listening comprehension ability. Additionally, on the basis of the findings of Elkhafaifi (2005) and Karakus' (2019), listening anxiety was predicted to be closely related to listening comprehension. The hypothesized model and the causal paths among the variables under investigation are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure.1

The Hypothesized Model for the Relationship between Goal Orientation, WTC, Anxiety, and Listening Comprehension



Methodology

Participants

Two hundred intermediate EFL learners studying English at different private language institutes in Kerman and Hamadan provinces participated in

the study. The participants included both females (*N*=135) and males (*N*=65) and their ages ranged from 14 to 22 (M=18.6). The participants were selected through convenience sampling procedure. The majority of the participants spoke Persian as their first language and had a mean of 2.5 years of experience in studying English as a foreign language in private language institutes. Prior to their participation, all the participants signed an informed consent form to participate in the study.

Instruments

The Goal Orientation Scale. The Goal Orientations Scale was adopted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et al. (1991). This scale consists of 4 items for Intrinsic (corresponding to mastery type) and 4 items for Extrinsic (corresponding to performance type) Goal Orientations (Pintrich et al., 1991). All the responses are on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 7 (very true of me). The total score for each type of goal orientation scale is calculated by adding up the score of each individual item. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, Pintrich et al., (1991) estimated the Cronbach alpha reliability which turned out to be .90. Regarding the validity of the questionnaire, an X^2/df ratio of less than 5 indicated a good fit and acceptable validity. Kwan and Wong (2015) also estimated Cronbach alpha coefficients for each of the intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations which turned out to be .80 and .76, respectively, showing a high level of internal consistency.

The WTC Scale. The participants' WTC was measured by a questionnaire consisting of 25 items developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1991). Based on the communication context, WTC has four subcomponents: WTC in public, meeting, group or dyad situations. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire, as computed by Cronbach's Alpha, was .91. As for its validity, the questionnaire was validated by McCroskey (1992) who reported an acceptable content and construct validity.

The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS). The FLLAS, developed by Kim (2000), consists of 33 items to be answered on a five-point Likert-scale. The scores in the FLLAS ranged from 33 to 165, with higher scores

indicating higher levels of listening anxiety. The internal consistency reliability of the scale, as calculated by Cronbach's Alpha, was .93. The scale also enjoys a high level of validity as measured by some previous studies (e.g., Wang, 2010; Wu, 2011).

The Listening Comprehension Test. To measure the participants' listening comprehension ability, the listening section of the IELTS exam by Cambridge ESOL was employed. This test, comprising of 40 items, measures learners' listening comprehension level in English. It is a well-reputed test whose validity has already been established.

Procedure

First, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were requested to sign a written consent form. Then, the questionnaires and the listening test were administered to the participants in two class sessions. In the first session, the participants took the goal orientation, WTC, and the listening anxiety questionnaires. After the distribution of the questionnaires, the procedures for completing the questionnaires were spelled out in detail to the participants. In the second session, the participants sat only for the listening test. After the data collection procedure, the hypothesized model was tested by the AMOS 24 statistical package program.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

As for the preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics and the correlations between the variables were calculated, the results of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Data

	Mastery goal	Performance goal	WTC	public	Group	Meeting	dyad	Listening anxiety	Listening comprehension
N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Mean	25.49	6.9	75.93	88.26	70.33	90.01	55.12	71.88	20.16
Std. Deviation	5.21	1.31	22.32	18.7	15.73	28.65	4.82	7.56	6.26

Table 1 displays the number of the participants, the mean score, and the standard deviation for all of the variables and their subcomponents.

Correlational Analyses

Eight Pearson Product Moment Correlations were run to test the correlations among the variables of the study, the results of which are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

The Relationship among EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension and Other Variables

		Listening comprehension
Mastery goal orientation	Pearson Correlation	.34**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200
Performance goal orientation	Pearson Correlation	-.13*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.02
	N	200
WTC	Pearson Correlation	.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200
WTC in public	Pearson Correlation	.29**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200
WTC in group	Pearson Correlation	. 13*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.02
	N	200
WTC in a meeting	Pearson Correlation	.20**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200
WTC with peers	Pearson Correlation	.12*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.04
	N	200
Listening anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.37**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200

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

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

As shown in Table 2, the results of Pearson correlation indicated that the participants' mastery goal orientation was found to be associated with their listening comprehension ability (r=.34, p<.05). On the other hand, performance goal orientation and listening comprehension ability were negatively correlated *(*r=-.13, p<.05). The pattern of correlation between WTC and listening comprehension was also in the expected direction (r=.32, p<.05). Moreover, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicated that subcategories of WTC correlated positively with listening comprehension (r=.29, r=.13, r=.20, r=.12, p<.05). Additionally, the correlation between listening anxiety and listening comprehension was found to be negative (r=-.37, p<.05). As noted below Table 3, all of the correlation indices were statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, to examine the relationship between listening anxiety and WTC, Pearson Correlation was used (Table 3).

Table 3

The *Correlation between Listening Anxiety and WTC*

		WTC
Listening anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.08
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.11
	N	200

As is evident in Table 3, the correlation between Listening Anxiety and WTC was not significant at 0.05 level (*r=-0.08*).

In order to test the proposed model, and to evaluate the fitness of the data in path analysis, AMOS Program was run and a range of goodness-of-fit indices were calculated. To do so, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NNFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the x^2 test statistic, and an evaluation of parameter estimates were employed, the results of which are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Goodness of Fit Indices

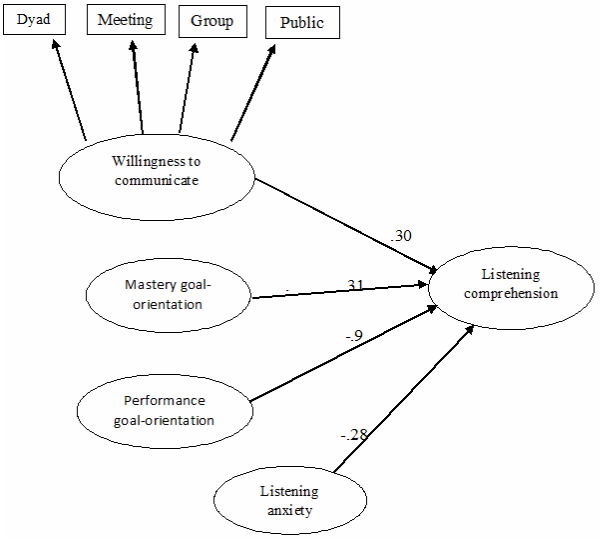
	X2/df	IFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Acceptable fit	<3	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.08
Model	8.37	.90	.88	.92	.19

As Table 4 indicates, the results revealed that Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.92, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.88, Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI) =0.90, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) =.19, and x2/df = 8.37. According to Schreiber, et al. (2006), Chi-square/*df* ratio must be lower than 3, the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Good Fit Index (GFI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) must be greater than .90**,** and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) must be below .08.

As can be seen from Table 4, some of the fit indices of the hypothesized model are beyond the appropriate range. Therefore, the model needs some revision (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Results of Testing the Hypothesized Model



As represented in Figure 2, all the variables under investigation were associated with listening comprehension (mastery goal orientation= .31, performance goal orientation= -.09, WTC= .30, and listening anxiety = -.28, respectively), with the mastery goal orientation being the strongest predictor (r^2=.31) of listening comprehension. However, the model still needs improvement.

To show a valid model of listening comprehension, the non-significant paths were deleted and the fit indices were checked again. The results are represented in Table 5.

Table 5

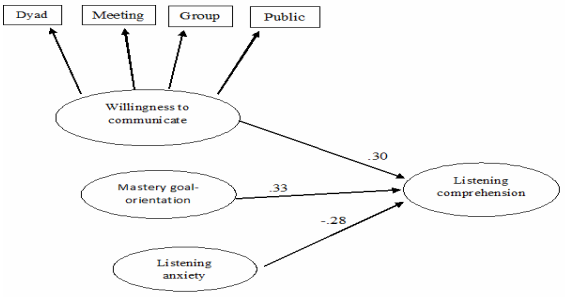
Modification Process of the Structural Model

Fit index	x^2/df	IFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Base Model	8.415	.90	.89	.93	.21
Revised model	2.67	.95	.92	.94	.09
Acceptable range	<3	>.90	>.90	>.90	<0.08

As illustrated in Table 5, the final model illustrates a very good fit. The modified model and the fit indices provided a better model than the initial model (the comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.94, Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) = .0.92, Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.95, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .09, and x^2/ df = 2.67). Therefore, the model represented in Figure 3 is our final standardized model.

Figure 3

The Final Standardized Model.



Discussion

The first research question in the present study investigated whether listening comprehension could be predicted by the mastery and performance goal orientations. Consistent with our predictions, SEM analysis revealed a significant correlation between mastery goal orientation and listening comprehension. A possible explanation for this result could best be provided by VandeWalle (1997) who stated that individuals with mastery goal orientation try to progress by developing new skills, mastering new situations, and increasing their competence. As already mentioned, a review of the previous literature indicated that mastery goal orientation was one of the most important factors that could positively influence students' listening comprehension (Karbakhsh & Ahmadi Safa, 2020; Magni et al., 2021; Pulkka & Niemivirta, 2013; Roebken, 2007). Similarly, consistent with the findings of the previous studies, the results of the present study also showed that mastery goal orientation was the best predictor of listening comprehension ability.

As for second research question which concerned whether listening comprehension could be predicted by WTC and its components, the results revealed a significant path from WTC to listening comprehension. Similarly, among the components of WTC, WTC in public and WTC in group were found to be stronger predictors of listening comprehension. These findings are compatible with the findings of MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) who found a negative correlation between action control theory and WTC. The findings of the present study are also consistent with Mahmoodi and Moazam (2014) and Zhou et al. (2020), which showed that L2 achievement could be predicted by WTC. However, the results of the study are not consistent with the findings of Joe et al. (2017) and Karbakhsh and Ahmadi Safa (2020) who found no correlation between WTC and language learning.

The third research question investigated whether listening comprehension could be predicted by listening anxiety. As SEM analysis revealed, listening comprehension was negatively correlated with listening anxiety. Therefore, as predicted, high levels of anxiety might be considered an impediment to students' listening comprehension ability. This finding is

consistent with the previous findings in the literature which, almost unanimously, have shown an inverse relationship between L2 anxiety and L2 learning. This finding also resonates with Zhang (2013), who showed that listening anxiety could influence FL listening performance but FL listening performance did not seem to systematically affect FL listening anxiety. Similarly, the result of the study is compatible with the findings of Wang and Cha (2019) who found that listening anxiety was associated with listening comprehension, especially for less proficient learners.

The final model of the study showed that among the variables (mastery and performance goal orientations, WTC, listening anxiety, and listening comprehension) and the subcomponents of WTC, all the variables, including the subcomponents were positively and significantly associated with L2 listening comprehension except for L2 listening anxiety and performance goal orientation, which were negatively correlated with L2 listening comprehension. Regarding the direct influence of the mastery goal orientation and WTC on listening comprehension, the findings are compatible with a number of studies that support our findings (e.g., Janke, 2022; Karbakhsh & Ahmadi Safa, 2020; Kilmen, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Also, regarding the indirect influence of performance goal orientation on listening comprehension, the findings are supported by a number previous studies such as Fang et al. (2019), Pulkka and Niemivirta (2013), and Roebken (2007). With respect to the role of listening anxiety which was negatively associated with listening comprehension, a number of previous studies confirm our findings. Furthermore, the results are in harmony with the findings of Wang and Cha (2019) who found that listening anxiety and the (lack of) self-belief significantly predicted listening comprehension. Moreover, Zhou (2021) reported a significant correlation between listening anxiety and listening strategy use. Additionally, Xu and Huang (2018) found the mediating role of listening metacognitive awareness from listening anxiety to listening test score as well as from test anxiety to listening test score.

Due to the complex interplay between ID factors, it should be mentioned that establishing any links between the factors investigated in this

study and L2 listening comprehension is immature at this point. This means that these factors should be interpreted in light of other key ID factors such as motivation and other personality factors, which might interfere while learning an L2. This is especially true for establishing any relationship between L2WTC and L2 listening since WTC itself might be affected by other factors, such as topic, context, motivation, personality factors, etc. For example, according to Dörnyei (2005), the interlocutor's motivation was found to be closely linked to the speaking interaction created by the individuals. This underscores the significance of the interlocutors in shaping the level of motivation and WTC in individuals, especially in classroom pair works in which an individual's level of WTC might be affected by the composition of the groups or pairs in which they are a member. Or, for example, motivation itself might be affected by individuals' level of anxiety which might, in turn, be affected by other factors such as the level of language course, language skills, and proficiency (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Young, 1990). Therefore, the identification of other factors that affect WTC, anxiety, and goal orientations, both in positive and negative ways, will help us to present more developed models of not only L2 production but also L2 comprehension. Knowing the relationship between these ID factors can also help us to disentangle the relative effect of each ID factor on L2 listening comprehension. Therefore, the model that we have presented for L2 listening comprehension is open to revision and can be developed if other ID factors underlying the model are discovered and added to the model.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the predictive power of several individual factors on the listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. The findings revealed significant correlation between mastery goal orientation, WTC, WTC in public, WTC in group, listening anxiety and listening comprehension. Moreover, mastery goal orientation was found to be the strongest predictor of the participants' listening comprehension. It seems reasonable, therefore, to claim that the type of goal orientation, especially mastery goal orientation, is a crucial factor in success in the process of L2

listening comprehension. It can also be concluded that one of the effective factors in L2 learning is L2 learners' willingness to participate in communication in the foreign language and consequently, one of the challenges facing EFL teachers is implementing WTC in EFL classrooms. Since the advent of the Communicative Language Teaching, WTC has been regarded as one of the major goals of L2 pedagogy because it positively affects L2 learners' communicative competence. Nevertheless, although the significance of WTC is evident, some additional variables that might underlie the enhancement of this yet-to-be known construct need to be investigated more. The inclusion of WTC to L2 literature is increasingly gaining momentum as the importance of authentic communication is recognized as an integral part of L2 instruction. Furthermore, this study revealed that L2 listening anxiety, as another ID factor, has a significant role to play in L2 listening comprehension.

The first implication of the study is for EFL teachers. One way that teachers can benefit from the findings of the present study is to encourage mastery goal orientation in L2 learners, cultivate their goal-directed teaching, create a low anxiety atmosphere in EFL classrooms, and try to enhance learners' WTC. Syllabus designers are also suggested to design an appropriate syllabus based on learners' goals and the factors that have an impact on learners' anxiety and motivation. The most important implication of the present study for EFL learners is that they are strongly suggested to set goals, especially mastery goals in contrast to performance goals, for their learning since goal-setting has a strong relationship with their L2 attainment, at least as far as the findings of the present study are concerned. Moreover, EFL learners are suggested to try to control their anxiety level by adopting some communication strategies like getting engaged in online communication. This can also be a step toward enhancing their WTC. In sum, this study suggests that in cases where the major goal of foreign language learning is developing communicative competence, the recognition of factors that both improve (i.e. WTC) and impede (i.e. listening anxiety) the development of this complicated competence is of paramount importance. Finally, it should be acknowledged that there are several limitations in this study that adversely affect its findings.

The first limitation was the fact that the study was conducted with 200 participants from private language institutes. Therefore, the sample is not representative of all EFL learners and thus the findings need to be treated cautiously as far as generalizability is concerned. The second limitation was that since the study does not have an experimental design and cannot claim causality, establishing any causal link among the variables under investigation must be interpreted with caution.

Since, in the present study, the data were collected only by self-report questionnaires, prospective researchers are strongly suggested to use qualitative methods of investigation such as observation and interview to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Furthermore, to claim any generalizability, it is suggested that future researchers replicate the present study in a wider range of EFL contexts with participants from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds.

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Growth Mindset EFL Teachers' Oral Feedback Practices and Their Beliefs

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Abstract

Despite the abundance of research on the link between teachers' beliefs and practices, little research has been conducted investigating the relationship between the beliefs of teachers with specific individual attributes and corrective feedback practices. Thus, this study aims to investigate whether growth mindset teachers' oral corrective feedback (OCF, henceforth) practices are aligned with their beliefs. Eight in-service growth mindset EFL teachers participated in the study. Having collected the data via two questionnaires and a set of classroom observations, MAXQDA software was used to code and quantify the data. The findings showed that growth mindset teachers' OCF beliefs and their actual OCF practices were aligned in terms of OCF timing. Regarding OCF types, female teachers' practices were aligned with their beliefs, but male teachers' beliefs were more incongruent with their practices. Teachers' beliefs and practices, however, were inconsistent regarding OCF amount and frequency, which can be due to contextual factors, such as occasional time limit. The implications and suggestions for further research are suggested.

