An investigation into the relationship among EFL teachers' reflection, classroom management orientations, and perceptions of language learning strategies and students' L2 achievement

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Abstract
The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship among three important teacher variables and students L2 achievement. To this end, 105 high school EFL teachers from Shiraz and Hamadan were asked to fill out three sets of instruments: the reflective teaching instrument, (Akbari, Behzadpour & Dadvand, 2010), the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998), and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Ardasheva & Tretter, 2013). Also, the scores of the English final exams of 2673 third-grade high school students were collected. The results of Pearson Product Moment Correlations revealed that there was a significant correlation between the above-mentioned three teachers variables and their students L2 achievement. The results also showed a significant difference between male and female teachers in the degree of perceptions of LLSs, while no significant differences were found between the two genders regarding their classroom management orientations and reflection. Moreover, running multiple regression analysis, it was revealed that among the teachers variables, reflection was the strongest predicator of students L2 achievement. Finally, based on the results of this study, some practical implications for maximizing students L2 achievement in English language classrooms are presented.

Keywords: Reflection, Classroom Management Orientations, Perceptions of Language Learning Strategies, L2 Achievement, EFL Teachers.

Introduction

Teachers have a critical role in learners achievement, and their characteristics can influence students performance (Lasley, Siedentop & Yinger, 2006; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997). Freeman and Richards (1996) claim that teachers are pivotal in the enterprise of teaching and learning (p. 1). In a similar vein, Griffiths (2007) states that teacher practices and perceptions are critically important since they have the potential to influence the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process (p. 91).

In order to understand teachers, we need to consider the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which are assigned to them (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson, 2005). Teachers reflectivity is a variable which can be considered as a way of dealing with the problems in the language classrooms, such as students inefficiency in learning English. Since reflective teachers examine their own values and beliefs about teaching and learning, they are more responsible for their actions in the classroom (Korthagen, 1993). Moreover, Pennington (1992) asserted that a reflective orientation improves classroom processes and outcomes. Consequently, teachers reflection is one of the factors which might have a positive effect on students achievement. Classroom management is another factor which might have a critical role in students success. In fact, effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom (Marzano, & Pickering, 2003, p.1). Finally, teachers perception of language learning strategies which deals with the problems related to the teaching practice, is another important factor towards students success in learning English.

In recent years, a great number of studies have been conducted on learning strategies and their positive effect on language learning (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Olivares-Cuhat, 2002). Previous studies (e.g. Ardasheva & Tretter, 2012; Griffiths, 2007; Sen & Sen, 2012) reported a high accordance between the most frequently used language learning strategies by the students and those reported by the teachers as highly important. Therefore, teachers perceptions seem to affect students use of language learning strategies. Based on the above mentioned ideas, three teachers variables, i. e. teachers' reflection, classroom management orientations, and perceptions of language learning strategies are examined in the present study in order to identify their potential effects on students success or failure in learning a foreign language.

Review of related literature
Reflective teaching
During the 1980s, reflective teaching, reflection and critical thinking became popular concepts in teaching and teacher education (Farrell, 1999). Digging deep into the literature indicated that the history of reflection goes back to the works of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates. The idea of reflective teaching, around which this study was based, started from John Dewey (1933) book How We Think . He established the notion of professional development through reflection by making a distinction between outinized and eflective teaching (Pollard, 2002).

Schön (1983) was another significant scholar in developing the theory and practice of reflective teaching in the twentieth century. Schön (1987) talked about reflective teaching and described two major processes of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Farrell (1998) explained the term eflection-in-action as

thinking about what we are doing, while reflection-on-action is concerned with thinking back on what we have done to find out how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected action. Farrell (2007) further claimed that reflective teachers regularly collect information about their classroom happenings and then analyze and evaluate this information and compare it to their underlying assumptions and beliefs so that they can make changes and improvements in their teaching.

