Effectiveness of Teachers' Education among Novice and Experienced Teachers: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of teachers' education among novice and experienced teachers. The study involved 24 novice and 31 experienced English teachers teaching in two English language institutes and a university in Shiraz, Iran (Omid, Parsa institutes, and Shiraz Azad University). They were both males and females and were selected through availability sampling procedure. Data were collected through a FLEQ questionnaire which included 32 Likert scale items. The data was analysed using both descriptive (in the form of frequency counts, tables) and inferential statistics (T-Test and ANOVA). Based on the analysis, the following results were obtained: 1) there was positive significant correlation between the experience of the teachers and their level of educations, and 2) The perceptions of novice and experienced males and females English language teachers did not significantly differ regarding the effectiveness of teacher**s'** education. The results could have implications for teachers, university instructors, syllabus designers and, in general, all those who are involved in the field of education.

1. Introduction

The main goal of language teaching is to increase students' understanding and learning. Jadidi and Bagheri (2014) mentioned that teachers need to be equipped with various kinds of knowledge and skills to establish and maintain effective teaching environments that enable them to achieve that goal. Thus, teachers' professional knowledge may be considered the single most important characteristic in instruction. Elbaz (1983, p.11) points out that "the single factor which seems to have the greatest power to carry forward our understanding of the teacher's role is the phenomenon of teachers' knowledge." The topic of teacher knowledge and the nature of the knowledge base have emerged as one of the central concerns of research in language teacher education over the last few years. That's why recent years have witnessed increased interest in evaluating the effectiveness of teacher education processes and how teachers and student-teachers interpreted and gave meaning to the teacher education programs they experienced (Zeichner, 1999). This led to emergence of a number of theoretical frameworks. The most influential of these was possibly Shulman's (1987) formulation of the knowledge base of teaching as comprising a set of different categories of knowledge:

1. Content knowledge
2. General pedagogical knowledge (pedagogical issues that transcend subject matter)
3. Curriculum knowledge
4. Pedagogical content knowledge (the special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers)
5. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics
6. Knowledge of educational contexts (at both micro- and macro-levels)

7. Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values (p.97)

Savolainen (2009) notes that teachers play very crucial role in quality education and quotes McKinsey and Company who argue that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'. (p. 16) Studies suggest (e.g. Sanders and Horn, 1998; Bailleul et al., 2008) that the quality of the teacher contributes more to learner achievement than any other factor, including class size, class composition, or background. The need for 'high quality' teachers equipped to meet the needs of all learners becomes evident to provide not only equal opportunities for all, but also education for an inclusive society. Reynolds (2009) believes that it is the knowledge, beliefs and values of the teacher that are brought to bear in creating an effective learning environment for pupils, making the teacher a critical influence in education for inclusion and the development of the inclusive school.

Cardona (2009) notes that concentration on initial teacher education '…would seem to provide the best means to create a new generation of teachers who will ensure the successful implementation of inclusive policies and practices' (p. 35).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Model of Teacher Education

As cited in Jadidi (2014) although the oldest model of teacher education, teaching as a craft still today is considered an irreplaceable model even with highly educated people. The other model considers the education as an application of science in that teacher education programs are informed by achievements of empirical researches. Knowledge transfer is the core of this model of teacher education. So it is one-way, experts introduce scientific achievements to prospective teachers to apply in practice later. This attitude has emphasized the difference between the theory and the practice in teaching foreign languages and has led to partition of experts in this area to those who create and think and teachers to those who apply the theories handed down by experts. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) rightfully stated such divisions of labor are not acceptable in current pedagogic environment in which teachers increasingly adopt multiple roles of researcher, syllabus designer, and materials producer. The reflexive model of teacher education is the most adequate for the contemporary moment.

Training future teacher for self-education by formal and empiric knowledge gained in a reflexive manner. Formal knowledge is theoretical and is based on scientifically based facts, while empiric knowledge is gained not only by practice but also by thinking on practice. The contemporary idea about autonomy in teaching, about training students for independent learning is the heart of this reflexive model, which gives equal significance both to theoretical knowledge and to practical experience. These three models show how our understanding of the nature of knowledge base required for successful language teaching changed during the last century. In fact these models stem from the attempts to conceptualize teacher learning. As such conceptualizations may overlap and may be understood differently, they can lead to different views to teacher education. (Jadidi& Bagheri, 2014)

In teacher education, it encourages teachers to explore their own beliefs and thinking processes and to examine how these are practiced in their classroom. (Borg, 2003)