Keywords: teacher's beliefs, oral corrective feedback, corrective feedback practices, growth mindset, teacher mindset, qualitative data analysis

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Introduction

Corrective feedback, as an important instructional technique (Sheen, 2011), refers to "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (Chaudron, 1977, p. 31). Corrective feedback can be given via two modes of oral and written. The oral mode, called OCF, which is the focus of this study, is a type of focus-on-form (Long, 1991) technique since it tends to make learners pay attention to a linguistic form while they are trying to communicate a message in a communicative activity. Although there are theoretically diverse views toward the benefit of corrective feedback, a stockpile of research has shown its facilitative role in language learning (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of corrective feedback is affected by a number of factors, including linguistic, contextual, and individual factors (Yu et al., 2018). Likewise, teachers' corrective feedback provision is under the influence of several variable categories such as contextual, learner, and teacher variables (Gurzynski–Weiss, 2016). Among various teacher variables, a multitude of studies have emerged exploring the impact of teachers' beliefs on their corrective feedback practices (Kaivanpanah et al., 2015; Mackey et al. 2004; Polio et al. 2006; Schulz 1996, 2001; Sepehrinia & Mehdizade, 2018; Tadayyon, 2019; Yoshida 2010; Yuksel et al., 2021), resulting in contradictory findings (Basturkmen et al., 2004). For example, the findings of Yuksel et al.'s (2021) and Kamyia's (2014) studies indicate that teachers' beliefs and their practices are consistent in terms of the OCF types while the findings of some other studies (e.g., Bao, 2019; Karimi & Asadnia, 2015; Ozturk, 2016) revealed inconsistent relationship between the two variables. However, research into teachers' beliefs toward error correction is not adequately conducted given the individual differences (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016; Li & Vuono, 2019). One of the individual differences which influences teachers' practices is mindset (Schmit et al., 2015).

Mindsets refer to the implicit beliefs individuals hold about the malleability of others' and self attributes. Mindsets theory represents a set of

beliefs along a continuum from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). People holding a growth mindset believe that intelligence, personality, abilities are malleable; therefore, they can be developed with time and effort (Plaks et al., 2009), whereas individuals who hold a fixed mindset believe that these basic human attributes are fixed and unalterable. Previous research has established that the individuals' mindset beliefs have an impact on their learning behaviors (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Horwitz, 1988). Similarly, the mindset or beliefs of teachers have an impact on their feedback behaviors (Jonsson & Beach, 2012; Rissanen et al., 2019; Schmit et al., 2015).

Besides, Basturkemn (2012) called for more studies to be conducted in the area of teachers' beliefs toward unplanned aspects of language teaching, such as corrective feedback. Aiming to fill in this void in the related literature, this study is designed to investigate the concordance of teachers' stated beliefs with their actual classroom practices in providing students with OCF.

Background

Teachers' Beliefs and Corrective Feedback Practices

Considering the fact that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81), researchers have switched their attention to the impact of teachers' beliefs on their oral corrective practices (Kaivanpanah et al., 2015; Mackey et al. 2004; Polio et al. 2006; Schulz 1996, 2001; Sepehrinia & Mehdizade, 2018; Tadayyon, 2019; Yoshida 2010; Yuksel et al., 2021). However, there is apparently no consensus among researchers on the link between teachers' corrective feedback beliefs and their actual practices.

Among the studies conducted in this area is a qualitative study by Roothooft (2014). To collect the data, the researcher adopted observation and an open-ended questionnaire. The findings of her study revealed that teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback were not aligned with their actual practices. As another example, Bao (2019) based on observation of eight Chinese ESL teachers' actual teaching, found that teachers' beliefs and their practices

concerning OCF matched in terms of the frequency of corrective feedback, the least used feedback strategy, and the emphasis on teacher-led feedback. There were inconsistencies regarding the timing, the commonly-used corrective feedback types, and the amount of corrective feedback. Kartchava et al. (2020) also elicited data from 99 pre-service language teachers through questionnaire, interview, and observation techniques. The findings of their study demonstrated that teachers practically corrected less errors than the amount they believed they would, but they used the same corrective strategy that they reported they would use.

Teachers' Individual Differences and Their Corrective Feedback Practices

Scholars proposed various explanations for the discrepancies found in the findings of the studies on the link between teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback and their practices. For example, Basturkmen (2012) refers to the unplanned nature of the corrective feedback as the reason, and explains that teachers rely on "automatic and generally unexamined behaviours" (p. 291) while giving feedback. Zheng (2013) suggested that such a relationship is "not absolute, but conditioned by various teaching situations" (p. 339). Likewise, Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2013) stated that teachers ought to consider many factors while deciding on various feedback moves.

Considering the contradictory results of prior research in this field (see review in Basturkmen, 2012) and the more inconsistent relationships found (see review in Li & Vuono, 2019), researchers switched their attention to explore the contribution of various individual variables, including teaching experience (Yuksel et al., 2021), instructional context (Tadayyon, 2019), training courses (Kartchava et al, 2020; Long, 2017), cultural background (Lyster & Mori, 2006), and so forth. There, however, have not been any studies investigating the impact of teachers' mindset beliefs on the link between teachers' beliefs and practices.

Considering that related literature lacks research on the impact of mindset beliefs on teachers' beliefs and their OCF practices, the current study makes a significant contribution to the existing related research. Thus, this study is designed to explore if the link between teachers' CF beliefs and their CF

practices is influenced by the particular mindset beliefs they hold. More specifically, this study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do growth mindset teachers' OCF beliefs match their OCF practices in terms of the amount of OCF?
2. Do growth mindset teachers' OCF beliefs match their OCF practices in terms of OCF timing?
3. Do growth mindset teachers' OCF beliefs match their OCF practices in terms of OCF type?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 12 Iranian EFL teachers was chosen to participate in the study. Based on teachers' scores on *Teacher Mindset Inventory* (detailed in the instrument section), nine teachers were chosen to continue the study further, all of whom held growth mindset beliefs, but one of them did not answer the second questionnaire completely, and was excluded from the study. The remaining teachers, four females and four males, ranged in age from 26 to 37, with four to 13 years of teaching experience. Since teaching experience does not interfere with teachers' beliefs and their OCF practices (Roothooft, 2014), participants were not excluded due to their years of teaching experience. All teachers held Master degrees, except two of them who had bachelor degrees. Participating teachers majored in English-related courses, but two of them held degrees in statistics and material engineering. As previous research showed, language teacher education does not make significant difference regarding the correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices (Karimi & Dehghani, 2016), so it was not considered as a variable in this study. Participants were all teaching students at high levels of English proficiency, ranging from pre-intermediate to advanced levels. The demographic information of the participating teachers is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participating Teachers

Teachers	Age	Gender	Qualification	Experience	Levels Taught
T1	29	Female	Master of TEFL	4 years	Pre-intermediate to advanced
T2	33	Male	Master of TEFL	10 years	Upper-intermediate, Advanced
T3	26	Male	Master of material engineering	5 years	Pre-intermediate, Intermediate
T4	35	Female	Bachelor of Translation	6 years	Pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate
T5	30	Female	Bachelor of Statistics	12 years	Pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate
T6	37	Female	Master of TEFL	13 years	Intermediate to advanced
T7	28	Male	Master of TEFL	8 years	Pre-intermediate, Intermediate
T8	29	Male	Master of TEFL	6 years	Intermediate, Upper-intermediate

Instruments

Two methods were employed in the current study to collect the required data; observation of participating teachers' classes to record their actual OCF practices and two questionnaires to elicit their beliefs. The detailed information regarding each method is provided below.

Questionnaires

Teacher Mindset Inventory. This questionnaire was constructed to measure teachers' mindset beliefs in the present study. It consists of two

separate parts, namely the Implicit Theory of Intelligence (*ITI*) (Dweck, 2000, 2006) and the Implicit Theory of Giftedness (*ITG*) (Dweck, 2000, 2006; Kussisto et al., 2017), both of which were used in the current study to measure teachers' attitudes toward the nature of intelligence and giftedness, respectively. Both instruments consist of four statements scored using a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). The calculated mean scores were considered as the teacher mindset scores. The items of *ITI* (e.g. 'You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you really can't do much to change it') and *ITG* ('You have a certain amount of giftedness, and you really can't do much to change it') were designed to elicit teacher mindsets on malleability of intelligence and giftedness, respectively. The mean score of 1.0 to 3.0 on the scale indicates a fixed mindset; the mean score of 3.1 to 3.9 is an indicator of a mixed mindset; and finally, the mean scores ranging from 4.0 to 6.0 show a growth mindset (Rissanen et al., 2019). The reported internal reliability of *the implicit theory of intelligence* and *the implicit theory of giftedness* in the previous research were 0.90 and 0.95, respectively (Zhang et al., 2020), indicating very highly reliability indices (Cohen et al., 2017).

Questionnaire on Oral Feedback. The. *Questionnaire on Oral Feedback* (Roothooft, 2014) was applied to explore teachers' beliefs regarding corrective feedback. This questionnaire incorporated all the aspects of OCF which were the focus of this study. However, using open-ended questionnaire lets teachers express their beliefs in more details (Dornyei, 2007). The questionnaire consists of 11 open-ended questions aiming to measure teachers' beliefs toward OCF, including the feedback frequency, the kinds of errors to be corrected, and types of feedback. For instance, the questionnaire items regarding feedback types, based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology, are provided in the following excerpt from the questionnaire:

Teacher: What did you do last weekend?

Student: I watch a film with my friends.

a) Teacher: No, not watch, watched.

b) Teacher: You watched a film. That's interesting.

c) Teacher: I'm sorry?

d) Teacher: You need to use the past tense.

e) Teacher: Last weekend I … (pausing)? (rising intonation)

f) Teacher: I WATCH a film? (stressing the mistake, with rising intonation)

Teacher participants were accordingly asked to state which feedback type they think their learners might rather get, which feedback types they think is the most effective ones, and which ones they employ more in their classroom. They were further required to estimate what percentage of students' errors they tend to correct. Since the questionnaire was piloted in the previous study (Roothooft, 2014), it was not piloted again in the current study. All of the participants completed all the questions. They wrote a considerable number of words in response to each question: on average, the word counts were between six to 99 per question, with a mean length of 24 words per question across the five questionnaires. The information collected out of the questionnaire was analyzed qualitatively.

Structured Observation. In the current study, a structured observation was adopted to collect data on teachers' actual feedback practices. The specific researcher role adopted in the current study was a complete observer because the researcher was interested to observe the data as they were occurring naturally, and there was no need neither to manipulate the situation nor to pose any questions for the subjects (Adler & Adler, 1994). During the observation sessions, neither the teacher nor the students were informed that the observer is a researcher.

The researcher participated in two sessions of each teacher's class to observe and take notes of their teaching in general and their actual OCF practices in particular. Obtaining permission of the institutes' managers, the classes were also audio recorded to be used to analyze the data in detail. The teachers' classes were all approximately at the same level, that is intermediate level of English proficiency. In Table 2., detailed information about the observed classes is provided.

Table 2

Detailed information about the observed classes

Teachers	Observed class	Class level	The observed teaching topics	Class size
T1	Two parallel classes of 1:20 Total: 2 h 40 minutes	Intermediate & Upper-intermediate	Pronunciation, grammar, speaking, listening, vocabulary	11-13
T2	Two parallel classes of 1:25 Total: 2 h 50 minutes	Upper-intermediate	Grammar, listening, vocabulary, conversation	10-12
T3	Two subsequent classes of 1:30 Total: 3 hours	Pre-intermediate	Grammar, reading, speaking, vocabulary, listening	14
T4	Two subsequent classes of 1:30 Total: 3 hours	Pre-intermediate	Grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading	14-17
T5	Two subsequent classes of 1:20 Total: 2 h 40 minutes	Upper-intermediate	Grammar, listening, speaking, pronunciation	10-7
T6	Two subsequent classes of 1:30 Total: 3 hours	Intermediate	Grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening	7-6
T7	Two subsequent classes of 1:30 Total: 3 hours	Intermediate	Reading, grammar, pronunciation	11
T8	Two parallel classes of 1:30 Total: 3 hours	Upper-intermediate	Grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening	12-13

Procedure

Firstly, teacher-participants were asked to answer the items of the *Teacher Mindset Inventory* to measure their mindset scores. Those teachers whose mean scores on the *Teacher Mindset Inventory* resided between 4 to 6 were asked to continue the study because they all held growth mindset beliefs. The teachers whose mindset scores were not in the mentioned range were excluded since

their scores did not differ much significantly from the scores of growth mindset teachers. Having obtained the required permission, two sessions of each teacher participants' classes at intermediate level of language proficiency were observed. The whole observation process took place covertly until the last observation session of each teacher's class when the researcher introduced herself and asked the teacher to save a couple of minutes to complete the required questionnaires related to the study.

The questionnaires were sent by the most convenient means or ways to each teacher and to the teachers who agreed to participate in the study. As it was mentioned earlier, *Teacher Mindset Inventory* was the questionnaire used to measure teachers' mindset beliefs. Participating teachers' beliefs toward OCF were elicited using the *Questionnaire on Oral Feedback*.

The recordings of the observed classes were transcribed. All the transcription documents, alongside the teachers' completed questionnaires on beliefs about OCF were transferred into the MAXQDA software (version 2020) for the purpose of qualitative analysis. To analyze the data qualitatively, all the students' turns with a spoken error were specified. Likewise, all the teachers' turns which contained a correction were determined. Then, learners' spoken errors were categorized as being either a grammatical error, a pronunciation error, a lexical error, or a multiple error (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Lyster and Ranta's (1997) categorization was used to make it possible to compare the findings of this study with the findings of previous observational studies in the same field. The corrective feedbacks that the teachers provided to the learners were then coded according to the typology of OCF proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), which consists of the following six types:

1. Explicit correction: The teacher explicitly provides the correct form.
2. Recast: The teacher reformulates all or part of the student's utterance, minus the error.
3. Clarification request: The teacher indicates to students that either the utterance is misunderstood by teacher or it is ill formed.
4. Metalinguistic feedback: The teacher provides the student with

some comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the utterance, without explicitly giving the correct form.

5. Elicitation: The teacher uses some techniques to directly eliciting the correct form from the student.
6. Repetition: The teacher repeats the student's erroneous utterance, with adjusted intonation to highlight the error.

The teachers' feedback move was coded as 'other' if it did not fit into any of the Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology. As an example of this code is the following excerpt from the data of the current study:

Teacher*: If it was, I'm not get used to, it was false. You have to say, I don't get used to because of get, because get is a main verb. Okay, but, be used to when you want to make it negative. you put not after be,*

Student*: because in be used to we say that uh, now it's familiar [pronunciation error], but it is*

Teacher*: okay. [I want to say it's not (in Persian)] familiar (emphasizing the mispronounced syllable) [for me (in Persian)]*

The other code theme was coding the corrective feedback moves based on timing of their provision (Ellis, 2009; Varnosfadrani, 2006). That is, the OCF moves were coded as either immediate feedback (teachers' giving feedback as soon as the error is produced) or delayed feedback (teachers' postponing feedback provision until the student finishes his/her utterance) (Ellis, 2009). Examples of coded segments regarding OCF timing are provided below:

Delayed feedback	Teacher: *Yasaman, what do you do?*
	Student*: Sometimes I, I left home or sometimes I shout at all of them,*
	Teacher*: hmmm, I leave home.*
	Student*: yeah*
Immediate	Teacher*: Okay, number three*
feedback	Student: *Teenagers use smart phones and laptops. B: things have very changed from past to the present.*
	Teacher*: Have changed a lot.*
	Student: *Yes, number four, A: what changes have you made in your life?*

To ensure coding reliability, a second coder, a Ph.D. candidate in TEFL, coded 25 % of the data, which revealed 91% of intercoder agreement in the segmentation and coding the segments. The controversial codings were resolved through discussion.