In recent years, teachers have been encouraged to be reflective and think about their experiences and their actions in their classes. Different researchers list different characteristics for a reflective teacher. For example, Dewey (1933) stated that a reflective teacher is open-minded, responsible, and whole-hearted. Kumaravadivelu (2002) believed that reflective teachers use classroom-oriented action research and problem-solving activities in order to enhance their learners learning. Zeichner and Liston (1996, p. 6) believed that a reflective teacher:

> examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
> is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
> is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches;
> takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts;
> takes responsibility for his or her own professional development.

Classroom management
Classroom management is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching for new and sometimes experienced teachers. New teachers fear students will not respect them,

and for experienced teachers establishing management is a primary goal in the first few weeks of the year (Good & Brophy, 2008). Researchers describe classroom management as a complex issue in which many external and internal factors are interwoven. For example, Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) believed that classroom management is a broad umbrella term which describes the teacher sefforts to oversee classroom activities, such as learning, social interaction, and student behaviour.

Classroom management problem is one of the central causes of burnout and job dissatisfaction for most of teachers. According to Landau (2009), the status of classroom management has been looked down because classroom management is not included in most of teacher preparation courses. Advice to teachers about classroom management was based on untested theory of what works best for me and little was supported by solid evidence (Good & Brophy, 2008). Most teachers have their own approach of classroom management acquired through their teaching experience or their own school years as learners (Coetzee, Niekerk & Wydeman, 2008). Teachers should find the approach that best fits into their context, learners, and style of teaching. A framework offered by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) has been one of the most frequently used frameworks in classroom management studies. Evertson and Weinstein organized classroom management strategies into six distinct approaches, namely: external control of behaviour, internal control, classroom ecology, discourse, curriculum, and interpersonal relationships.

Perceptions of language learning strategies
Over the last few decades, there has been growing interest in studying the needs of the individual learners. Language teaching

researchers moved their focus from various teaching methodologies to the language learner. Aside from learning aptitude, gender, culture, age, and other demographic variables, language learners differ in learning styles, learning strategies, and affective variables (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Areas of research on language learning strategies could be classified into three categories: studying good language learners, studying the definitions and lists of language learning strategies, and studying various factors that affect learners language learning strategy choices (Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies are important in second language learning and teaching for two main reasons. First, we gain insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective processes involved in language learning by examining the strategies used by successful second language learners. Second, less successful language learners can be taught new strategies and become better language learners.

Oxford (2003) specified three conditions for the usefulness of language learning strategies. She stated that the strategy should (a) relate well to the L2 task at hand, (b) fit the particular student s learning style preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the student should employ the strategy effectively and link it with other relevant strategies. She claimed that the strategies that achieve these conditions make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).

Since language teachers are often considered as experts by their students, their beliefs could have a strong influence on the

students own beliefs (Horwitz, 1988 p. 291). Similarly, Bedir (2010) believed that teacher belief about LLS is one of the important factors which impacts the effectiveness of learning strategies instruction.

Previous research findings
Since the above mentioned issues have been appealing to many scholars, several researchers have focused on the investigation and evaluation of these concepts. Taghilou (2007) tried to explore the relationship between "reflective teaching practices" and "learning outcomes" of the Iranian EFL students. In this study, he used two homogeneous groups of pre-university students. Using the same materials and similar pedagogical conditions, two different teaching practices on reflection was taught to the participants. One of the teachers was a strong supporter of the reflective pedagogy, and the other was a disbeliever in its use and effect on students' learning potential. The results of this study showed that the students mean score was significantly lower (p<0.05) in the disbeliever teacher category (control group) in contrast to the mean score of students in the believer teacher category (experimental group). In addition, in the experimental group, the students were more satisfied. He believed that the results of his study demonstrated the potential contribution of reflection and reflective teaching to the ease and effectiveness of learning on the part of the Iranian EFL students.

Another study on reflective teaching was conducted by Sim (2005) who invited a group of seventeen ESL learners enrolled in an intensive English course in Singapore to reflect on their English language learning experience. The instrument of this study was a summative diary administered towards the end of the course on how the students

approached their learning. The analysis of the entries was carried out with reference to the learners motivation, beliefs, attitudes, strategies and affective factors. Sim reported that the students motivation was mainly instrumental and they had certain clear beliefs about language learning. They evaluated their progress though not regularly. He proposed that affective factors had a strong impact on their English learning experience. He went on to say that two important factors that surfaced were the importance of social support and the emphasis on effort.