Teacher learning as personal construction is based on the belief that knowledge is actively constructed by learners not passively received. Learning is seen as involving reorganization and reconstruction and it is through these processes that knowledge is internalized. New learning is fitted into learner's personal frameworks. In teacher education this has led to emphasis on teachers' individual and personal contributions to learning and to understanding their classrooms, and utilizing activities that focus on the development of self-awareness and personal interpretation through such activities as journal writing and self-monitoring. (Richard and Lockhart, 1994)

As cited in Mahmoudi and Özkan(2015) the experienced teachers differ from novice teachers in their knowledge, skills, and beliefs (Rodríguez & McKay, 2010). Therefore, it may be concluded that they also differ from novice teachers in their professional development needs. Novice teachers are defined as those with little or no mastery experience. They are often student teachers or teachers who have less than 2 years of teaching experience

(Gatbonton, 2008). The identification of experienced teachers is more complex but they can be identified according to the number of years they have taught. For example, Gatbonton (1999, as cited in Rodríguez & McKay, 2010), pointed out that experienced teachers are those who have approximately 5 years or more of classroom experience. Richards and Farrell (2005) also distinguished experienced teachers from novice teachers according to some characteristics that they share. They say that experienced teachers have:

- ➢ a rich and elaborate knowledge base,
- ➢ ability to integrate and use different kinds of knowledge,
- ➢ ability to make intuitive judgments based on past experience,
- ➢ desire to investigate and solve a wide range of teaching problems,
- ➢ deeper understanding of students' needs and student learning,
- ➢ awareness of instructional objectives to support teaching,
- ➢ x better understanding and use of language learning strategies,
- ➢ greater awareness of the learning context,
- ➢ greater fluidity and automaticity in teaching, and
- ➢ greater efficiency and effectiveness in lesson planning (p. 7).

2.2 Practical Studies on the Comparison of Novice and Experienced Teachers

As cited in Mehrpour and Mirsanjari (2016) some researchers in the field of second/foreign language teaching have investigated the differences between novice and experienced teachers from different angles.

Pilvar and Leijen (2015) explored the differences in thinking between experienced and novice teachers when solving problematic pedagogical situations. They believe that solving problematic situations is an important part of developing teaching expertise. They introduced a test to explore differences in thinking between 29 experienced and 29 pre-service novice. Participants were asked to solve a problematic situation related to teaching. The test consisted of a description of a pedagogical work-related incident and guiding questions. The situation was based on a real teaching situation. After analysis of the data, it turned out that the expected different results between the experienced and novice teachers based on the comparison of the two groups in the theoretical part did not occur in the empirical part of the paper as evidently as they did in the characteristics listed in the theoretical framework. Personal experiences related to the situation were associated with the use of some characteristics of problem solving. The results suggested that more experienced teachers used an action plan to search for information more often, which means that more experienced teachers generally structure their action plans better than novice teachers. In fact, experienced teachers were searching for information more frequently when making action plans, drew up more action plans overall and structured plans better than novice teachers.

Wolff et al., (2014) focused on the differences between expert and novice teachers' representations of classroom management events. They believe that classroom management represents an important skill and knowledge set for achieving student learning gains, but poses a considerable challenge for beginning teachers. They created a coding scheme using grounded theory to analyze expert and novice teachers' verbalizations describing classroom events and their relevance for classroom management. Four categories of codes emerged referred to perceptions/interpretations, thematic focus, temporality, and cognitive processing expressed. Mixed-method analysis of teachers' verbalizations yielded a number of significant effects related to participants' expertise levels. Notably, teachers' cognitive processing diverged significantly based on expertise level. Differences in focus included themes such as student learning, student discipline, and teacher interaction and influence. Experts focused on learning in the classroom and the teacher's ability to influence learning, whereas novices were more concerned with maintaining discipline and behavioral norms.

With this background, the study aimed to seek answers to the following research questions-
1. Is there any difference between novice and experienced English teachers regarding effectiveness of teacher education?
2. Do the perceptions of novice and experienced male and female English

teachers significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education?

From the above research questions, the following research hypotheses were extracted:

1. There is not any difference regarding effectiveness of teacher education between novice and experienced English teachers.

2. The perceptions of novice and experienced male and female English teachers do not significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were 55 EFL teachers from two English language institutes and one university in Shiraz, Iran (Omid, Parsa institutes, and Shiraz Azad University). They were both males and females. Their educational level varied from B.A., M.A. to Ph.D and so the years of experience. The participants were selected through availability sampling procedures.