Findings

Teachers' OCF Practices

Table 3 depicts the total number of learners' turns containing an error as well as the total number of feedback moves observed, which are also broken down into various feedback types. The feedback moves the teachers applied in the observed classes were well classified based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology, except for few cases which were classified as "other." The "other" category included repeating the correct form, highlighting the correction using learners' L1, making a joke using the corrected form of an error, speaking in student' L1 and telling a word in English. Some similarities can be mentioned among teachers in terms of the rate of correction and the types of feedback used. As Table 3 shows, the participating teachers' rates of correction ranges from 17% to 67.4%, with an average rate of 47.3%.

Regarding the types of feedback used, recast, which dedicated the average use of 76% of all feedback moves to itself, was the single most common feedback type all the participating teachers preferred to use the most in the observed classes. Each teacher's most frequently used feedback type is shown in bold in Table 3. As Table 3. shows, explicit correction was the second most frequently used feedback type. Other feedback types (repetition, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification request), except for "other" and "elicitation", which comprised 6% and 5% of all feedback moves respectively, were rarely observed. Metalinguistic feedback and clarification request were the least common feedback types. All in all, it appears that teachers in this study preferred to recast students on their errors more than using any other feedback types.

Table 3

Amount and types of OCF Provided by the Participating Teachers*

Teacher	Ss' turns with error	Ts' turns with feedback	% of errors corrected	Recast	Clarification request	MF	Elicitation	Repetition	Explicit correction	Other
T 1	106	53	50	48(90%)	2(4%)	0	0	0	2(4%)	1(2%)
T 2	101	33	32.7	30(91%)	0	0	1(3%)	0	2(6%)	0
T 3	39	18	46.15	15(83.3%)	0	0	0	0	0	3(16.7%)
T 4	95	64	67.4	45(70%)	0	0	4(6%)	0	12(19%)	3 (5%)
T 5	50	21	42	7(34%)	0	1(5%)	4(19%)	3(14%)	3(14%)	3 (14%)
T 6	140	72	51.4	54(75%)	2(2.8%)	0	2(2.8%)	0	11 (15.4%)	3 (4%)
T7	28	16	57.14	11(68.75%)	0	0	2(12.5)	0	0	3(18.75)
T8	41	7	17	5(71.4)	0	0	0	0	2(28.6)	0
Total	600	284	47.3	215(76%)	4(1.5%)	1(0.5%)	13(5%)	3(1%)	32 (11.3%)	16 (6%)

***** OCF stands for oral corrective feedback

Teachers' beliefs about OCF

All participating teachers stated that OCF is important because it helps students understand their mistakes and thus, they try not to repeat the mistake again. The only exception was T1 who did not clearly specify the importance of OCF, instead she emphasized that giving corrective feedback is a teacher responsibility. Besides considering corrective feedback as important, almost all teachers believed that their students also expected to get corrective feedback on their oral errors. For example, T5 pinpointed that students sometimes complained to her about not getting corrective feedback on their oral errors. She specified that students "feel like that: if you won't mention my mistakes, so who would do that?". She further acknowledged that "The more I correct them, the more careful they will be while speaking, and the number of their mistakes will be less and less."

Regarding the corrector, almost all teachers reported that they prioritized self-correction. As some examples, consider the following extracts from the data:

It's usually a self-correct. In this level there is a good fluency in English for them and they know most grammars or vocabularies. So I'm usually patient about it and let them to analyze it by themselves. (T5)

Self-correction is my first choice. (T1)

I encourage them to correct their mistakes themselves. If they can't, I'll help them to know their mistakes and correct them. (T6)

Teacher feedback prevents any potential fossilization. (T8)

As for the time of correction, most of the teacher participants stated that they gave students corrective feedback after the speaking activity finishes. They also pointed to some mediating factors, particularly learners' proficiency level, nature of the mistake, and the class time, which can affect the time they choose to correct the error. As an example, T1 explained that:

I give feedback on some mistakes during the speaking activity. As you know, some mistakes are because of some emotional factors such as stress, and I prefer to correct them after the speaking activity. I don't like stop the students while they are enjoying speaking the language. (T1)

As for students' preferences for the teachers' beliefs about the type of corrective feedback, almost all of the teachers in our study agreed that students prefer input providing corrective feedback because they are less challenging. Particularly, T2 and T8 stated their beliefs that students would rather recast. Both T4 and T6 believed that students prefer metalinguistic feedback. T1 as well as T6 considered explicit correction as the method which students might prefer. In the same vein, T3 stated that error correction should be "short, brief, and straightforward" for students to appreciate it. In contrast, only T5 and T7 opted prompts as the methods students prefer. T5 explained that "students enjoy learning how to analyze the sentences." Similarly, T7 stated that students' "self-correction clears out their misunderstanding, and consequently, they gain confidence, and feel a sense of achievement."

As for teachers' views of the feelings of students when they receive feedback, all teachers agreed that students expect to be corrected on their errors, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

Totally positive. Actually, they look forward to it and they'll find you a

precise teacher. I've had a number of students, complaining why some teachers don't mention their speaking problems. They feel like: "If you won't mention my mistakes, so who would do that?" you know. Sometimes I doubted it and I've thought it may seem picky, but no. They always encourage me to do it. The more I correct them, the more careful they will be while speaking, and the number of mistakes will be less and less. (T5)

They usually like to know their problems. (T4)

Apart from T1 and T8 who believed in the effectiveness of implicit methods of giving feedback, the teachers' opinions about the most effective feedback type were similar in making students to correct the error through using elicitation because it helps students to recognize the error and correct the error themselves. Some of the teachers, specifically T3, T4, T6, and T7 added other methods which prompt students to self-correct the error.

Overall, teachers' answers to the items of the questionnaire suggest that they believe in the importance and effectiveness of giving corrective feedback on language learning. They also recognize that students expect to be corrected on the errors they make. Students' personality and some emotional factors, such as stress when teachers pinpointed, are considered in teachers' providing students with corrective feedback.

A Comparison of Teachers' Stated Beliefs and Their Actual OCF Practices. As Table 4 displays, teachers' beliefs about the amount of OCF and their actual practices do not match perfectly. Only one of the eight teachers was able to estimate the overall number of errors based on her beliefs to correct when compared to the classroom observation. Other seven teachers' estimated correction rates were higher than what was observed in their actual classes (see Table 5). Several incongruities were also found between teachers' estimates and their actual correction rates for different error types. Vocabulary errors were the only error type for which estimates and actual practices of most of the female teacher participants, except for T6, matched (see Table 5).

Table 4

Estimated Versus Observed Rates of OCF

Teachers	Total nr of errors		Pronunciation errors		Vocabulary errors		Grammar errors	
	estimated	observed	estimated	observed	estimated	observed	estimated	observed
T1	85-92	50	100	65.32	100	100	85-95	17.5
T2	50	32.7	70	30.43	20	50	80	26.31
T3	80	46.15	70	40	80	75	90	41.66
T4	90	67.4	90	66.66	90	80	100	68.42
T5	80	42	100	100	90	75	80	29.72
T6	50	51.4	80	80.7	40	100	30	18.33
T7	90	57.14	100	75	100	66.66	100	38.46
T8	90	17	50	33.33	85	12.5	95	20

Table 5

Relationship Between Estimated (E) And Observed (O) Correction Rates

Teachers	Total nr of errors	Pronunciation errors	Vocabulary errors	Grammar errors
T1	E > O	E > O	E = O	E > O
T2	E > O	E > O	E < O	E > O
T3	E > O	E > O	E = O	E > O
T4	E > O	E > O	E = O	E > O
T5	E > O	E = O	E = O	E > O
T6	E = O	E = O	E < O	E = O
T7	E > O	E = O	E > O	E > O
T8	E > O	E > O	E > O	E > O

Teacher participants were also asked to express their beliefs about their preferred method of correcting students' errors. All female teachers' expressed beliefs, matched their practices (see Table 6). Despite emphasizing on prompt as an effective CF technique, almost all of the male teachers most frequently recast students on the occurred errors, and they did not give the students much opportunity to think about the error. Among the male participants, only T3 focused on the importance of variation and time limitation in his decisions about CF provision. As Table 6 depicts, he tends to apply a variety of CF types. On the other hand, female teacher participants' beliefs and practices were consistent and all of them pointed to the application of recast as

their frequently used CF technique. For example, T1 who believed in the effectiveness of implicit correction techniques and in the importance of keeping "affective filters" low, mostly applied recast as she reported. T4 also, who reported to use explicit correction on pronunciation errors, used that technique more frequently than other techniques since pronunciation errors were the most frequent error type in her classes observed. T5 was also aware of using recast, elicitation, and repetition, but she was also observed using explicit correction and other techniques. Among the many techniques which T6 reported to use, only repetition was not identified in her classes observed. Congruity between the reported CF types and the teachers' practices are indicated in bold in Table 6, from which it can be concluded that five of the eight teachers (four females, one male) were to some extent aware of their actual corrective feedback practices, and the other three teachers, who were all males, were not.

Table 6

Reported and Observed Ways of Giving OCF

Teachers	Reported OCF types used	Observed OCF types used
T1	**recast**	Mostly **recast,** rarely clarification request, explicit correction, and other techniques
T2	**Recast,** repetition	Mostly **recast**, rarely explicit correction and elicitation
T3	Clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and rarely repetition	Mostly recast and other techniques, rarely elicitation
T4	Usually elicitation and repetition, and **explicit correction** for pronunciation errors	Mostly recast and **explicit correction**, rarely elicitation and other techniques
T5	**Recast**, **elicitation**, and **repetition**	Mostly **recast**, **elicitation**, but also **repetition** and other techniques, rarely metalinguistic feedback

T6	**Recast**, **explicit correction**, repetition, and elicitation	Mostly **recast** and **explicit correction,** rarely clarification request, elicitation, and other techniques
T7	elicitation, repetition	Mostly recast, rarely elicitation and other techniques
T8	Clarification request, metalinguistic feedback	Mostly recast, rarely explicit correction

Correspondence was also found between teachers' stated beliefs about OCF and their actual practices when they were asked to report on the preferred timing of OCF. In line with their stated beliefs, all teacher participants were observed to give mostly delayed feedback on students' errors, except for T6 and T8 (see Table 7). T6, who mostly postponed her corrective feedback in the observed classes, made her stated beliefs conditional on the proficiency level of the students, as she stated: "It depends. For higher levels, I prefer to give feedback during activities, but for lower levels, I try not to interrupt them and give them feedback after the activity". However, she did not clearly specify whether she categorizes intermediate level students as having a high or a low level of proficiency. Similarly, T8 stated that his decision on the timing of CF depended on the types of the mistake as he explained that he corrected obvious mistakes immediately, and more complicated errors afterwards. However, he did not clarify what he meant exactly by obvious mistakes and complicated errors.

Table 7

Reported Versus Observed Timing of OCF

Teachers	Reported OCF timing	Observed OCF timing
T1	For some mistakes, immediate, but **mostly delayed**	73% delayed
T2	**Delayed**	65% delayed
T3	**Mostly delayed**, rarely and only on important and common mistakes immediate	88% delayed
T4	It depends. **Mostly delayed**	56% delayed

T5	Depends on the activity, but **mostly delayed**	95% delayed
T6	Depends on the level, immediate for higher level students and delayed for lower level students	68% delayed
T7	**Delayed**	93% delayed
T8	Immediate feedback on obvious mistakes and delayed feedback on complicated errors	86% delayed

Discussion

The study was intended to explore whether teachers' stated beliefs on OCF and their actual in-class practices correspond. Much in line with some previous studies (Kartchava et al., 2020; Roothooft, 2014) and in contrast to some other research (Bao, 2019; Ozturk, 2019; Tadayyon, 2019; Yuksel et al., 2021), the findings of this study indicate that teachers' beliefs toward the amount of OCF did not correspond to their actual feedback practices. This finding provides supportive evidence for the mediating role of some factors, such as teaching context in teachers' amount of OCF (Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Milla & Mayo, 2014), and it provides evidence for the facilitative role of corrective feedback in language learning (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et. al., 2006; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006), which is endorsed by growth mindset teachers regardless of their gender.

Contrary to the findings of previous studies (Bao, 2019; Ozturk, 2019; Tadayyon, 2019), and in line with the Rothooft's (2014) study, it was found in this study that teachers' beliefs and their in-class practices regarding the timing of feedback provision are aligned as teachers reported that they preferred delayed feedback, which was also observed more frequently in their feedback practices. This finding can be due to individual factors (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015), particularly teachers' mindset beliefs in this study as well as their considerations for learners' feeling when they receive feedback (Kamiya, 2016; Kaivanpanah et al., 2015), however, due to the little amount of research on the timing of feedback (e.g., Rolin-Ianziti, 2006; Vilcek, 2014), the finding on this aspect of corrective feedback is not generalizable yet (Vilcek, 2014).

Much in line with prior research on the congruity between teachers' beliefs about feedback types and their actual instructional practices (kartchava

et al., 2020), and contrary to some previous studies (Bao, 2019; Roothooft, 2014; Tadayyon, 2019), it was found in this study that the beliefs of all the growth mindset female teachers about feedback types were aligned with their practices, which was not the case for the male participants. This finding not only indicates that growth mindset teachers are aware of the feedback types they apply in their classes, but also it provides further evidence to the relationship between gender and teachers' feedback practices (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016; Nosek et al., 2002).

Considering the correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices and the impact of teacher mindset on their feedback practices, proved in prior research (author, Manuscript under review), the findings of this study indicate that growth mindset teachers argue for the importance of corrective feedback in language learning and they are often aware of the feedback strategies they apply. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers be empowered with growth mindset beliefs by participating in specific training courses which are designed to boost mindset beliefs. The finding of this study, indicating the potential role of gender on the in/congruency between teachers' stated beliefs and practices, builds on the controversies found in the previous research in the field and it further establishes the "highly individualistic basis" (Ozturk, 2019, p. 8) of teachers' corrective feedback practices. Thus, more studies are called for to explore the contribution of teachers' individual attributes in their feedback practices.

Conclusion

The current study, conducted in an EFL context, explored the correspondence between growth mindset teachers' beliefs about OCF and their actual OCF practices. The findings indicate that growth mindset in-service EFL teachers' beliefs about the amount of OCF did not match their practices, however, their practices were aligned with their beliefs in terms of timing and to some extent the types of OCF. It was also found that male teachers' beliefs about CF types did not match their practices, which further highlights the role of gender in teachers' beliefs and practices, and can be the subject of future

studies. It can be claimed that growth mindset teachers are aware of the way they provide students with corrective feedback, and the divergence between their beliefs and practices can be due to contextual factors (Tadayyon, 2019) which teachers need to consider while giving OCF (Lyster, Saito, Sato, 2013), or some learners' factors, such as anxiety and stress, as teachers in this study mentioned, since teachers care for their students' emotional well-being (Roothooft, 2014). The teachers in this study also pinpointed frequency of errors and time limitation as two important factors which can influence their OCF provision. Moreover, this study supports further evidence for the belief that the link between teachers' beliefs about CF and their practices is affected by teachers' individual attributes, such as gender (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016; Nosek et al., 2002) and mindset beliefs.

Considering that this study highlights the role of teachers' mindsets on the link between their beliefs and practices, and the fact that little research has been conducted exploring growth mindset teachers' instructional practices, and even, to the authors' knowledge, no study on teachers' oral feedback practices, this study can be considered as a valuable one in its own kind. The studies investigating the role of mindset on teachers' feedback practices can be beneficial to both the teachers who value OCF effectiveness and the stakeholders who value teachers' empowerment. Teacher trainers can use the findings of this study as it provides evidence for the actual practices of growth mindset teachers and designing and running growth mindset pedagogical training courses for teachers.

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The Influences of Online Teaching on Iranian EAP Teachers' Professional Identity (Re) Construction

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Abstract

In recent years, online education has become a significant part of teachers' professional career. Moreover, it has been argued that contexts of teaching are significantly influential in EAP teachers' practices and identities. Despite these points, little research has examined EAP teachers' identity construction in online contexts. The present study addressed this gap by exploring the impacts of online education on 20 Iranian EAP teachers' identity construction. The participants were interviewed and thematic analysis was run to analyze the data. The findings revealed that online education influenced the teachers' personal, pedagogical, and social identities. More specifically, it was found that the teachers could reconstruct their identities in light of the challenges and affordances of online teaching and adopt new identities that featured concerns with both their EAP and educator responsibilities. These findings are then discussed and implications for teacher educators are offered so that they could help EAP teachers construct their identities in online settings effectively.