Hosseini Fatemi, Elahi Shirvan and Rezvani (2011) explored the effect of EFL teacher s reflection on their learners writing achievement. Participants of their study included 100 EFL teachers teaching in Mashhad language institutes and their 1000 EFL learners. They used the Reflective teaching instrument designed by Akbari and Behzadpour (2007). Also, they calculated the EFL learners Grade Point Averages (GPAs) of their writing scores. An unstructured interview with 10 teachers of each group of highly reflective and low reflective teachers was also done. The results of the statistical analysis revealed that teachers reflection significantly affects EFL learners writing achievement. Learners with highly reflective teachers had higher writing achievement scores than those with low reflective teachers.

Regarding classroom management, Rahimi and Hosseini (2012) investigated Iranian EFL teachers classroom discipline strategies from their students perspective. They asked 1497 students to answer the classroom discipline strategy questionnaire that assessed their perceptions about teachers classroom management disciplines. The results of this study showed that Iranian EFL teachers appeared to use

recognition/rewarding strategies more often to discipline their classes, while using aggression and punishment were the least common classroom discipline strategies. Female teachers used punishment, discussion, and aggression strategies more in contrast to male teachers.

In another study, Martin and Shoho (2000) investigated the relationship between teachers' age and perceptions of classroom management style. Data were collected from a total of 388 participants via the (ABCC) Inventory and a demographic questionnaire. They found a significant correlation between subjects' age and the people management sub-scale. They stated that as teachers increase in age, their beliefs and attitudes toward this dimension of classroom management become more controlling.

In order to explore Iranian EFL teachers classroom management orientations and its relationship with teaching styles, Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) asked three hundred EFL teachers to fill in the (ABCC) inventory and Teaching Activities Preference questionnaire. They found that most Iranian EFL teachers were interventionist with respect to their classroom management approaches. They concluded that teachers who were more interventionist in their classroom management used more teaching activities than those with interactionalist classroom management orientation.

Griffiths (2007) investigated the point of intersection of teachers and learners perceptions of language learning strategies. An original questionnaire in a classroom situation based on student input was developed and used. The study examined reported frequency of strategy use by international students and teachers perceptions regarding the importance of strategy use. The results showed that

students and teachers perceptions did not perfectly match. However, there was a high level of accordance between strategies which students reported as the most frequently used strategies and those which teachers reported as highly important.

Ardasheva and Tretter (2012) explored perceptions and use of language learning strategies among ESL teachers and English-learning students. The subjects of their study were 1,057 students and 54 teachers. The results of the study showed that (a) the level of strategy effectiveness awareness among teachers working at all educational levels was high; (b) teacher and student strategy ratings differed qualitatively, with most of the teacher scores being above the high-level benchmark and most of the students scores within the medium-level benchmark; and (c) none of the correlations between teacher and student strategy ratings were statistically significant.

The aforementioned studies demonstrated the importance of teachers reflectivity, classroom management orientations, and perceptions of language learning strategies in the language learning and teaching process. However, to the best of the researchers current knowledge, none of the above studies have so far brought these variables together to investigate their relationship with, and their contributions to Iranian EFL learners L2 achievement. Thus, it is potentially worth shedding light on the contribution of each of these variables to students L2 achievement; considering the fact that teachers reflectivity, classroom management orientations, and perceptions of language learning strategies might lead to students higher performance and help L2 teachers to take better actions.

Research questions

The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship among three important teacher variables and students L2 achievement. To achieve the goals of this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Is there any significant relationship between teachers degree of reflectivity and students L2 achievement?
2. Is there any significant relationship between teachers classroom management orientations and students L2 achievement?
3. Is there any significant relationship between teachers perceptions of language learning strategies and students L2 achievement?
4. Is there any significant difference among Iranian EFL teachers classroom management orientations, perceptions of LLSs, and reflectivity with respect to their gender?
5. Among teachers reflectivity, classroom management orientations and perceptions of language learning strategies which one is the best predictor of students achievement?