3.2 Instruments of the Data Collection

The Foreign Language Education Questionnaire (FLEQ), developed by Linda Quinn Allen (2002), was used to collect the data for this study. The FLEQ consisted of 32 items. Respondents rated the extent of their agreement with each of the 32 statements on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree), to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale, whereby "1" meant "I don't agree with the statement at all" and "5" meant "I fully agree with the statement" was used.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

For the sake of validity, the researcher used the help of two experts, each with a Ph.D. degree in TEFL. The experts checked the whole content of the questionnaires and commented on them. And also these questionnaires were used before in some cases.

To check the reliability of the questionnaires, the reliability of the Foreign Language Education Questionnaire based on Cronbach's Alpha was found to be %89. This indicates that the questionnaire was reliable.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

To analyse the data, both descriptive (in the form of frequency counts, tables) and inferential statistics (independent sample t-test analysis for each variables and ANOVA for two variables) were used to answer the questions formulated earlier in this study.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information

A total 55 Iranian EFL teachers participated in the research and filled out a questionnaire. The demographic data extracted from questionnaire is in the following.

Table: 1 Distribution of Gender

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	F	36	65.5	65.5	65.5
	M	19	34.5	34.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

As seen in Table: 1, most of the participants were females (36 persons out of 55(65.5%)) and males (19 persons out of 55 (34.5%)). So, in this study the most of participants were females gender groups.

Table 2: Distribution of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BA	23	41.8	41.8	41.8
	MA	21	38.2	38.2	80.0
	PHD	11	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Table: 2 shows the participants' education. Most of the participants had BA degree (23 participants- 41.8%), and 21 participants had MA degree (38.2%), and 11 possessed PhD (20%).

Table 3: Distribution of Teaching Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	novice	24	43.6	43.6	43.6
	expert	31	56.4	56.4	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Table: 3 shows the novice and experienced participants. The novice teachers were 31 (43.6%) and the experienced were 31 (56.4%).

Table 4: Statistics for Novice and Experienced

	Exp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Novice	24	117.4839	9.72661	1.98544
	Expert	31	124.4583	11.10517	1.99455

Table 4 presents statistics for novice and experienced teachers. Results indicated that the novice Mean was 117.48 with standard deviation 9.72, and the experienced Mean was 124.45 with standard deviation 11.10.

4.2 Analysis of Research Question: 1

Table 5: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	.184	.669	2.436	53	.018	6.97446	2.86277	1.23247	12.71646
	Equal variances not assumed			2.478	52.137	.016	6.97446	2.81428	1.32755	12.62137

The results of independent t-test as presented in Table 5 show that there was positive significant correlation between experienced teachers and their level of educations, (p=0.669>0.05). Hence, the first hypothesis of the study that "There isn't any difference regarding effectiveness of teacher education among novice and experienced English teachers" shows that the experience teachers are more familiar than novice teachers with effectiveness of teacher education, and they can apply it in their classes. It also shows that it is beneficial for experienced teachers with high level of educations.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for EFL Teachers in Different Groups

Total					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Female Novice	18	124.9444	9.60681	2.26435	120.1671	129.7218	111.00	139.00
Female Expert	18	119.7778	11.54304	2.72072	114.0376	125.5180	103.00	138.00
Male Novice	6	123.0000	10.86278	4.43471	111.6002	134.3998	110.00	134.00
Male Expert	13	114.3077	10.03647	2.78362	108.2427	120.3727	104.00	131.00
Total	55	120.5273	10.99976	1.48321	117.5536	123.5009	103.00	139.00

In Table 6, descriptive statistics for variables, (EFL teachers) among different genders as well as years of experiences groups have been summarized. The results in this table indicate that the mean score obtained for the EFL teachers was 120.52 with a standard deviation of 10.99. The whole scores, of course ranged between 103 and 139.

4.3 *Analysis of Research Question: 2*

Table 7: The ANOVA Test for Comparing the Novice and Experienced Teachers in Terms of Gender

Total	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	900.884	3	300.295	2.719	.054
Within Groups	5632.825	51	110.448		
Total	6533.709	54			

As shown in Table 7, the results of ANOVA test indicated that there was positive correlation between novice and experienced teachers in terms of gender (p=0.054>0.05). Hence, the second hypothesis of the study that "The perceptions of novice and experienced male and female English teachers do not significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education*."* was accepted as there aren't any differences between male and female teachers.

4.4 Discussion

In this part, each major finding of the study will be discussed under a separate heading. The first research question of the study was-

Is there any difference between novice and experienced English teachers regarding effectiveness of teacher education?

The result of independent t-test showed that there was positive significant correlation between experienced teachers and their level of educations. In other words, the experienced teachers were more familiar than novice teachers with effectiveness of teacher education and they can apply it in their classes. Also this result showed that it is beneficial for experienced teachers with high level of educations. It showed that there are differences among novice and experienced English teachers. Danhui Zhang (2008) reported that there was positive impact of teacher education, level, teaching experience, and teaching behaviors on students' science achievements. A significant correlation was noticed between teachers possessing advanced degree in science or education and years of teaching science which was inversely associated to students' science achievement. Better teaching behaviors were also positively related to student achievement in science directly, as well as mediated the relationship between student science achievement and both teacher education and experience.