Keywords: EAP teacher identity, identity reconstruction, Iranian EAP teachers, online education, online teacher identity

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Introduction

Over the past decades, the interest in the research on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers has substantially grown. This emerging body of knowledge attempts to explore different dimensions of EAP teachers' professionalism, including their disciplinary knowledge, institutional work, and sociocultural performances (Alexander, 2012, Atai et al., 2022; Dhillon & Murray, 2021, Campion, 2016, Ding & Campion, 2016, Farrell & Yang, 2019; Tavakoli & Tavakol, 2018). Moreover, in an attempt to discuss the "conditions and materiality that govern what [EAP practitioners] can realistically achieve or would like to achieve" (p. 70), Ding (2019) discussed the role of three sociocultural, institutional, and disciplinary factors that influence EAP teachers' identity construction. From this perspective, not only do EAP teachers function as individuals developing mastery over content, but they are also in the process of constructing their identities as professionals (Tao & Gao, 2018). A significant part of EAP teachers' identification process involves the contexts that they work in. In this regard, Basturkmen (2014) and Campion (2016) have argued that the contextual parameters that shape the environment in which EAP teachers work can significantly influence their understanding and practice of their profession.

One such context that has gained increasing attention in recent years is online teaching. Online contexts "are now seen as flexible and effective ways to reach teachers" (van Bommel et al., 2020, p. 1) in that they, according to Lantz-Andersson et al. (2018), could significantly define and shape teachers' identities. However, despite the recognition that EAP teachers' work and identity construction are profoundly shaped by the contexts they work in, little has been done on their identity in online contexts, as also argued by Atai et al. (2022). Thus, there is a gap in the EAP literature with regard to EAP teachers' professional identity construction in online contexts. The current study aims to fill this gap by exploring Iranian EAP teachers' identity construction in online contexts. This line of research is particularly significant because (a) little research has explored EAP teachers' identity in online contexts, and (b) it could offer implications for teachers and teacher educators in how to tailor online

instruction to teachers' identities.

Literature review

EAP Teacher Identity Construction

Since the seminal work of Dudley-Evans and St John's in 1998, which defined the roles of EAP teachers, research on EAP instructors has experienced a significant surge in growth. (Campion, 2016; Tavakoli & Tavakol, 2018). While Dudley-Evans and St John enumerated six roles of EAP teachers, later developments have added to these roles, including intercultural workers or interpersonal knowledge constructors, which have been chiefly discussed in Basturkmen (2014). Moreover, in his review of research on EAP teachers, Nazari (2020) discussed the lack of research on different dimensions of EAP teachers' professionalism. Defining EAP teacher education research as "studying practitioners' (subject-specific) cognition(s), the way they practically address the interplay between content and language, and the multiplicity of factors influencing and being influenced by their professionalism and professional career" (p. 9), Nazri (2020) advocated for more research on EAP teacher identity construction, which has also been continued by other researchers.

Over the past decades, there has been a significant increase in research focused on the construction of identity among EAP teachers (e.g., Atai et al., 2022; Tao & Gao, 2018). This body of knowledge shows that EAP teachers could take agentive roles in their own identity construction in the different ecologies that define their work (Mahendra, 2020). Furthermore, EAP teachers could be influenced by the various sociocultural and structural forces that shape their identification processes. In this regard, Ding (2019) argued that a large part of the way EAP teachers construct their identities is determined by how policy and planning and broader discourses and dominant cultures are socioculturally defined. From this perspective, sociocultural and institutional contextualities of teaching are central to EAP teachers' identity construction (Kaivanpanah et al., 2021). Additionally, the content knowledge that defines EAP work is also recognized as a key factor in that EAP teachers should balance language and

content knowledge because content forms many of the daily interactions that occur between teachers and students, and thus shape their identities (Gu & Benson, 2015; Rebenko et al., 2021; Tao & Gao, 2018).

For example, Atai et al. (2022) explored the process of identity construction of a novice teacher of Sports Sciences in the Iranian context. Drawing on data from interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals, the authors found that the teacher faced challenges in effectively constructing his identities, which were associated with emotional and agentic conflicts as well. Moreover, Tao and Gao (2018) explored the identity construction of Chinese teachers and found that their identities were defined by sociocultural contextualities, disciplinary considerations, and personal understandings. In another study, Chang (2017) explored how an EAP teacher moved to the ESP context, and how this process was replete with identity and emotional tensions, which complicated the professional side of her work.

Online Teacher Identity Construction

Following the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational institutions moved to online settings. This form of learning delivery brought about ramifications for the way teachers defined their identities. Flores and Swennen (2020) argued "[t]he implications and effects of the pandemic on education are yet to be known; indeed, they will surely be more challenging for educators and learners in more fragile and unstable contexts" (p. 1). Relatedly, it was later revealed that online education could challenge the teachers in many respects, especially in relation to their identity construction. From this perspective, Parsons et al. (2019) argued that online settings "can effectively support individual teachers' professional learning if it allows for social educative engagement with other professionals" (pp. 34-35). Thus, online education can bring about multifarious contributions for the way teachers construct their identities in relation to the other members and the content of the work.

In online education, researchers have developed various understandings of how this context shapes teacher identities. As an example, Robson (2018) proposed a framework for exploring teachers' online identities.

His framework was grounded on the idea that capturing teacher identities should move beyond describing the factors that influence such an identification process toward accounting for the complexity of this setting. His framework involved the components of agency, social complexity, context, and structure. Moreover, Lantz-Andersson et al. (2018) reviewed research on teachers' online communities and suggested that there is a lack of research on teacher identity construction and that this area should receive more attention from researchers.

Motivated by these ideas, research has addressed teachers' identity construction in online contexts (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2019; Lu & Cruwood, 2015; Nazari & Seyri, 2023; Nazari & Xodabande, 2022a). For instance, Nazari and Seyri (2023) explored six Iranian teachers' identity construction during the COVID-19 pandemic. They collected data from semi-structured interviews, self-reported practices, and online interactions. The study findings revealed that "Subject-related instructional variation; tensions, such as low agency, greater responsibility, and low professional preparation; emotional labour; conceptual change in becoming technophile teachers; (in)congruities in identity extension; and enhanced reflectivity" (p. 1) were the major factors defining the teachers' online identities. Moreover, Nazari and Xodabande (2022b) used sociocultural theory and more specifically a genetic analysis approach in tracking five Iranian teachers' online interactions and collegial identity during participation in a professional development course structured around mobile phone usage. Data were collected from the teachers' online interactions and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis showed that the teachers referred to different aspects of their membership and highlighted how collegial support and gendered identities featured in their professional and effective membership in the course.

The aforementioned literature reveals that research has not adequately examined teachers' identity construction both in EAP and online contexts. Thus, there is a need for more research on each of these contexts. More importantly, there is far less research available on EAP teachers' identity construction in online contexts. This issue is important because many classes have been delivered to the online context and it is needed to explore how this context shapes EAP teachers' identities. Moreover, considering that EAP

teaching is significantly dependent on the context in which it is delivered (Atai et al., 2022; Ding, 2019), exploring how online teaching can influence EAP teachers' identities warrants more empirical attention. This, subsequently, can assist teachers and teacher educators in running professional online development courses more effectively, knowing how online teaching influences teachers' identity construction. The current study aims to explore this issue among Iranian EAP teachers who taught at different universities in Iran by addressing the following question:

How do Iranian EAP teachers perceive the process of constructing their identities in online teaching?

Method

Context

This study was conducted during the first year of COVID-19 pandemic when the higher education of Iran moved to online education like many parts of the world. In Iran, EAP teaching is delivered in both English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purpose (ESAP) forms, and teachers generally come from the field of Applied Linguistics. Policy and planning of this sector are done by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Moreover, the SAMT organization designs the textbooks that are used by different disciplines. This organization "has been supporting growing needs of the higher education of Iran by composing, compiling, translating and publishing textbooks, and journals specific to writing university textbooks in collaboration with educators, professors and researchers of prominent universities and research institutes" (SAMT, 2022)

Participants

The participants of this study were twenty English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers from Iran who had been teaching in online settings for at least two years. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling (in particular maximum variation sampling as they had different experience and background ranges), based on their experience and willingness to participate in the study. They were all employed by different universities in

Iran and had diverse backgrounds in terms of age, gender, and educational qualifications. This was done to gain as much useful information as possible from the teachers regarding their identity construction in online teaching.

The participants were Persian native speakers, ranged in age from 31 to 47 and their teaching experience ranged from a few months to 15 years. All participants held at least a master's degree in English language teaching or a related field and had extensive experience teaching EAP courses to Iranian university students in various fields of study including medicine, chemistry, engineering. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

The participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study and provided written consent to participate. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of research involving human subjects.

Design and Data Collection Procedure

For the purposes of this study, a basic qualitative research design was selected (Creswell, 2014) as it helps researchers obtain in-depth information about people's ideas and perceptions. The design of this project is structured around a flexible and iterative process, allowing for the exploration of new ideas and themes as they emerge from the data. It employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method and thematic analysis were applied to the interview transcripts as the method of data analysis. Since we could not have access to the classes of the teachers due to systemic problems and the teachers' own discretion, we could not observe their classes. The interviews were conducted via phone calls or online via video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and Skype, to accommodate the participants' geographical locations and schedules. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Prior to the interviews, a set of open-ended questions was developed based on the research question and objective of the study. The questions were in line with the definition of identity Yazan (2018) provided as "teachers'

dynamic self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, which shifts as they participate in varying communities, interact with other individuals, and position themselves (and are positioned by others) in social contexts" (p. 1). The questions were designed to elicit the participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to their professional identity construction in online teaching. The questions were pilot-tested with two EAP teachers who were not included in the study to ensure their clarity and relevance. The teachers' responses led to minor changes that strengthened the accuracy of the questions for the purposes of the study.

The interviews were conducted individually with each participant, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English, as it was the language of instruction for EAP courses in Iran. The interviews were conducted by the first author, who had experience conducting qualitative research and had received training in interview techniques.

The interviews began with a brief introduction clear explanation of the study's purpose and objectives. The participants were then asked to provide their demographic information, including their educational qualifications, teaching experience, and online teaching experience. The interview questions then focused on the participants' experiences and perceptions of their professional identity construction in online teaching, including their beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices related to online teaching.

The interviews were conducted in a conversational style, allowing the participants to express their thoughts and experiences freely. The interviewer used probing questions to clarify and deepen the participants' responses, and encouraged them to provide examples and anecdotes to illustrate their points. After each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involved identifying patterns and themes in the participants' responses. The analysis was conducted by the first author, who read and re-read the transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns and subsequently the themes were then organized into subthemes.

The process involved moving from codes to themes in which first the codes emerging from the teachers' responses were noted down and then they were developed into broader themes. The themes were analyzed comparatively to see their accuracy and were reviewed and discussed with the co-authors to ensure their validity and reliability. Inter-coder reliability was obtained by asking a fellow researcher to independently code the same set of data using the same coding scheme or guidelines. There were some discrepancies in the coding and the coders discussed and resolved them until an agreement was reached. The level of agreement between the coders was ICR=88% in percentage agreement. Moreover, we used member-checking of the data with the participants to verify the accuracy of the interpretations and minor points of disagreement were resolved.

Findings

Based on the obtained data, online teaching impacts EAP teachers' professional identity in three personal, pedagogical, and social aspects. These major themes are presented in three tables along with their subthemes. Each sub-theme is then elaborated on.

Table 1

Personal Identities as a Result of Online Teaching

The impacts of online education	Resulting identity
Poor IT infrastructure, limited access to the required technology and low internet speed	Become more patient and hard working
More time-consuming than face to face teaching	Become effective time manager
The need for teachers to embrace new ways of teaching and learning	Become open minded
The transition to online teaching requires teachers to adapt to new technologies and teaching methodologies	Become more adaptive
The need for teachers to handle an online environment well and keep up-to-date with technology	Become confident technology user, Technology enthusiast
Teachers' understanding of students' numerous problems while learning online	Become more empathic

EAP teachers' personal aspects of professional identity were formed and transformed by online teaching. In this regard, six subthemes were extracted from the interviews that were related to personal identities EAP teachers construct. The majority of the EAP teachers stated that due to the lack of proper IT infrastructure, limited access to the required technology and low internet speed, they had to deal with numerous technical problems, especially at the beginning of their career as online teachers. As a result, they became more patient and hardworking:

> *Online teaching has made me more patient because I face many problems that convince me to be a more patient person. (Sara)*

Moreover, several EAP teachers stated that teaching online is more time consuming as Zeinab said:

> *I have to repeat myself more in online classes. It is not like in face to face classes that you could tell if students understood the lesson by looking at their facial reactions and expressions.*

Therefore, some of the teachers came to the realization that they had to manage their time more effectively both in and out of class and eventually they had to train themselves to become effective time managers:

> *Because we had many problems in teaching online and managing time, I looked for strategies to save time and I did it by thinking about my use of time. (Fatemeh)*

With the introduction of online teaching to Iranian universities due to the pandemic, EAP teachers cited that they were first confused and sometimes frustrated to see a completely different teaching context. As for the requirements of Covid safety protocols, online education was obligatory. Teachers stated that they had no choice but to embrace new ways of teaching and learning they previously did not take seriously. As a result, they became more open-minded towards other teaching approaches when they found out more about online teaching classroom conduct and methodology as Sahar's statement shows this:

> *I used to think there are only a hand full of acceptable ways to teach EAP. When I started to teach online, I realized there are other new ways of*

teaching that should not be ignored.

Teachers also noted that the transition to online teaching required teachers to adapt to new technologies and teaching methodologies. They had to give up on their old and sometimes rigid beliefs on teaching mythology and adapt themselves and their teaching styles to this new environment as Fatemeh explained that:

> *At first, I felt frustrated. I didn't know how to teach with those online tools. Gradually, I started to adapt my personal teaching preferences to fit this new environment.*

The EAP teachers expressed that they felt more confident at online teaching after the first few months of struggling. After teaching online for a while, they saw themselves as efficacious users of technology as they could run their classrooms on a range of different teaching tools and platforms. Some of the teachers talked about their excitement every time they found out about a new tool and their eagerness to try it in their teaching. Sina stated that:

> *I have become really interested in technologies and their application in educational technology. I am a member of different technology groups now to be informed of the latest trends in technology.*

The last but not the least subtheme relates to EAP teachers' change in their personality. They stated that as they were witnessing first-hand the problems students were having in online environments, they became more empathetic towards their students. Zahra said:

> *I used to believe students always look for excuses to be absent, leave or cancel classes. The experience of teaching online made me realize that their problems are real especially in online environments. I become more compassionate and tried to help them as much as I could.*

Table 2

Pedagogical Identities as Result of Online Teaching

The impacts of online education	Resulting identity
The need to tailor the existing materials to the needs of students and to create more engaging and interactive activities	Content creator
Special sophisticated pre-planning is required in online teaching	Online course designer
Change in teaching methods and practice and lack of student participation and collaboration	Become creative
Incorporating group works and peer reviewing, managing online discussions, setting rules and regulations	Online manager
Promoting student-centeredness, encouraging learners to assume greater responsibility for their own learning	Online facilitator
Providing feedback online in a range of innovative ways	Online feedback provider
Dealing with the challenges of online teaching including maintaining interactivity and focus among my students.	Become reflective
Troubleshooting any technical issues that arise during online classes	Become a problem solver
The need for teachers to get familiar with the communication norms in academia including academic writing, critical thinking especially in the virtual environment	Online academic English specialist
Challenges to assume appropriate professional identity (most online educational platforms reinforce teaching roles such as a classroom manager/lecturer rather than a facilitator)	Become a lecturer
Using more translation due to lack of nonverbal cues and facial expressions	Become a translator
The responsibilities of providing new evaluation methods to assess academic progress in online environments such as assessing digital portfolios	Become digital assessment specialist

The pedagogical identities that EAP teachers constructed are, as expected, by far more than their personal and social identities. Twelve identities were extracted; each is further elaborated on in order of their

presentation in Table 2.

When EAP teachers first started to teach online, they soon realized the need to create materials usable and tailored to this new environment. They started to make or find photos, PowerPoint slides, videos, podcasts, and many other online tasks and activities. Susan said:

> *Most of the martials I used in my classes were unusable in online teaching, even the book. I had to make PowerPoint slides for the book I used because there was no electronic version of it. To teach academic genres, I created some videos and shared them in their online groups.*

The teachers also held that they had to design an online course where all the martials needed to be digital. As online course designers, EAP teachers needed to tailor their courses to meet the specific needs of their students, to incorporate multimedia resources, interactive activities, and other digital tools to enhance the learning experience of their students. Designing online courses also allowed these EAP teachers to have more control over the content and structure of their courses, enabling them to create a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum that covers all necessary topics and skills:

> *I think that the pandemic gave me the opportunity to design the lessons more effectively and I included many more interesting topics (Sara*).