Methodology

Participants

One hundred and five Iranian EFL teachers (50 males and 55 females) from Shiraz and Hamadan participated in this study. They were all high school teachers of third grade classes. The reason for selecting this level was due to the fact that the third-grade English language final exam is prepared by Iran Ministry of Education (Assessment and Evaluation Center), and is held throughout the country each year. Thus, it can be used as a sign of students overall achievement in English. All of the teachers had degrees in TEFL, English literature or English

Translation except for one who had studied Arabic literature. They were selected based on convenience sampling procedure and their age ranged from 25 to 53 (mean=39.52). Moreover, the scores obtained by the third-grade students (N= 2673) in their final English exam were collected from the schools registrars office and were considered as the indication of the students L2 achievement.

Instruments
Reflective teaching questionnaire
The reflective teaching questionnaire was developed and validated by Akbari, Behzadpour and Dadvand (2010) and contains 29 items with five-point Likert scale responses ranging from 1 (never), to 5 (always).

Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (ABCC Inventory)
The ABCC Inventory was developed and validated by Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) to measure teachers orientations towards classroom management. The ABCC Inventory has 26 items with three broad dimensions that address components of classroom management: instructional management (14 items), people management (8 items), and behavior management (4 items).

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) –ELL Teacher Form
This questionnaire was originally developed by Oxford (1990) to assess students perceptions of language learning strategies. It was modified and validated by Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) to assess teachers perceptions of language learning strategies. This questionnaire is based on Oxford s classification of strategies and contains five categories: Memory (7 items), Cognitive (5 items), Compensation (5 items), Metacognitive (4 items), Affective strategies

(3 items) and Social (4 items). Reliability of this questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (= .912).

English Language Achievement Test
The final exam of third grade high school students is prepared by language testing experts of the Ministry of Education (Assessment and Evaluation Center) and administered under the supervision of Central Offices of Education across the nation. According to Farhady and Sajadi Hezaveh (2010, p. 12), this exam is a high stakes test and has high level of reliability and validity. The Central Office of Educational Measurement and Evaluation takes all necessary measures to ensure test security, similar administration across the country, and fair scoring of the test papers.

Procedure
The data collection in this study was carried out in two phases. First, the questionnaires were given to 127 teachers who had accepted to take part in the study. They were allowed to take the questionnaires home, fill them out and give them back to the researchers one week later. However, only 105 teachers returned the questionnaires. Then, the final English exam scores of the students were collected from the registrars offices of the high schools as an index of their English achievement score.

Results and discussion
Testing the correlation between teachers' variables and students' L2 achievement
To answer this research question, three Pearson Product Moment correlations were used, the results of which are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the main variables of the study

	N	Mean	SD
Reflection	105	90.75	12.10
Management Orientations	105	78.60	11.09
Perceptions of LLS	105	80.53	14.81
Students L2 Achievement	2673	14.43	2.54
Teachers age	105	39.52	7.10

Table 1 summarized the descriptive statistics for the teachers variables, i. e. teachers reflection, classroom management, perceptions of LLSs and also students L2 achievement.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations between teachers' reflection, classroom management, perceptions of LLSs and students' L2 achievement

		Students L2 Achievement
Reflection	Pearson Correlation	.69[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	105
Management	Pearson Correlation	-.31[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	105
Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.36[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	105

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

Question 1: As indicated in Table 2, a significant positive correlation was found between teachers reflection and students L2 achievement, r (103) =.69, *p*<. 01, N=105. According to Cohen (1988), the effect size of 0.47 is medium. A possible explanation for this significant relationship could best be justified by Waltermire s (1999) opinion regarding the fact that reflective practice pivots around student learning and a commitment to helping students succeed. Reflective teachers examine the consequences of their actions in the classrooms and try to find suitable solutions to the problems that occur during the educational year (Farrell, 2007). These reflections would result in their students higher satisfaction of classrooms and the teachers. As Dewey (1933) puts it, reflection is thought to be a purposeful attempt to resolve complex classroom dilemmas into educative experiences leading to further student and teacher growth and learning.