The second research question of the study was-

Do the perceptions of novice and experienced male and female English teachers significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education?

The results of ANOVA test indicated that the novice and experienced teachers had positive significant correlation in terms of gender and the perceptions of novice and experienced male and female EFL teachers did not significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education. It means that there weren't any differences among male and female teachers. This was in sharp contrast with Florack's (2012) findings.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the effectiveness of teachers' education among novice and experienced teachers. The findings demonstrated that there was positive significant correlation between experience of teachers and their level of educations. In other words, the experienced teachers were more familiar than novice teachers with effectiveness of teacher education. These results also show that it is beneficial for experience teachers with high level of educations. And there are differences among novice and experienced English language teachers. It was also found that the perceptions of novice and experienced male and female English teachers do not significantly differ regarding effectiveness of teacher education and there weren't any differences among male and female teachers.

5.1 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

The findings can be insightful for teachers and practitioners as well as the researchers and scholars undertaking research in second language pedagogy. Language schools and universities, particularly, may utilize the findings of the present study in designing syllabi and evaluation. Educators can benefit from the results in that they can adapt them to their own practices in classrooms, their own lesson plans and even the syllabi and course examinations.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Foreign Language Educating Questionnaire (FLEQ)
Position: Teacher ☐   Years of experience: ------------------year(s).
Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐   Degree level: BA☐   MA☐   PHD☐

Please read each statement and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Put an X over the appropriate box to indicate your opinion. Respond according to what you believe, not necessarily what you actually do. There is no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The major curricular focus of effective foreign language programs is on the adopted textbook and accompanying ancillaries.					
2. The idea time to being the study of a foreign language in early elementary school.					
3. The effective foreign language teacher provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning (i.e., relating the content of the foreign language class with that of other school subjects).					
4. Effective foreign language instruction incorporates authentic materials.					
5. Students who have learned a language other than English somewhere other than in school can benefit from taking courses in the language they have learned elsewhere.					
6. The effective foreign language teacher uses the foreign language as the dominant language of instruction.					
7. All students, regardless of future educational plans, can benefit studying a foreign language.					
8. In effective foreign language programs, nearly all of class time is devoted to learning the language system (i.e., pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and syntax).					
9. In effective foreign language instruction, sometime is devoted to teaching students how to use specific communication strategies (e.g., circumlocution, approximation, gestures).					
10. Effective foreign language programs include opportunities for students to access a variety of technologies.					
11. The effective foreign language teacher provides opportunities for students to explore topics of personal interest the foreign language.					
12. Effective language programs provide students at all levels of instruction with opportunities to use the target language for real communication, both in the school and beyond.					
13. English is the dominant language of instruction in effective foreign language programs.					
14. Effective instruction in the foreign language class is designed to promote the use of critical thinking.					
15. Only college-bound students should enroll in foreign language classes					
16. Effective foreign language instruction is related to students' real lives within the school, community, family, and peer group.					
17. Effective foreign language teachers plan instruction on how to use specific learning strategies (e.g., previewing, skimming, inferring information.)					
18. The idea time to being the study of a foreign language is in high school.					
19. Effective foreign language instruction uses open-ended activities (e.g., portfolios, demonstrations, presentations, projects) to determine a portion of the students' grade.					
20. Effective instruction in culture leads to an understanding of the underlying values and beliefs of the target society (societies).					
21. The primary focus of effective foreign language programs is on the development of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.					
22. The roll of foreign language teachers is to help students learn what is in the textbook.					
23. The chapter tests that accompany the textbook provide an adequate means of assessment in effective foreign language programs.					
24. Foreign language study is not for students who have difficulty with learning in general.					
25. There is little or no benefit for students who have learned a language other than English somewhere other than in school to take courses in that language.					
26. Effective foreign language instruction defines and assesses cultural learning objectives just as systematically as grammatical and lexical learning objectives.					
27. The study of foreign language enhances only certain professions.					
28. The effective foreign language teacher creates opportunities for learning that relate foreign language instruction to that which the students already know.					
29. The role of cultural instruction in effective foreign language programs is secondary to that of vocabulary and grammar.					
30. Students who have learning difficulties can be successful foreign language learners.					
31. The focus of assessment in effective foreign language programs is on students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.					
31. All students, regardless of career objectives, can benefit from studying a foreign language.					