This can be especially important in EAP instruction, where students may need to develop specific language and academic skills to succeed in their academic pursuits. In addition, a few EAP teachers also mentioned that they had to carefully pre-plan their lessons and even create plan B and C and …., in case technology fails.

The teachers indicated that changes in pedagogy, teaching and learning practices were huge which made them look for innovative teaching methods and became more creative in their use of online tools and their teaching practices. They stated that running an online classroom was drastically different from a face-to face one. Different set of rules were needed to be established to regulate different online activities including group work, peer collaboration and classroom discussions. Maryam states that:

> *Managing an online class is really hard. For instance, I once asked*

> *students to discuss a topic in 6 breakout rooms in Adobe connect. As it is not possible for the teacher to be present in all rooms simultaneously, so in some rooms students were not participating or were talking about some unrelated topics. It was also difficult and time-consuming to provide quality feedback to them. After that incidence, I asked them to do the discussion part using an online forum which turned out to be more efficient.*

Moreover, they stated that they worked hard and spent more time on finding workable solutions for the complex problems they were facing in a new situation. According to the participants of the study, one of the major problems they had to tackle was limited interpersonal interaction in online environments which made both teachers and students less interested in online learning and teaching and made classes less engaging and appealing. The teachers stated that they tried hard to think creatively to find new ways of maintaining interaction in online teaching as Mohsen indicated that:

> *I tried to be more creative and use different resources to make my classes less boring.*

The professional identity of teachers as online facilitators in online teaching, as stated by EAP teachers, involves developing skills and competencies that are specific to the virtual environment. This includes using technology to engage students, creating interactive and collaborative learning experiences, and providing timely feedback and support. EAP teachers teaching online believed that it is not possible to be a facilitator in the same way as face-to-face teaching. They thought that, when teaching online, teachers should encourage learners to take greater responsibility for their own learning and promote student-centeredness. Elnaz said that:

> *I try to encourage my students to take an active role in their own learning process and look for and rely on additional online resources to improve their language skills.*

Teachers who viewed themselves as online feedback providers recognized that feedback was essential for student learning and growth. They cited their use of a variety of methods to provide feedback, including written

comments, audio recordings, and video conferencing. They also mentioned their use of online tools such as learning management systems and digital assessment tools to provide feedback on assignments and track student progress. To facilitate learning in an online environment, EAP teachers utilized a variety of tools to and provided online feedback on their writings using word processor. Sara said:

> *I would ask my students to read certain passages and send me the summary of it in the form of voice messages in Telegram. I would listen and give them feedback in their language use in voice messages.*

The EAP teachers also believed that they have become more reflective in online teaching due to various reasons such as adapting to a new teaching environment, lack of face-to-face interaction, increased flexibility, and technology integration. They said online teaching requires them to adapt to new tools and platforms, which can be challenging at first. This may lead them to reflect on their teaching practices and find ways to improve. Additionally, the majority of teachers thought that reflecting on their teaching methods can help them find ways to engage students and create a more interactive learning experience. Amir commented:

> *When my online classes end, I usually think about my experience in those classes, I try to learn from my experiences, good or bad, for my future classes.*

The EAP teachers held that in online teaching, teachers were required to become problem solvers as they face various challenges such as technical issues, student engagement, and assessment. Teachers stated that they needed to identify and solve problems quickly and efficiently to ensure that students receive a quality education. In this regard, Elham's statement could be referred to:

> *When teaching online, it is not unusual for something to go wrong. I think every challenge that arises is an opportunity to find creative solutions and improve the learning experience for my students.*

In online teaching, the teachers argued that they also played the role of digital assessment specialist. This means that they were responsible for

evaluating student learning and providing feedback on their progress using various digital tools and platforms. Sahar mentioned:

> *I am fascinated by the capacity of online assessment. Ever since I have learned about online tests and quizzes. I often create online tests to assess my students' progress. They are easier to administer and score and students like it.*

The EAP teachers participating in the study stated that may lecture more in online teaching because it is a common method of delivering content in virtual environments. Additionally, they indicated that online teaching may require more direct instruction and guidance from the teacher, as students may have limited opportunities for face-to-face interaction or support from peers. As a result, the EAP teachers pointed out that may find themselves lecturing more frequently in order to provide the necessary structure and direction for their online courses. Susan voiced this concern:

> *I tend to lecture more in online classes. Because of the limitations of the technology to convey information effectively, lecturing seems like the easiest option.*

Some of the EAP teachers reported that they usually translate more in online classes because they want to ensure that their students understand the material. Online classes may present more challenges for students who are not fluent in the language of instruction, so teachers may use translation as a tool to facilitate comprehension as Mohsen said:

> *I relied more on translating during online teaching as a way to make sure students fully understand the passage.*

Table 3

Social Identities as a Result of Online Teaching

The impacts of online education	Resulting identity
The need for teachers to mentor or coach individual students on tech use	Become technology advisor
Setting online office hours and using commination applications as valuable ways to establish one-on-one communication, listen to student feedback and help them with	Online mentor

their assignments or questions	
Teachers' recognition of the importance of asking for support during difficult times	Support seeker
Collaborative relationships among colleagues such as sharing ideas, resources and strategies through creating virtual professional communities	Online collaborator
Teachers struggle to build rapport with their students, being unable to rely on nonverbal cues or physical presence to communicate with students.	Online rapport establisher
Engaging in continuous professional development to adapt to new online tools	Become a lifelong learner
The need to be part of a recognized EAP community and the affordances of internet for online international forums and communities	Active international network participant

With regard to the social identities teachers construct, seven identities along with their subthemes were extracted. Each one is further elaborated on in order of their presentation in Table 3.

The teachers stated that they gradually became technology advisors in online teaching because they needed to have a good understanding of the technology tools and platforms they were using to deliver their classes. They needed to be able to troubleshoot technical issues, provide guidance on how to use different features, and help students navigate the online learning environment. By becoming technology advisors, teachers believed they could ensure their online classes run smoothly and that their students have access to the best possible learning resources. Parisa held that:

> *I am not just teaching English; I also strive to equip my students with the right digital tools to excel in their studies.*

EAP Teachers stated that they act as online mentors to provide guidance and support to their students, help students navigate the online learning platform, to foster a positive and supportive learning environment, to provide feedback on assignments, and answer questions about course content. They also stated that they offered encouragement and motivation to keep students engaged and on track with their studies. One of the teachers made a

statement in this regard:

> *I feel privileged to be a mentor to my online students, guiding them towards their academic success and personal growth. (Zohreh)*

The EAP teachers who viewed themselves as support seekers recognized that they could not operate in isolation and that they needed to collaborate with other educators, administrators, and support staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students. They actively sought out opportunities for professional development, such as attending workshops, conferences, and webinars, and engage in ongoing conversations with colleagues to share ideas and best practices. Fatemeh, one of the EAP teachers stated that:

> *Before starting to teach online, I preferred to rely more on my own abilities than asking for support, but I have changed ever since when I faced this new situation with novel problems.*

The teachers believed that their identity as online collaborator is a crucial aspect of their role in online teaching environments. They mentioned that collaboration allowed them to share ideas, resources, and strategies, which could lead to a more effective and engaging learning experience for students. According to the teachers, collaboration in online teaching could be with teachers such as sharing lesson plans, co-teaching as Mina said:

> *I used to think that teaching online meant I was alone in my virtual classroom, but now I see that I can easily connect with other educators to share teaching ideas, resources and lesson plans.*

Or it could be with students, including being present online and providing feedback on student work as Amir said:

> *Since there is no physical presence, I have to increase my online presence so that students feel that I am more available and more reachable to guide them.*

Some of the teachers mentioned that online teaching requires them to be proficient in the use of technology and digital tools as well as to stay up-to-date with new developments and trends in online education. They referred to various ways of learning, such as attending professional development

workshops and conferences, participating in online courses and webinars, reading educational literature, and collaborating with other educators. They referred to themselves as lifelong learners as one of the teachers indicated:

> *From the moment I started to teach online, I have been constantly learning and growing alongside my students, discovering new ways to engage and connect with them in this ever-evolving world of technology. (Ramin)*

Moreover, the teachers believed that in the rapidly changing field of online education, it is essential for teachers to continually update their knowledge and skills to ensure they are providing best possible learning experience for their students. According to the participants of the study, one way for teachers to do this is to become active international network participants in online social networks and become actively engaged in global communities of practice related to EAP instruction. Sara commented:

> *Before starting online teaching, I was not aware of the existing international community for EAP teachers. As I was looking for professional development opportunities online, I become familiar with many international forums related to online teaching and EAP. They would set up online speeches and conferences.*

Discussion

This study aimed to explore how online teaching influenced Iranian EAP teachers' professional identity construction. It was found that online education had significant effects on the teachers' personal, pedagogical, and social identities. With respect to personal identities, it was found that the teachers in this study faced a multitude of challenges that influenced their identity construction. Particularly, online education influenced the teachers' personal attributes and characteristics in terms of influencing their socio-affective states. Previous research (e.g., Atai et al., 2022; Tao & Gao, 2018) has shown that EAP teachers' identities are highly influenced by their personal characteristics. However, the findings of this study reveal that the challenges of online education have added to these complexities in that the teachers have

defined new identities for themselves in terms of becoming more adaptable and enthusiast. Thus, it appears that online education can significantly influence EAP teachers' personal identities by moving them toward adopting new identities that facilitate their work in these contexts. This finding is also in line with Lantz-Andersson et al. (2018) who found that online communities are likely to shape the personalized dimensions of teachers' understandings.

At the pedagogical level, it was found that online education influenced the EAP teachers' identities in a way that they were more oriented toward reconstructing their identities in relation to the content of EAP. The range of identities that the emerged from the data showed that content figured as a key dimension of the teachers' online identities. This finding is in line with the role identities that Atai et al. (2018) mentioned for Iranian EAP teachers. Moreover, the findings align with Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) and Basturkmen (2014) in terms of the EAP teachers' role identities. Nevertheless, the findings add to these discussions because they provide a more comprehensive categorization of EAP teachers' identities. Moreover, these findings are more worthwhile because they paint the picture of EAP teacher identities in online settings, which is a novel dimension of EAP teachers' work. In particular, these findings corroborate the claim made by Lantz-Andersson (2018) that "the continuous growth of teachers' online interaction for professional use reflect[s] a growing sense amongst teachers that these are meaningful and beneficial professional activities" (p. 313) because the teachers' constructed identities show how they have come to adopt new roles and identities.

It was also found that the teachers' reconstructed identities were not limited to personal and pedagogical dimensions, and they came to develop identities that extended to a social level. It has consistently been argued that EAP is closely related to and defined by the sociocultural contextualities of teaching (e.g., Ding, 2019; Rebenko et al., 2021; Tao & Gao, 2018). Such a character of EAP teacher professionalism stems from the nature of this area in that, as Campion (2016) emphatically argued, EAP attempts to constantly respond to the demands of the society. Similar observations have been made by Ding (2019) regarding the effects of neoliberalist forces on EAP teaching and

specifically on EAP teacher identity construction.

However, the findings of the current study show that not only can online education influence the EAP teachers' technology-related identities, but it also shapes their EAP identities. That is, the teachers reconstructed their identities in both technological and EAP terms. This finding is a novel finding in the context of both online and education and especially EAP teaching. This finding shows how the teachers could extend beyond their institutional level and adopt identities that help them in both settings. This finding is in line with Atai et al. (2022) and Tao and Gao (2018) in showing the complexity of EAP teacher identities. Moreover, it shows how context of teaching, as argued by Basturkmen (2014) and Campion (2016) discussed, comes to significantly influence EAP teachers' diverse identities, which happened in particular relation to EAP teachers' identities in online education in this study.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how online education influences Iranian EAP teachers' professional identity construction. The study findings revealed that online education provided a context that profoundly influenced the restructuring of the teachers' identities in personal, pedagogical, and social levels. It was found that the teachers' identities are significantly defined by the content of EAP teaching as well as their adoption of the role of an online educator. These findings add to the body of knowledge on both EAP teaching and online education by showing how context makes and helps teachers adopt identities that respond to their needs in that context. Moreover, the findings show the multidimensionality and complexity of EAP teacher identities in being online educators in that these identities are formed by personal, social, pedagogical, institutional, and disciplinary considerations.

The study findings offer implications for teachers and teacher educators. Teachers can benefit from the study findings by reflecting more on their identities and how online teaching influences their professional practices. This will help them become more cognizant of how online teaching shapes their identities and professional performance. In addition, in their discussion of EAP

teacher professionalism, Atai and Nejadghanbar (2017) argue that lack of systematic teacher education in Iran "has resulted in a fuzzy state in which teachers basically follow their own tentative conceptualizations of the nature of EAP instruction" (p. 44). The findings of this study could provide a useful alternative for such teacher education courses. In this regard, teacher education courses can embrace the identities that this study showed because they can help the teachers contribute to teachers' professional growth in different personal, pedagogical, and social terms. Moreover, these findings could also be helpful for online education courses because this study is one of the few ones that offers such a neat categorization of online teacher identities. Thus, these identities could be the focus of professional development courses so that the teachers face fewer tensions in transitioning to online education.

The current study had some limitations that could be addressed in future research. The first limitation is that data were only collected from interviews. It is apparent that collecting data from more instruments such as reflective journals and classroom observations could effectively unpack different dimensions of EAP teachers' online identities. The second limitation concerns the number of teachers. Future research can examine EAP teachers' identities with a greater number of teachers, especially if done across different contexts. It would also be helpful to explore how EAP teachers' practice in online education influences their identities because EAP teachers' practice carries the additional component of content in comparison to general English education. It is hoped that the findings of this study could help EAP teachers and teacher educators effectively address the challenges and construct their identities more effectively.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. How has your experience with online teaching impacted your professional identity as an EAP teacher?
2. Have you experienced any challenges in maintaining a sense of professional identity while teaching online? If so, can you describe these challenges?
3. How do you think that online teaching affects the way that you interact with your students and colleagues, and what impact does this have on your professional identity?
4. Have you noticed any changes in the way that you approach lesson planning or curriculum development as a result of teaching online?
5. Do you feel that your professional identity as an EAP teacher is influenced by the technology and tools that you use to teach online? If so, how?
6. How do you think that your professional identity is affected by the increased flexibility and autonomy that comes with teaching online?
7. Do you believe that online teaching has led to any changes in your teaching style or pedagogical approach, and if so, how has this impacted your professional identity?
8. Have you noticed any differences in the way that students perceive you as a teacher when you are teaching online versus in-person? If so, can you describe these differences and their impact on your professional identity?
9. How do you balance the need for student engagement and interaction with the limitations of online teaching platforms?
10. How do you build rapport and establish trust with students when teaching online?
11. In what ways do you believe that online teaching has impacted your ability to assess student learning and provide feedback?
12. Have you noticed any differences in the types of assignments or assessments that are most effective when teaching online versus in-person?
13. How do you maintain a sense of community and collaboration among students when teaching online?
14. How do you balance the need for structure and organization with the flexibility that comes with online teaching?
15. In what ways do you believe that online teaching has impacted your professional development and continuing education as an EAP teacher?

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The Most Common Feedback Types Provided by EFL Teachers in Essay Writing Classes

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Abstract

Despite the importance of the perception behind teachers' feedback, it is astonishing to note that there are not many studies regarding how teachers provide feedback. Drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of written Corrective Feedback (CF), this study explored the most common feedback types provided by EFL teachers. Moreover, the study aimed at finding out whether teachers' teaching experience and learners' proficiency level had any bearing on the type of feedback the teachers provided. Eleven teachers provided feedback on 301 descriptive essays written by EFL students in English. The findings revealed that teachers mostly tended to employ direct CF to correct their students' linguistic errors. This was followed by indirect CF and metalinguistic CF, respectively. It came to light that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation had no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers. The experienced teachers opted more for indirect feedback while the inexperienced ones preferred direct feedback. Teachers were more inclined to provide intermediate students with direct CF whereas they provided more indirect CF to the upper intermediate students. The results suggest that not all teachers' perceptions about feedback can necessarily be rendered into classroom practices and various factors, including culture, society, learners and teachers themselves impact teachers' beliefs and practices.