A review of the previous literature indicated that teacher reflection is one of the most important factors influencing students achievement (Akbari, 2007; Goldhaber, 2002; Pacheco, 2005; Sanders, 2000). The result of the present study, in this regard, is in line with what has been echoed in the previous literature. As Kumaravadivelu (2002), Korthagen (1993) and Pennington (1992) noted, reflective teaching has a significant effect on students learning. In a similar vein, Hosseini Fatemi, Elahi Shirvan and Rezvani (2011) stated that highly reflective teachers believed that they were responsible to take control of their teaching and tried harder than those with lower levels of reflection. This finding also supports previous research on teachers reflection in Iranian settings (e.g. Akbari & Karimi Allvar, 2010; Hosseini Fatemi, Elahi Shirvan & Rezvani, 2011; Taghilou,

2007). However, this finding is contrary to Braun and Crumpler (2004) and Griffiths s (2000) study which indicated that engaging teachers in reflective teaching will not necessarily lead to higher student achievement or better learning outcomes.

Question 2: The second research question was concerned with the possible correlation between teachers attitudes toward classroom management and their student achievement. As shown in Table 2, a significant negative relationship was found between teachers attitudes toward classroom management and their students achievement, r (103) = -.31, $p<$. 01, N=105. This indicated that the higher the level of control exerted by the teachers in the classroom, the lower the students L2 achievement. This finding might have been due to the fact that from elementary levels, Iranian students are not involved in classroom management. Therefore, they might not accept this style of classroom management at higher levels. Therefore, from the beginning levels, teachers should involve students in issues related to classroom management, such as classroom behavior, interruptions and transitions, group work and independent work, and the use of materials and equipments. The findings of the study, in this regard, are in contrast with the results of a great number of studies which reported a significant relationship between classroom management and students achievement (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011; Edwards, Green & Lyons 2002; Griffiths, 2002; Milner, 2002; Poulou, 2007). Djigic and Stojiljkovic (2011) investigating the correlation between teachers management styles and students achievement, found that students achievement was at its highest when teachers practiced interactionist style, and at its lowest when the teachers were interventionists. The previous findings

indicated that teachers who use effective management strategies tend to reduce custodial control and increase students autonomy (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Further, teachers classroom management practices can influence students behavior and direct it in a constructivist manner, which in turn, would set the stage for instruction and increased learning (Marzano & Pickering, 2003). Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) stated that Iranian students are obedient and dependent on authority figures in the class, and conform to the rules. They further stated that this is the product of traditional book-centred approach and teacher-centred methodology in the Iranian EFL curriculum.

Question 3: Another correlation was also run to answer the third research question. As presented in Table 5.1, a moderate positive relationship was found between teachers perceptions of LLSs and their students achievement, r (103) = .36, $p<$. 01, N=105, which implied that by increasing the teachers awareness of LLSs, their students achievement was also raised.

To make the language learning process successful, L2 teachers need to focus on the needs of the individual learners and provide them with appropriate strategy training. LLS researchers believe that teachers perceptions of LLSs are among the most significant factors that may directly impact the learning experiences and achievements of the students (Ian & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1990; Oxford, Ehrman, & Lavine, 1991; Riazi & Rahimi, 2003). Teachers awareness of LLS is likely to encourage explicit LLS instruction, which in turn, increase students strategy knowledge and use and may ultimately lead to higher achievement and performance (Oxford, 1990; Chamot, 2007). The findings of this study implied that teachers who are aware of

their students LLSs are more likely to adapt appropriate teaching methods compatible with their students way of learning, help their students develop an awareness of learning strategies, and enable them to use a wider range of appropriate strategies.

The findings of the present study corroborate theoretical postulates about the effect of LLSs on learners achievement, and the role of teachers perceptions in their students beliefs. This finding is in agreement with Kern s (1995) study which showed that teachers' beliefs were effective on students' beliefs about language learning. Review of the previous research indicates that teachers are the principal components of any pedagogical program. Consequently, their perceptions and beliefs have considerable influence on their instructional practices and classroom behavior as well as their students' achievement (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008).