Keywords: direct CF, indirect CF, reformulation, teaching experience, teacher feedback

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Introduction

Writing is a language skill which can be regarded as extremely crucial when it comes to EFL/ESL academic success (Bobanović, 2016; Hyland, 2003; Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2015). Language learners might encounter multiple challenges in the process of writing as it is primarily a productive language skill. One of the most pivotal elements in writing is to help learners not to have too many challenges, especially linguistic ones. Accordingly, feedback can play a determining role in guiding students and developing their cognitive abilities in the process of writing (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Yu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang & Cheng, 2021). The information about the students' performance or apprehension with regard to their learning goals can be provided through effective feedback that should be presented to them by their teachers. Therefore, teachers need to provide students with various types of corrective feedback (CF) in order to bring their current linguistic and non-linguistic levels closer to the desired outcome. Nevertheless, it should be noted that providing learners with mere feedback, without considering the type of feedback and its effectiveness, does not necessarily lead to improvement and success on the part of language learners (Lee, 2020; Yu et al., 2020).

Teachers' feedback would most probably affect and scaffold students' cognitive development and inform them about their potential strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, many language instructors and learners maintain that teachers' written corrective feedback can result in language learning in general and writing improvement in particular (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). However, what type of feedback can lead to learners' language development and writing improvement remains a controversial issue. Hyland and Hyland (2006) note that though feedback can be regarded as a focal facet of the written process in various pedagogic settings, the existing literature points to an inclusiveness and uncertainty regarding its part in L2 progress and instructors typically are of the opinion that its potentialities are not being fully unleashed.

A number of studies (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Chen et al., 2016) have investigated the relation between language learners'

proficiency level and their preferences for receiving feedback. Some seminal evidence suggests that the learners' overall proficiency directly influences the extent to which CF can lead to learning (Bagheri Nevisi et al., 2019; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Sheen, 2004). However, few studies, specifically in the Iranian EFL setting, have investigated the types of feedback provided by teachers in essay writing classes. Therefore, drawing upon the written CF typology of Ellis (2009), the present study probed into feedback types Iranian EFL instructors utilized in their essay writing classes to correct the students' linguistic errors.

Literature Review

Writing in EFL/ESL context is viewed as a purposeful means of communication rather than the accomplishment of an aimless, haphazard, and spontaneous activity. Quality feedback provides crucial information about development and learning with regard to learning objectives and expectations; stirs possible interactions between the educator and pupils and among learners about the indispensable dimensions of the learning process; enables writers to develop a repertoire of alternative strategies; prompts positive motivational values and perceptions; and improves self-esteem (Ferris, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wahyuni, 2017).

Despite mounting emphasis on oral teacher and peer feedback, written teacher feedback plays a pivotal part in both ESL and EFL settings. Early studies on native English speakers indicated that the majority of written feedback types were poor and commonly misconceived and misinterpreted by students (Truscott, 1996). It is of paramount importance to pinpoint that feedback research was in its early stages of its development at that time and ideas of providing feedback and planning research to explain it were basic, simple, and unsophisticated. More recent empirical studies indicate that written feedback does result in writing enhancement (e.g., Banaruee, et al., 2018; Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

A significant body of studies on written corrective feedback (WCF) provided by instructors in L2 settings has dealt with correcting learners' errors and whether this could be beneficial to their overall writing progress. Error-

correction researchers have investigated not only its relative effectiveness and the strategies teachers employ to correct students' errors in L2 writing, but also the impacts such feedback leaves on students' short-run and long-run developments as writers (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Zhang, 2018). According to process theories, feedback on errors is rather disheartening and disappointing and typically falls short of leading to desired outcomes in L2 writing contexts (Fazio, 2001). However, distinct conclusions cannot be drawn from the existing literature as to the genuine efficacy of the error-correction approach to providing written feedback due to varied populations, treatments and research designs. Written feedback should be regarded as more than mere marks on papers and essays since it should be truly representative of the real classroom environment within which it transpires and properly should reflect teacher-student relationships as well (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Goldstein, 2004).

Although teacher feedback alone cannot be considered the sole responsible factor for learners' progress in L2 writing, it should be regarded as one crucial variable. One other important factor is the feedback type (e.g., direct vs. indirect feedback). Results on feedback type have been paradoxical and contentious, primarily because of differing learner populations, various writing types, and the disparate methodologies adopted. Ferris (2006), for example, found that learners utilize direct feedback more consistently and efficiently than indirect feedback, as students merely copy and paste the teachers' recommendations into the following drafts of their written work. Although this might be a disappointing result for many teachers who are on the lookout for evidence that learners are becoming more skilled writers, the significance of instantaneous and swift enhancement of drafts cannot be understated and downplayed (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Another important element is teachers' standpoints and attitudes towards learners' texts and the kind of link they set up with students while providing feedback. Teachers do approach the written works of students differently with various goals in mind and such considerations and attitudes might change with various assignments, learners, and drafts (Gao & Zhang, 2020).

There have also been attempts to discover learners' viewpoints about

teacher written feedback. Investigation of learners' feedback preferences broadly suggest that ESL learners think highly of teacher written feedback and typically consider it more important than the alternatives (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019; Sakrak-Ekin & Balçikanli, 2019; Wiboolyasarin, 2021). Though most research demonstrates that learners desire teachers to specify their grammar mistakes, some desire to be provided with comments on the content by their instructors. Surveys indicate that learners tend to prefer to be presented with WCF combined with other sources like conferences and are generally receptive to indirect types as well (Esmaeeli & Sadeghi, 2020).

A last crucial issue of pupils' reactions to instructor feedback is that of 'text appropriation', or "the idea that ownership of writing can be 'stolen' from a writer by the teacher's comments" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 88). Such issues were posed in ESL debates of feedback but were strongly repudiated by Reid who stated that text appropriation was "largely a mythical fear of ESL writing teachers" (Reid, 1994, p. 275). She asserted the peril of mixing up useful and advantageous mediation and interference with appropriation and strongly asked ESL educators to concentrate rather on their parts as informers of culture to create and facilitate the socio-discoursal community in ESL writing classes.

Purpose of the Study

Drawing upon the typology of Ellis (2009), this research intended to probe into the types of feedback Iranian EFL instructors employ in their five-paragraph essay writing classes to correct the students' linguistic errors. Pinpointing the most commonly-applied feedback types used by the Iranian EFL teachers is another objective of this research. Finally, investigating the association between the instructors' experience and the type of the feedback that they present to the students at different proficiency levels is the final goal of conducting this study. To achieve the above-stated objectives, the researchers formulated the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent feedback types used by EFL instructors to correct the learners' linguistic errors?

2. Does the EFL teachers' teaching experience play any role in the type of feedback they provide?
3. Do EFL teachers provide the same feedback types to EFL learners regardless of the learners' proficiency level?

Methodology

Participants

Eleven male and female EFL teachers, teaching essay writing courses at different universities across the country, agreed to cooperate with the researchers of the study. They signed the electronic form sent through email to them to cooperate with the researchers. The teachers then let the researchers have access to the students' commented essays with various feedback types. All in all, 301 descriptive essays written by 301 male and female BA students majoring in English language and literature were collected for the purpose of data analysis. The students had already taken the Solution placement test and had been divided into intermediate and upper intermediate proficiency levels. Then, the participant teachers were kindly asked to specify their essay writing teaching experiences (i.e., the number of years they had been teaching writing-related courses). Based on the answers provided by the teachers, the researchers divided the teachers into two groups of high and low teaching experience based on the mean and median statistics. That is to say, six teachers had teaching experiences equal to or less than 8.91 or 7 years, and five had a teaching experience of higher than 8.91 or 7 years.

Instruments

To account for the questions of the study, the researchers utilized the following instruments: the Solution Placement Test was applied to specify the participants' proficiency levels. Also, Ellis' (2009) typology of teacher choices to amend linguistic errors of learners' writings was employed to identify the type and frequency of the feedback the teachers had provided.

Solution Placement Test. Solution placement test is a widely-used multiple-choice general language proficiency test. This test is used for placement and diagnostic purposes. The placement test included 50 multiple-

choice items which evaluated learners' grammatical and lexical knowledge, a reading comprehension passage with 10 graded items, and a writing test that gauged learners' productive language skill. The 50 multiple-choice items and the reading activity were planned to be answered together within 45 minutes. The writing activity was completed in the following week and took nearly 20 minutes. No negative points were conceived for the wrong responses and each correct answer had one point. According to the obtained answers from the solution placement test, all the students were categorized into two major levels of language proficiency: Intermediate and upper intermediate. Those who scored between 31 and 44 were labeled intermediate and those who scored 45 and higher than 45 were regarded as upper intermediate.

Ellis' (2009) Typology of Written Corrective Feedback. Drawing upon teacher handbooks and experimental research on WCF, Ellis (2009) put forward a classification of teacher choices to amend and rectify learners' errors. His typology includes the following parts:

A. Direct Feedback: In this type of feedback, the learners are presented with the right format by the instructor. Direct feedback is typically provided by instructors when spotting a grammar error, by presenting the proper form or the anticipated reaction close to the language or grammar mistake. Direct feedback can be provided in different shapes like drawing a line through the erroneous or redundant word or phrase; embedding and entering a misplaced, absent or anticipated phrase, word, or morpheme; and via giving the exact and accurate language form above or near the incorrect one (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2006).

B. Indirect Feedback: In this type, the teacher presents the learner with indications rather than the correct form of an error. Therefore, instructors can present general information and cues concerning the place and the error type or nature by highlighting, underlining, circling, coding, or marking an error, and the learners are asked to self-correct the error. This type of feedback is further divided into two subcategories: Indicating + locating the error, and Indication only (Lee,

2008; O'Sullivan & Chambers, 2006).

C. Metalinguistic Feedback: Metalinguistic corrective feedback is divided into two subcategories: Application of error code and brief grammatical descriptions. Instructor jots down codes in the margin of a passage in the former, and puts a number for errors in text and describes each numbered error linguistically at the bottom of the text in the latter. The instructor provides metalinguistic indication and hint as to the essence of the error. It entails either commentaries or questions relevant to the accuracy and correctness of the learners' utterance, without precisely giving the accurate and proper form.

D. Electronic Feedback: The existence and availability of corpora of written English can be considered a useful means to present learners with help and guidance in their writings. Through electronic feedback, the learners are guided via software programs while writing.

E. Unfocused Feedback: In this type, teachers select to amend all or almost all errors of the learners.

F. Focused Feedback: In focused CF, the teacher chooses particular errors to be rectified and remedied and disregards the others.

G. Reformulation: This comprises a native speaker's revision and re-rendering of the learners' whole contents and wordings to create a native-like version of the written text to the extent possible while maintaining the originality of the text as well. This type of feedback is further divided into two subcategories: Revision required and No revisions required.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers went through these methodological stages to complete the research process: First, the students in 11 different essay writing classes were given the Solution placement test by their teachers. According to the obtained findings from the test, the researchers could divide all the participants into intermediate (n = 141) and upper intermediate (n = 160) levels. Next, all the subjects were asked by their teachers to write a five-paragraph descriptive

essay inside the class.

Having collected all the essays, the teachers went through the essays and provided some linguistic feedback for their students. Finally, the teachers let the researchers of this study gain access to their students' essays and the written corrective feedback. Drawing upon content analysis and considering Ellis' (2009) classification of instructor choices to amend linguistic errors, the researchers analyzed the data to pinpoint and categorize the types and frequencies of the feedback types that the teachers had provided.

Two researchers of the present study went through the provided feedback as carefully as they could to do the coding. The researchers embarked upon the coding process with a good command of and a mastery over the above-mentioned WCF typology. To do the coding, the researchers went through the teachers' feedback and comments one by one and decided upon the category each feedback belonged to and specified the feedback type according to the explanations provided by Ellis. It became obvious that the two coders approximately agreed with each other in the majority of cases and the intercoder reliability was .86. Nevertheless, the two coders asked a writing expert for guidelines, directions, and assistances in case of disagreements to make the right decision. The expert enjoyed 30 years of teaching writing in several academic institutions and was an associate professor of Applied Linguistics.

The first feedback type based on Ellis's typology is called direct, in which learners are presented with the right format. For instance, the following teacher feedback was coded as direct by both coders since the teacher had provided the correct form by drawing a line through the erroneous or redundant word and had given the precise and correct form near the incorrect one:

I ~~did~~ the right decision and enjoyed ~~from~~ my travelling experience a lot.

The second feedback type is indirect, in which students are provided with indications rather than the accurate form of an error. This feedback type is subdivided into two subdivisions: *Indicating + locating the error* and *Indication only*. The two coders counted the following example as indirect feedback

because the teacher had indicated the error by underlining the error without actually correcting it:

She walked <u>onto</u> the room, <u>losed</u> her balance and tumbled backwards.

The third feedback type is called metalinguistic, which falls into two subcategories: *Application of error code*, in which students are provided with codes in the margins, and *brief grammatical descriptions,* in which errors are numbered and then explained briefly at the bottom of the text. The following example was regarded as metalinguistic feedback (brief grammatical description) by both coders since it included a commentary pertinent to the accuracy of the students' writing without presenting the accurate form:

He went through bridge and over the river to find missing dog.

1 2 3

(*1) you need 'over' when you go across the surface of something; you use 'through' when you go inside something*

(2), (3) you need 'the' before the noun when the person or thing has been mentioned previously.

The remaining three feedback types were absent in the collected data; focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation had no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers. Rarely did the two coders disagree on a specific teacher feedback and the category it belonged to. The following is an example where such a disagreement transpired and a reference was made to the writing expert to resolve it:

The train <u>left</u> early in the morning by the time her parents and friends got to the station

One of the teachers had underlined the erroneous structure and had written *Past perfect = had + pp* in the margin. One of the coders believed that this feedback should be considered *Use of error code*, while the other one argued that it is *Brief grammatical description.* The third coder agreed with the former opinion and settled down the discrepancy.

Data Analysis

Having collected the data, the researchers employed the latest version

of Statistical Package for Social Sciences to analyze the data. Drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of written corrective feedback types, the researchers of the study analyzed the instructors' feedback on learners' writings to identify and categorize the types and frequencies of teachers' feedback types. Chi-square test was also employed to approach the data quantitatively.

Results

Exploring the First Research Question

The first research question explored the frequency of the feedback types presented by EFL instructors to correct linguistic errors. Table 1 displays the frequencies and percentages for the feedback types presented by EFL instructors. The results indicated that direct CF (n = 1399, 46 %) was the most frequent feedback type provided by the EFL teachers. This was followed by indirect CF (n = 1248, 41%): "indicating + locating" (n = 713, 23.4 %) + "indication only" (n = 535, 17.6 %), and metalinguistic CF (n = 394, 12.9%): "brief grammatical description" (n = 247, 8.1 %) + "use of error code" (n = 147, 4.8 %).

Table 1

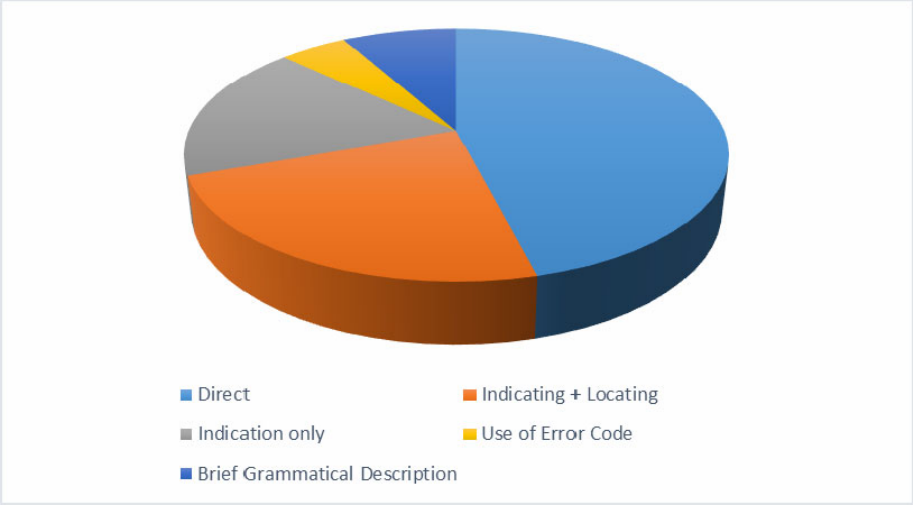
Frequencies and Percentages of Types of Corrective Feedback (CF)

Feedback Type		Frequency			Percent
Direct CF			1399		46.0
Indirect CF	Indicating + Locating the error	713	1248	23.4	41.0
	Indication Only	535		17.6	
Metalinguistic CF	Brief Grammatical Descriptions	247	394	8.1	12.9
	Use of Error Code	147		4.8	
Total			3041		100.0

Figure 1 displays the percentages illustrated above in Table 1. The findings showed that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation had no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers.

Figure1

Feedback Type Proportions



Exploring the Second Research Question

The second question intended to find out whether EFL teachers' teaching experience has any significant role in determining the type of feedback they provided. It is noteworthy that eleven EFL teachers participated in this study whose teaching experiences were 1, 3, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 17, and 22 years. Table 2 shows the mean and median for the teachers' years of teaching experience. The mean and median were 8.91 and 7, respectively. The researchers divided the teachers into two groups of high and low teaching experienced based on the mean and median statistics. That is to say, six teachers had teaching experiences equal to or less than 8.91 or 7 years, and five had teaching experience higher than 8.91 or 7 years.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Years of Teaching Experience

Mean	8.91
Median	7.00
Std. Deviation	6.61
Minimum	1
Maximum	22

Table 3 shows the frequencies, percentages, and standardized residuals (Std. Residual) for the feedback types provided by the high and low experience instructors. If Std. Residuals were higher than 1.96, it could be concluded that the observed frequency was significantly beyond what was expected, and if they were higher than - 1.96, it could be concluded that the observed frequency was significantly below what was expected.

According to the findings demonstrated in Table 3, it can be said that less experienced teachers provided significantly more direct CF (50.4 %, Std. Residual = 2.8 > 1.96) than the more experienced ones (38.9 %, Std. Residual = -3.6 > -1.96). The high-experience teachers provided significantly more indirect CF ["indicating + locating" CF (27.4 %, Std. Residual = 2.8 > 1.96 and "indication only" CF (25.8 %, Std. Residual = 6.6 > 1.96] than the low-experience group ["indicating + locating" CF (21 %, Std. Residual = -2.2 > -1.96 and "indication only" CF (12.6 %, Std. Residual = -5.2 > -1.96]. Although the low-experience teachers provided more "use of error code" CF (5.5 %, Std. Residual = 1.3 < 1.96) than the high-experience group (3.8 %, Std. Residual = -1.6 < -1.96), the difference between the two groups was insignificant because Std. Residuals were lower than +/- 1.96. And finally, "brief grammatical description" was provided significantly more often by the low-experience teachers (10.6 %, Std. Residual = 3.7 > 1.96) than by the high-experience ones (4.1 %, Std. Residual = -4.8 > -1.96).

Table 3

Frequencies, Percentages and Std. Residuals for the Feedback Types by Teaching Experience

		Direct CF	Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		
		Direct	Indicating + Locating	Indication only	Use of Error Code	Brief Grammatical Description	Total
Low	N	947	395	236	103	199	1880

	%	50.4%	21.0%	12.6%	5.5%	10.6%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	2.8	-2.2	-5.2	1.3	3.7	
High	N	452	318	299	44	48	1161
	%	38.9%	27.4%	25.8%	3.8%	4.1%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	-3.6	2.8	6.6	-1.6	-4.8	
Total	N	1399	713	535	147	247	3041
	%	46.0%	23.4%	17.6%	4.8%	8.1%	100.0%

Table 4 displays the results of the chi-square test. The results (χ^2 (4) = 144.97, p = .000, Cramer's V = .218, p = .000) revealed that there existed significant disparities between types of CF provided by the high and low-experience teachers.

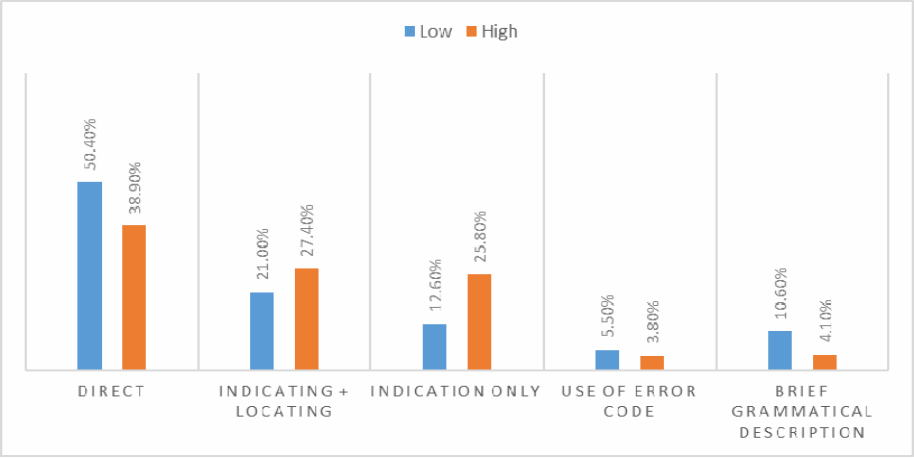
Table 4

Chi-Square Tests for the Feedback Types by Teaching Experience

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	144.977[a]	4	.00
Likelihood Ratio	146.652	4	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	.168	1	.68
N of Valid Cases	3041		
Cramer's V	.218		.00

Figure 2

Percentages of Feedback Types by Teaching Experience



Exploring the Third Research Question

The third question intended to examine whether the EFL teachers provided the same feedback types to EFL learners considering their proficiency level. Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics for the feedback types EFL instructors presented to intermediate and upper intermediate EFL learners.

Based on the results displayed in Table 5, it can be concluded that EFL teachers provided significantly more "direct" CF to intermediate learners (49.7 %, Std. Residual = 2.1 > 1.96) than the upper intermediate ones (41.7 %, Std. Residual = -2.4 > -1.96). The participant teachers provided significantly more "indirect" CF to the upper intermediate learners ["indicating + locating" CF (27.2 %, Std. Residual = 2.9 > 1.96) and "indication only" CF (20.8 %, Std. Residual = 2.9 > 1.96] than to the intermediates ["indicating + locating" CF (20.2 %, Std. Residual = -2.7 > -1.96) and "indication only" CF (14.8 %, Std. Residual = -2.7 > -1.96]. Although the participant teachers provided more "use of error code" CF to the upper intermediate learners (5 %, Std. Residual = .2 < 1.96) than the intermediates (4.7 %, Std. Residual = -.2 < -1.96), the difference was not statistically significant as all Std. Residuals were lower than +/- 1.96. And finally, the teachers provided significantly more "brief grammatical

description" feedback to the intermediate learners (10.6 %, Std. Residual = 3.6 > 1.96) than to the upper intermediates (5.2 %, Std. Residual = -3.9 > -1.96).

Table 5

Frequencies, Percentages and Std. Residuals for the Feedback Types by EFL Students' Proficiency Levels

		Direct CF	Indirect CF		Metalinguistic CF		Total
		Direct	Indicating + Locating	Indication only	Use Of Error Code	Brief Grammatical Description	
Intermediate	N	812	330	242	77	174	1635
	%	49.7 %	20.2%	14.8%	4.7%	10.6%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	2.2	-2.7	-2.7	-.2	3.6	
Upper Intermediate	N	587	383	293	70	73	1406
	%	41.7 %	27.2%	20.8%	5.0%	5.2%	100.0%
	Std. Residual	-2.4	2.9	2.9	.2	-3.9	
Total	N	1399	713	535	147	247	3041
	%	46.0 %	23.4%	17.6%	4.8%	8.1%	100.0 %

Table 6 displays the results of the chi-square test. The results (χ^2 (4) = 69.77, p = .00, Cramer's V = .115, p = .000) indicated that there were significant disparities between feedback types EFL instructors presented to intermediate and upper intermediate EFL learners.

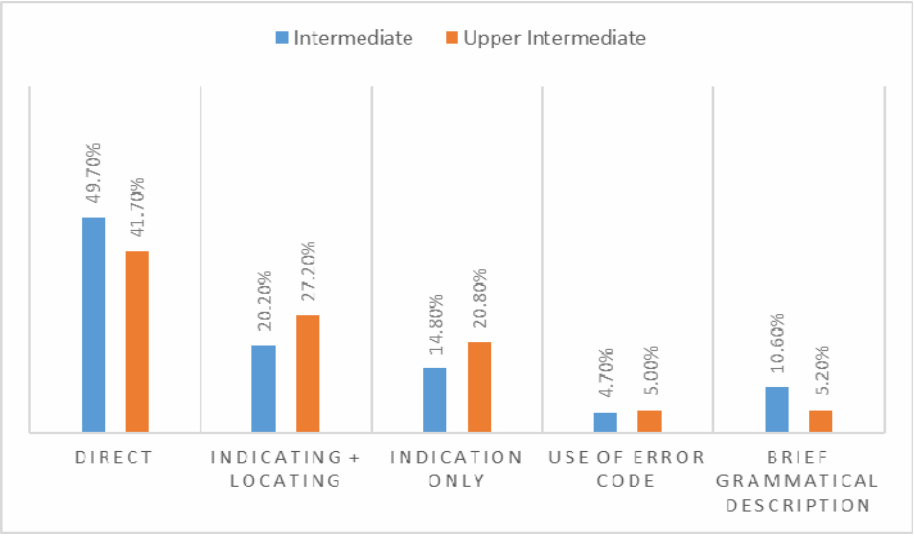
Table 6

Chi-Square Tests for the Feedback Types by EFL Students' Proficiency Levels

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	69.772[a]	4	.00
Likelihood Ratio	70.764	4	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	.168	1	.68
N of Valid Cases	3041		
Cramer's V	.151		.00

Figure 3

Percentages of Types of Feedback by EFL Learners' Proficiency Levels



Discussion

The present study, drawing upon Ellis' (2009) typology of WCF types, was an attempt to delve into the most frequent feedback types presented by EFL instructors to correct their students' linguistic errors. In addition, the study aimed at finding out whether teachers' teaching experience and learners' proficiency level had any effects on the feedback type the EFL instructors

provided. Findings demonstrated that EFL instructors were mainly inclined to employ direct CF to correct their students' linguistic errors. This was followed by indirect CF and metalinguistic CF, respectively. It came to light that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation were of no popularity among Iranian EFL teachers.

These findings are similar to those found in Lee's (2008) Hong Kong study where most of the instructors (70%) presented direct feedback to learners. In Lee's study, the instructors maintained that their pupils could not find and rectify errors by themselves. By contrast, this study is different from the ones conducted by Hamouda (2011) and Mao and Crosthwaite (2019), where the instructors opted for the indirect feedback in spite of learners' preference to receive direct feedback.

One probable explanation for the high frequency of direct CF could be the fact that such feedback types are most welcome by students as they are directly and explicitly guided towards where the problem exactly lies and the solution to the problem is also offered by the teacher (Ellis, 2009). When providing direct CF, noticing the gap easily transpires and students' conscious attention to the problem is raised. Yet another reasonable justification for the higher frequency of direct CF in comparison with other feedback types presented by instructors can be presented by the fact that students' cognitive capacity is readily taken up, and no additional mental overload is imposed upon the learners' working memory. The reverse occurs when teachers provide learners with error codes, where the cognitive capacity of the learners cannot be properly utilized and extra cognitive burden will be imposed on learners' short-term memory.

As mentioned by many researchers (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2008, 2017), culture and teachers' cultural background is a significant factor that should be considered regarding provision of corrective feedback by teachers. The popularity of the direct CF among Iranian EFL teachers could be attributed to the Iranian culture and the fact that explicit and deductive teaching and learning is deeply rooted in the Iranian psyche and such mentality is appreciated by both teachers and learners. Evidence for the ingrained impact

of deductive and explicit teaching and learning can be readily discerned in Iranian national curriculum. At schools, Iranian learners study and go through a specific rule and its explanation and then rehearse certain tasks relevant and pertinent to the structure. Inductive or implicit learning is rarely utilized. Knowledge, then, is largely accepted, in Iran, as knowing "the rules". The fact that you can bring your own explanations and come up with new hypotheses - would seem rather odd and weird. Moreover, public exams such as the University Entrance Exam play a pivotal part. Deductive and explicit learning is primarily considered the best way to guarantee that learners are sufficiently prepared for this very crucial local examination. Nevertheless, while teachers are familiarized with concepts like indirect education in their professional training, resistance to applying them in the classroom can be observed. The fundamental transition of power from instructors and educators to pupils as suggested by indirect learning can be regarded as one potential reason, which violates and contravenes the conventional influence and social position of a teacher in the classroom. The other argument can be made referring to the fact that many individuals including educators in Iran still maintain that providing well-formed and good explanations proves how skilled and expert the instructor is, and a teacher is commonly complimented and cherished when he or she can "provide good explanations" (Rezaei & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2011).

The findings showed that focused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation were not welcome by Iranian EFL teachers. The nature of the essay writing course, which entails tackling a wide variety of students' errors, justifies the lack of focused CF. Reformulation comprises a native speaker's reworking of the students' wordings to create a native-like version of the written text to the extent possible while maintaining the originality of the text as a whole (Ellis, 2009). Lack of reformulation can be attributed to the minimal number of native speakers available in the Iranian EFL context. Finally, the absence of electronic feedback types can be due to not only a lack of conceptual awareness on the part of both teachers and learners about what such feedback types entail and how they can possibly be implemented, but also a lack of

technological consciousness on their part. The technology is seemingly a missing element in many EFL settings which requires more attention and expertise.

Regarding the teachers' teaching experience, it was revealed that, contrary to what was observed by Nourozian (2015), the high teaching experience group provided more indirect CF than other types of WCF, and the low-experience group was inclined more to direct CF. This tendency of experienced teachers, according to Zheng and Yu (2018), to opt for the indirect CF can be looked upon from three possible perspectives. From the affective vantage point, students would be more at ease with the direct feedback type (Chandler, 2003). However, the high teaching experience group tended to indicate where the error lay. This could be explained by the fact that learner autonomy can be boosted and enhanced when indicating and locating the error rather than directly providing the students with direct feedback. Moreover, students can take responsibility for their own learning, develop inner criteria for correctness, and be more involved in a process of discovery learning that is more welcome and desired by more experienced teachers (Sheen, 2011). Leading students down the garden path and offering only a partial picture of how WCF works might be more beneficial to students as they have to develop some degree of independence from the teacher and complete the learning process. From the behavioral perspective, students like to be exposed to direct feedback types more than indirect types. This could be attributed to the fact that the correct forms are observable and can be easily and quickly spotted by the students (Chandler, 2003). Nevertheless, the high teaching experience group might have desired a lower behavioral engagement on students' part and should have demanded that students read between the lines in order to achieve their objectives rather than merely presenting them with the concrete, easily seen, and the observables. Cognitively speaking, processing the indirect feedback types poses a greater challenge to students as such feedback types place a heavy burden on the working memory and may lead to long-term learning (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Rahimi, 2021). Given this, the high teaching experience group might have desired a higher cognitive involvement on

students' part because "pushing learners to stretch their interlanguage engages them in noticing the gap and in hypothesis testing" (Sheen, 2011, p. 48).

On the other hand, the low teaching experience group provided more direct CF. It seems that low-experience teachers were mainly preoccupied with the cultural clichés of being a good teacher in the Iranian EFL context explained earlier. They might have cared less about student autonomy and their developing inner criteria for correctness and merely exposed them to the correct form without engaging them in a process of discovery learning just to prove that they know the rule and can explain things well. The provision of more metalinguistic CF by these teachers might be justified on this ground as well. Another justification could be that they might have been more affectively engaged with the learners as they opted for what the students desired more: The direct CF. Finally, they might have believed more in the concrete and the observable rather than the abstract and unobservable.

The obtained results showed that the participant teachers in this study were more inclined to provide the intermediate students with direct CF followed by indirect and metalinguistic CF, whereas they showed a tendency to provide more indirect CF followed by direct and metalinguistic CF to the upper intermediates.

This could be readily explained by the fact that the overall proficiency of students at lower levels might not allow for a more complicated and intricate feedback type (Rahimi, 2021). Many researchers advocate direct CF for lower-level L2 proficiency writers and suggest that they might not be cognizant of the way linguistic and non-linguistic errors can be rectified and amended (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, et al., 2008). Processing indirect CF calls for not only higher learner proficiency level, but also higher cognitive involvement on the students' side. Writers at higher levels of L2 proficiency, on the other hand, have a higher tendency to go for the indirect feedback type. This could be ascribed to the fact that they are progressing in terms of proficiency level and may desire a more cognitive engagement with the written tasks. This could help them develop independence from the teacher and analyze the data more profoundly. It can be reasonably argued that the

more students progress in terms of their proficiency level, the more they desire a need for learner autonomy and engagement with the tasks (Sheen, 2011).