Testing the relationship between teachers' variables and gender
Question 4: An independent-samples t-test was run to determine the possible significant differences between male and female teachers regarding their degree of reflection (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for levels of teachers' reflection and their gender

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Male	51	91.82	14.68	2.05
Female	54	89.74	9.03	1.22

Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test between levels of teachers' reflection and their gender

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD
Equal variances assumed	17.17	.00	.88	103	.38	2.08
Equal variances not assumed			.86	82.2	.38	2.08

As indicated in Table 4, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female teachers regarding their degree of reflection, t (82.22) =.86, *p* =. 38>.05. The results are in line with the recent studies in Iranian context in which no significant difference was found between the two genders with regard to teachers reflectivity (Aghaei & Jadidi, 2013; Bagheri & Abdolrahimzadeh, 2015; Khany & Ghoreyshi, 2014; Mousapour & Beiranvand, 2013). This result is in contradiction to Ansarin, Farrokhi, and Rahmani s (2015) study in which female teachers were found to be more reflective than male teachers.

In the same way, the result of teachers classroom management orientations questionnaire and their gender were compared to determine the existence of any significant difference between male and female teachers. The results are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for teachers' classroom management orientations and gender

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Male	51	78.56	11.66	1.63
Female	54	78.62	10.63	1.44

Table 6: Independent Samples T-test between levels of teachers' classroom management orientations and their gender

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD
Equal variances assumed	3.25	.07	.15	103	.87	.33
Equal variances not assumed			.15	101	.87	.33

As illustrated in Table 6, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female teachers on levels of classroom management orientations t (103) = .15, *p*= .87>.05. The result of this study, in this regard, is in line with Martin s study (1997) who found no significant difference between male and female teachers classroom management orientations. The results are in contrast to the studies by Sridhar and Javan (2011), and Martin and Yin (1997) who found that male teachers selected interventionist style more than other styles. Moreover, regarding the approaches to instruction, male teachers preferred more controlling instruction in a number of studies (Chen, 2000; Lam, Tse, Lam, & Loh, 2010; Martin & Baldwin, 1996). However, in another study, Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) found no gender differences related

to any of the classroom management orientations.

An independent-samples t-test was also run to determine the existence of any significant difference between male and female teachers regarding their Perceptions of Language Learning Strategies. The results are shown in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for levels of teachers' perceptions of LLSs and their gender

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Male	51	84.78	18.77	2.62
Female	54	76.51	8.02	1.09

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test between levels of teachers' perceptions of LLSs and their gender

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD
Equal variances assumed	39.31	.00	2.96	103	.00	8.26
Equal variances not assumed			2.90	66.8	.00	8.26

As shown in Table 8, a statistically significant difference was found between male and female teachers perceptions of LLSs (t (66.84) = 2.90, p= .00<.05). Previous studies on the relationship between gender and strategy use have come to mixed conclusions. Some studies discovered significant gender differences in strategy use (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) while others

failed to discover any evidence of differing language learning strategy use between the genders (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). The results of the present research are in line with Wharton᾽s (2000) study which indicated that males used more LLSs than females. However, Gu᾽s (2002) study suggested that female learners generally make better use of the learner strategies, particularly those helping enlarging vocabulary size, compared with their male counterparts.

Multiple regressions between the independent variables of the study and students' achievement

Question 5: In order to determine which one of the teachers᾽ variables were the best predictor of students᾽ L2 achievement, a multiple regression analysis was run. The results are shown in Tables 9, 10, and 11.

Table 9: Model Summary of multiple regression between all variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson
1	.70[a]	.49	.47	2.08

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategy, management, reflecti

b. Dependent Variable: student achievement

Table 10: ANOVA for multiple regression between all variables

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	331.79	3	110.59	32.53	.00[b]
	Residual	343.36	101	3.40		
	Total	675.15	104			

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategy, management, reflection

b. Dependent Variable: achievement

Table 11: Coefficients multiple regression between all variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.64	1.84		.89	.37
management	-.00	.01	-.03	-.50	.61
reflection	.14	.018	.68	8.26	.00
strategy	.00	.015	.02	.24	.80

a. Dependent Variable: student. achievement

The Standardized Beta Coefficients is a measure of how strongly each predictor variable influences the dependent variable. The Beta is measured in units of standard deviation. As shown in Table 11, teachers᾽ reflection beta value is .68 which indicates that a change of one standard deviation in teachers᾽ reflection will result in change of .68 standard deviations in students᾽ achievement. Thus, the higher the beta value the greater the impact of teachers᾽ variable on students᾽ L2 achievement. As can be seen in Table 11, the results showed that teachers᾽ reflection is the strongest predictor of the students᾽ L2 achievement compared with the other variables. Tolerance and VIF give the same information. In this table, since Tolerance value is high ($> 1-R^{2)}$, there is no problem with multicollinearity.

Unlike classroom management orientations and perceptions of LLSs, teachers᾽ reflection made a significantly unique contribution to predicting the students᾽ achievement. This finding supports the aforementioned result obtained from Pearson correlation between reflection and L2 achievement, and serves to highlight the principal role that teachers᾽ reflection might play in predicting Iranian EFL students᾽ achievement (Akbari, 2007; Goldhaber, 2002; Sanders, 2000).

As mentioned above, reflective teachers collect information about their classrooms, examine and evaluate it, and consider the consequences of their actions, which in turn lead to higher student achievement (Bainer & Cantrell, 1991).

This finding corroborates the idea of Akbari and Karimi Allvar (2010) who suggested that reflection is a passionate desire on the part of teachers to transform problematic classroom situations into opportunities for students to learn and grow (p. 13). Thus, reflective teachers attempt to increase students learning and provide effective classroom situations.

Conclusion and implications

The aim of the present study was to investigate the contributions of three teacher variables (i.e., reflective teaching, classroom management orientations, and perceptions of LLSs) to students L2 achievement. The study further aimed at identifying gender differences in each of the three teacher variables. The results led to the conclusion that teachers reflection and perceptions of LLSs had a significant positive correlation with students achievement, suggesting that developing teachers awareness of reflective teaching and LLSs are deemed necessary in enhancing students L2 achievement. However, classroom management orientations were found to have a negative relationship with students achievement. That is to say, the higher the level of control exerted by the teachers in the classroom, the lower the students L2 achievement. From among three teacher variables, teachers reflection was found to be the best predicator of students achievement which reinforced the significant role of reflective practice in EFL classes. Another conclusion derived from the findings of the study proved that gender differences did not have any effects on teachers reflection and classroom management; while, a significant difference was found between the male and female teachers with regards to their perception of LLSs. Since the results of this study indicated a significant relationship between teachers perceptions of LLSs and students L2 achievement, it seems reasonable to recommend that during pre-

service and in-service teacher education programs, teachers become aware of the importance of LLSs and get familiar with the ways through which such strategies can be taught. Moreover, since the results indicated reflection as the best predicator of students achievement, it is deemed essential for EFL/ESL teachers to enhance their awareness of reflection and apply reflective practice in their classes to improve the quality of their teaching. Also, teacher trainers should make teachers familiar with efficient classroom management skills in order to create a safe learning environment that ultimately results in students achievement and success.

Limitations of the study

Although efforts have been made to guarantee reliability and ensure validity in the present study, some limitations exist. First, the data were collected using self-report questionnaires; therefore, there might be some discrepancies between the teachers actual practices in their classes and their answers to the questionnaires. Next, the sample was extracted from two cities, Shiraz and Hamadan, and it might not yield a true picture of the effect of EFL teachers variables on students achievement in Iran. Thereby, the results cannot be generalized to all EFL teachers. Finally, the students score on their final English exam was selected as an index of their English achievement. Despite all the necessary measures taken by the Central Office of Educational Measurement to ensure test security, similar administration across the country, and fair scoring of the test papers; still some unsystematic variations might exist which are out of the researchers control.

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