Finally, it seems that the paucity of employment of metalinguistic CF by the teachers could be justified on the ground that it is time-consuming and requires a large amount of time on the part of teachers (Al Bakri, 2015; Hamouda, 2011). In addition to being time-consuming, using error codes could cause trouble for both instructors and pupils. Underachievers might experience difficulty applying these codes to rectify and redress their own errors and their immoderate and disproportionate utilization might create bewilderment for learners. Furthermore, instructors may find it challenging to assort and classify the errors according to the marking code system.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to explore the most frequent corrective feedback types provided by Iranian EFL teachers in their essay writing classes. The results indicate that not necessarily all teachers' perceptions about feedback can be rendered into their classroom practices. Different factors and variables influence teachers' beliefs and practices; for example, cultural factors such as society and stakeholders' expectations, teacher factors such as teachers' experience, and student factors such as learners' proficiency level have a bearing on teachers' beliefs and practices.

This study can serve as a point of reference for many practitioners in the field who are striving to provide the most appropriate feedback for learners at differing levels of language proficiency. More importantly, both experienced and inexperienced writing teachers can adjust and alter their feedback types to accommodate learners' needs at different proficiency levels. The findings of the study revealed that the experienced teachers opted more for the indirect feedback while less experienced ones preferred direct feedback. This finding suggests that the inexperienced teachers should turn their attentions to indirect feedback in their writing classes as well. Moreover, the results indicated that EFL teachers were more inclined to provide the intermediates with direct CF, whereas they provided more indirect CF to the upper

intermediates. It seems that the teachers should be aware of this, and that they should try to redress this balance.

The study has its own limitations as the number of available teachers who were willing to let the researchers have access to their students' commented essays could be regarded as minimal. This, in turn, might have affected and rather undermined the generalizability of the findings. Future studies with a larger sample are recommended to augment and boost the reliability of findings. Practical workshops can be held to raise both teacher and students' awareness about various feedback types, the way they might best work within classroom settings, and how their assessment can be attained with regard to specific yardsticks and the intended audience. Furthermore, technology-enhanced feedback types and materials have a lot to offer, and they have great potentialities to be unleased as both teachers and learners become more involved in their activation, processing, and implementation. As a matter of fact, electronic feedback is to be utilized more and more in developing countries like Iran as such feedback can further enhance and expedite the learning and teaching process of L2 writing.

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Abstracts
in Persian

مجله افق‌های زبان
LGHOR
دانشگاه الزهرا

فصلنامهٔ علمی افق‌های زبان دانشگاه الزهرا(س)
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مطالعه‌ای با روش تحقیق ترکیبی درباره تأثیر طنز موقعیت بر استدلال و کنش انتقادی فراگیران ایرانی زبان انگلیسی

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چکیده

این پژوهش ترکیبی، با اتخاذ طرح تبیینی متوالی، در صدد (الف) بررسی تأثیر کمدی موقعیت بر مهارت‌های استدلال انتقادی و کنش انتقادی زبان‌آموزان ایرانی و (ب) کنکاش نگرش آنان درباره چگونگی تاثیر کمدی موقعیت بر استدلال انتقادی و کنش انتقادی آنان می‌باشد. ۶۰ نفر زبان‌آموز به صورت تصادفی انتخاب و در دو گروه شاهد و کنترل تقسیم شدند. گروه کنترل آموزش کلاسی رایج را دریافت کرد، در حالی‌که گروه شاهد از طریق مشاهده کمدی موقعیت، به فراگیری زبان انگلیسی پرداخت. از ویرایش فارسی آزمون تفکر انتقادی کالیفرنیا، برای سنجش مهارت‌های کلی استدلال شرکت‌کنندگان استفاده شد. برای ارزیابی و سنجش کنش انتقادی آنان مقیاس جهت‌گیری کنش‌گرایی کورنینگ و مایرز (۲۰۰۲) استفاده شد. برای تحلیل داده‌های کمی از تحلیل کوواریانس مورد استفاده قرار گرفت. نتایج نشان داد که تفاوت معنی‌داری میان دو گروه از نظر استدلال انتقادی و کنش انتقادی وجود دارد. تحلیل مصاحبه‌ها اثربخشی کمدی موقعیت در بهبود استدلال و کنش انتقادی را تایید کرد. یافته‌های کیفی شامل دو مضمون درباره نقش کمدی موقعیت در پرورش مهارت استدلال انتقادی بود: استنتاج و ارزیابی. درباره کنش انتقادی دو مضمون آگاهی از مسائل سیاسی و اجتماعی و اشتیاق برای حضور در فعالیت‌ها جهت تغییر به دست آمد. تلفیق داده‌ها مشخص کرد که کمدی موقعیت فهم زبان‌آموزان از تفاوت اجتماعی را ارتقاء می‌دهد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: تحقیق ترکیبی، استدلال انتقادی، کنش انتقادی، طنز، طنز موقعیت

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آموزش مبتنی بر نظریه انتخاب و نظارت بالینی برای معلمان زبان: تأثیر آنها بر درک مطلب و خودمختاری زبان‌آموزان

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تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۵/۱۳ تاریخ تصویب: ۱۴۰۳/۰۴/۲۸

چکیده

هدف از انجام این مطالعه، بررسی تأثیرآموزش مبتنی بر نظریه انتخاب و نظارت بالینی معلمان زبان انگلیسی بر خودمختاری و درک مطلب زبان‌آموزان می‌باشد. به منظور دستیابی به هدف این تحقیق، ۳۰ معلم زبان انگلیسی ایرانی بر اساس تمایل خود در این تحقیق شرکت کردند و در دو گروه ۱۵ نفره قرار گرفتند: یک گروه در برنامه آموزش مبتنی بر نظریه انتخاب و گروه دیگر در برنامه نظارت بالینی. علاوه بر معلمان، ۴۴۵ زبان‌آموز در سطح متوسطه در این تحقیق شرکت کردند: ۲۲۵ زبان‌آموز توسط معلمانی که در برنامه آموزش مبتنی بر نظریه انتخاب شرکت کرده بودند و ۲۲۰ زبان‌آموز دیگر توسط معلمانی که در برنامه نظارت بالینی شرکت کرده بودند، تدریس شدند. برای بررسی میزان خودمختاری ۴۴۵ زبان‌آموز از پرسشنامه خودمختاری ژنگ و لی به عنوان پیش‌آزمون و پس‌آزمون قبل و بعد از تدریس توسط ۳۰ معلم استفاده شد. همچنین یک نمونه آزمون پت از زبان‌آموزان قبل از کلاسها به عنوان پیش‌آزمون داده شد و نمونه‌ای دیگر هم به عنوان پس‌آزمون گرفته شد. نتایج آماری دو آزمون تحلیل کوواریانس استفاده شده در این تحقیق نشان می‌دهد که زبان‌آموزانی که توسط معلمانی که در برنامه آموزش مبتنی بر نظریه انتخاب شرکت کرده بودند عملکرد بهتری در زمینه خودمختاری و درک مطلب مفاهیم آموزشی داشتند. پیامدهای آموزشی نتایج مذکور در این تحقیق مورد بحث قرار گرفته‌اند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: آموزش زبان، نظریه انتخاب، نظارت بالینی، خودمختاری یادگیرندگان، درک مطلب

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رابطه میان جهت‌گیری هدف، تمایل به برقراری ارتباط، اضطراب شنیداری و درک مطلب شنیداری زبان‌آموزان ایرانی: مطالعه‌ای مبتنی بر تحلیل مسیر

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تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۱/۱۶ تاریخ تصویب: ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۰

چکیده

این پژوهش رابطه متقابل میان جهت‌گیری هدف، تمایل به برقراری ارتباط، اضطراب در هنگام شنیدن زبان خارجی و درک مطلب شنیداری را در فراگیران زبان انگلیسی بررسی می‌کند. برای این منظور، ۲۰۰ نفر از فراگیران زبان موسسات خصوصی که بر اساس روش نمونه‌گیری در دسترس انتخاب شدند، پرسشنامه‌های جهت‌گیری هدف (پینتریچ و همکاران ، ۱۹۹۱) ، تمایل به برقراری ارتباط (کائو و فیلیپ، ۲۰۰۶) و اضطراب شنیداری (کیم ، ۲۰۰۰) را تکمیل کردند. بعلاوه، محققان برای اندازه‌گیری میزان درک مطلب شنیداری یادگیرندگان از آزمون آیلتس استفاده کردند. پس از جمع‌آوری داده‌ها، مدل فرضیه از طریق نرم‌افزار ایموس مورد آزمایش قرار گرفت. نتایج نشان داد که همه متغیرهای مطالعه به‌طور مثبت و معنی‌داری با درک مطلب شنیداری فراگیران زبان انگلیسی همبستگی دارند به جز اضطراب در هنگام شنیدن زبان خارجی و جهت‌گیری هدف عملکردی که با درک مطلب شنیداری رابطه منفی دارند. همچنین، مشخص شد که جهت‌گیری هدف قوی‌ترین پیش‌بینی‌کننده متغیر وابسته است. در ادامه، یک مدل پیشنهادی برای روابط متقابل بین متغیرها ارائه شد. براساس یافته‌های این مطالعه، می‌توان نتیجه گرفت که هم متغیرهای روانشناختی مانند اضطراب در هنگام شنیدن زبان خارجی و هم متغیرهای شناختی مانند جهت‌گیری هدف در موفقیت زبان‌آموزان بسیار مهم هستند. کاربردهای نتایج این مطالعه به تفصیل در متن مورد بحث قرار گرفته‌اند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: جهت‌گیری هدف، تمایل به برقراری ارتباط، اضطراب شنیداری، درک مطلب شنیداری.

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شیوه های بازخورد شفاهی معلمان زبان انگلیسی با ذهنیت رشدیافته و باورهای آنها

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دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۱/۱۶ تصویب: ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۰

چکیده

علیرغم فراوانی تحقیقات در مورد ارتباط بین باورها و عملکرد معلمان، تحقیقات کمی به بررسی نقش ویژگی‌های فردی معلمان در رابطه بین باورهای معلمان و شیوه‌های بازخورد اصلاحی پرداخته‌اند. بنابراین، این مطالعه با هدف بررسی تطابق یا عدم تطابق بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی معلمان با ذهنیت رشد یافته (بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی) با باورهای آنها انجام شده است. هشت معلم زبان انگلیسی ضمن خدمت با ذهنیت رشدیافته در این مطالعه شرکت کردند. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از دو پرسشنامه و مشاهده کلاسی استفاده شد. تجزیه و تحلیل کیفی داده‌ها نشان داد که باورهای معلمان با ذهنیت رشدیافته و شیوه‌های بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی آنها از نظر زمان‌بندی بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی همسو هستند. در مورد انواع بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی، عملکرد معلمان خانم با اعتقادات آنها همسو بود، اما باورهای معلمان آقا با عملکرد آنها ناسازگار بود. با این حال، باورها و عملکرد معلمان در مورد مقدار و فراوانی بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی ناهماهنگ بود، که می‌تواند به دلیل عوامل زمینه‌ای یا محیطی مانند محدودیت زمانی باشد. برداشت‌ها و پیشنهادات برای تحقیقات بیشتر ارائه شده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: باورهای معلمان، عملکرد معلمان، بازخورد اصلاحی شفاهی، عملکردهای بازخورد اصلاحی، ذهنیت رشدیافته، ذهنیت معلم

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تاثیر آموزش برخط بر ایجاد/ بازسازی هویت حرفه‌ای معلمان ایرانی EAP

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تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۳/۲ تاریخ تصویب: ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۰

چکیده

در سال‌های اخیر، آموزش برخط به بخش مهمی از حرفه معلمان تبدیل شده است. علاوه بر این، استدلال شده است که بافت تدریس به‌طور قابل توجهی در کار معلمان انگلیسی برای مقاصد آکادمیک (EAP) تأثیرگذار است. با وجود این نکات، تحقیقات کمی ساخت هویت معلمان EAP را در بافت برخط بررسی کرده است. مطالعه حاضر با بررسی تأثیرات آموزش برخط بر ساخت هویت ۲۰ معلم ایرانی EAP به این شکاف در تحقیقات پرداخت. با شرکت‌کنندگان مصاحبه و تحلیل موضوعی برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها انجام شد. یافته‌ها نشان داد که آموزش برخط بر هویت شخصی، آموزشی و اجتماعی معلمان تأثیر می‌گذارد. به‌طور خاص، مشخص شد که معلمان می‌توانند هویت خود را در پرتو چالش‌ها و توانایی‌های تدریس برخط بازسازی کرده هویت‌های جدیدی را اتخاذ کنند که نگرانی‌هایی را در مورد مسئولیت‌های EAP و مربیگری آن‌ها را نشان می‌دهد. این یافته‌ها مورد بحث قرار گرفت و راهکارهایی برای مربیان معلمان ارائه شد تا بتوانند به‌طور مؤثر به معلمان EAP کمک کنند تا هویت خود را در محیط برخط بازسازی کنند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: آموزش برخط، هویت معلم برخط، هویت معلم زبان انگلیسی برای اهداف دانشگاهی، بازسازی هویت، معلمان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی برای اهداف دانشگاهی

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صفحات ۱۷۸-۱۵۱

متداول ترین انواع بازخورد ارایه شده توسط مدرسان زبان انگلیسی در کلاس های مقاله نویسی

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تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۱/۱۹ تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۰

چکیده

علیرغم اهمیت درک بازخورد معلمان، جالب توجه است که مطالعات زیادی در مورد نحوه ارائه بازخورد معلمان وجود ندارد. این مطالعه با تکیه بر چارچوب الیس (۲۰۰۹) درباره بازخورد نوشتاری، رایج‌ترین انواع بازخورد ارائه شده توسط معلمان زبان انگلیسی را بررسی کرد. علاوه بر این، این مطالعه به بررسی اینکه آیا تجربه تدریس معلمان و سطح مهارت فراگیران تأثیری بر نوع بازخورد ارائه شده توسط معلمان دارد یا خیر نیز پرداخته است. یازده معلم زبان انگلیسی درباره ۳۰۱ مقاله توصیفی نوشته شده توسط دانش‌آموزان انگلیسی بازخورد ارائه کردند. یافته‌ها نشان داد که معلمان عمدتاً تمایل داشتند از بازخورد مستقیم برای تصحیح خطاهای زبانی دانش‌آموزان خود استفاده کنند. به دنبال آن بازخورد غیرمستقیم و بازخورد فرازبانی به ترتیب قرار گرفتند. مشخص شد که بازخورد متمرکز، بازخورد الکترونیکی و فرموله کردن مجدد در بین معلمان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی محبوبیتی ندارند. معلمان با تجربه بیشتر بازخورد غیرمستقیم را انتخاب کردند در حالی که معلمان بی‌تجربه بازخورد مستقیم را ترجیح دادند. معلمان بیشتر تمایل داشتند که بازخوردهای متوسط را با بازخورد مستقیم ارائه کنند. این مطالعه نشان می‌دهد که همه ادراکات معلمان در مورد بازخورد لزوماً نمی‌توانند در شیوه‌های کلاس درس ارائه شوند و عوامل مختلفی مانند متغیرهای فرهنگی، اجتماعی، یادگیرنده و معلم بر باورها و عملکرد معلمان تأثیر می‌گذارند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: بازخورد معلم؛ بازخورد مستقیم؛ بازخورد غیر مستقیم؛ فرموله کردن مجدد؛ تجربه تدریس

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معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه

فصلنامهٔ علمی

افق‌های زبان دانشگاه الزهرا(س)

سال هشتم، شماره ۲، تابستان ۱۴۰۳ (پیاپی ۲۰)

صاحب امتیاز: **دانشگاه الزهرا(س)**

مدیر مسئول: **دکتر محسن شیرازی‌زاده**

سردبیر: **دکتر محمدرضا عنانی سراب**

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مجلهٔ افق های زبان با همکاری انجمن زبان شناسی ایران منتشر می‌شود.

انجمن زبان‌شناسی ایران