A Discourse Analysis of Marginalized Pupils: Elimination of Deficit Thinking As a Double-Edged Sword in Iranian EFL Teachers and Students

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ABSTRACT

'Deficit thinking' refers to the notion that pupils (particularly those of low income, racial/ethnic minority background) fail in school because such pupils and their families have internal defects (deficits) that thwart the learning process (for example, limited educability, unmotivated; inadequate family support). In this line, the aim of this research is to understand the role of two EFL school principals who explicitly reject deficit thinking to provide a more equitable education to pupils who are marginalized by deficit thinking practices. The main objective of the research is to find the biggest problems, teachers or even students are faced when it comes to learning language in general, and especially when it comes to produce a piece of writing (paragraph or essay). Toward this end, two types of questionnaire were prepared, one for teachers and the other for students in Shokuh English institution in Mashhad. Then, collected data were analyzed using SPSS$_{V.21}$ software. Finally, in was concluded that pupils' errors in writing should be taken into account seriously and work on eliminating or at least reducing their number. The pupils' responsibility goes back mainly to their poor background knowledge in the target language "English" and their unawareness of the importance of the writing skill. In addition their lack of concentration while writing in English stands as the major obstacle in their way of improving their writing style.

1. Introduction

Deficit thinking, an endogenous theory, 'blames the victim' rather than examining how the schools are structured to prevent certain pupils from learning. As far as EFL classrooms are concerned, it is the responsibility of all EFL teachers to encourage their pupils to be successful learners as well as to master the language skills in general. To develop communities of difference—communities in which pupils are able to be full members of the community, in which they are able to participate fully—it is important that pupils do not receive the message that their families are somehow deficient or that they are less important or defective in any way. A blaming the victim mentality cannot exist in a community of difference. Thus, in order for schools to create an inclusive community, they must develop some criteria against which to judge decisions to guide their actions and dialogue (Shields et al., 2004).

Many EFL pupils commit mistakes of different Kinds when using the target language "English". EFL teachers must question unspoken assumptions about the sources of their pupils' struggles. EFL teachers are regularly asked to assist schools that are a far cry from the typical EFL School. Clearly, teachers and school

educators are now grappling with many of the challenges traditionally associated with EFL schools, including growing demographic diversity and financial stress. In addition, EFL educators increasingly work in the kind of regulatory environment that has long characterized EFL schools' operations and influenced their culture. Bureaucratic school culture undercuts many of the teaching attitudes and behaviors that draw on pupil strengths (Weiner, 2000).

Providing feedback is quite helpful for the pupils to know their mistakes, so that they avoid them the next time, Harmer stated that" Feedback encompasses not only correcting pupils, but also offering them an assessment of how well they have done, whether during a drill or after a longer language production exercise". (2001, p.99). Numerous studies have demonstrated that a deficit thinking paradigm is highly pervasive in both public schools and institutions of higher education (Valencia, 1997a). Ladson-Billings (2017) found the evidence was clear that various segments of the public school population experienced negative and inequitable treatment on a daily basis. When compared to their White middle-class counterparts, pupils of color, pupils of low socioeconomic status, pupils who speak languages other than English, and pupils with disabilities consistently experienced significantly lower achievement test scores, teacher expectations, and allocation of resources (Alexander et al., 2011; Delpit, 2015).

Although the problem of deficit thinking is evident throughout American classrooms, there is little research examining the challenges faced by principals who address deficit thinking (Shields et al., 2004; Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). Specifically, there is little research on how a principal addresses deficit thinking at the secondary school level. The literature on school principal and effective schools has long held that the principal of the principal is the single most important factor in eliminating deficit thinking (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). It follows, then, that the principal of the secondary school principal has tremendous potential to eliminate deficit thinking and provide pupils who are marginalized with an equitable education.

The purpose of this multi-case study was to understand how principals aim to eliminate deficit thinking in a secondary school setting. Specifically, it builds an understanding of the practices that secondary school principals employ to challenge and change the beliefs and attitudes of teachers who succumb to deficit thinking. This is critical because teacher attitudes and relationships are more important and directly related to pupil achievement than funding or facilities (Shields et al., 2004). It is much safer to focus on the presumed deficits than to highlight the inequities in the distribution of economic and educational resources as causal factors in pupils' underachievement (Cummins etal, 2016).

When teachers overcame deficit thinking, pupil achievement increased (Bishop, 2017). Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the principal to provide a catalyst for social change. The single most important factor in the academic achievement of minority pupils is the explicit rejection of deficit thinking by the school-based administrator (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2018). Therefore, this study seeks to understand the role of two EFL school principals who explicitly reject deficit thinking to provide a more equitable education to pupils who are marginalized by deficit thinking practices.

1.1 Problem Statement

As such, the theory contends that poor schooling performance is rooted in the pupils' alleged cognitive and motivational deficits, whilst institutional structures and inequitable schooling arrangements that exclude pupils from learning are exculpatory. Each example of deficit thinking has roots that are often based on misleading or ill-informed research. Because of this misconstrued foundation, deficit thinking is often perpetuated by policies and practices aimed at decreasing or bridging deficiencies between privileged and marginalized pupils. To promote equality, democratic principal must create a climate that allows debate, discourse, and deliberation of ideas and issues. Principal cannot do this by focusing completely on the narrow goal of training children to be good employees who can read and do math (Delpit, 2015) nor can it be accomplished by leading a school environment that focuses on standardized assessments. In this context, teachers are deskilled and the curriculum becomes a drill-and-kill model of reading and mathematics instruction, essentially marginalizing disadvantaged pupils (Ravitch, 2010a). Compelling evidence suggested that effective principal by principals and superintendents could

improve both teaching and learning (Hoachlander et al., 2001) and superintendents could use external accountability as a lever to move the internal system to support improved teaching and learning. Yet, improved test scores did not automatically promote social or economic equity or equality (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). In order to impact and promote equity and equality in schools by eliminating deficit thinking, it is going to take more than principal; it is going to take principal with the purpose of transforming the beliefs of those who practice from a deficit thinking platform (Cummins, 2001).

The theory contends that poor schooling performance is rooted in the pupils' alleged cognitive and motivational deficits, whilst institutional structures and inequitable schooling arrangements that exclude pupils from learning are exculpatory. The type of principal needed to create this paradigm shift is that of a transformative educator. A transformative educator is rooted in moral and ethical values in a social context. Their approach enhances equity, social change and quality of life for pupils who are marginalized (Shields, 2010). Transformative educators find ways to overcome the persistent and socially constructed disparities that exist between dominant and marginalized populations. Transformative educators challenged deficit thinking as well as attitudes, policies, and practices that pathologized the lived experiences of children (Shields et al., 2004).

Pupils who are marginalized are sometimes labeled as lower achieving and subsequently relegated to lower level classes in a misguided effort to best serve their needs. In actuality, these types of practices actually hamper the intellectual, social, emotional and cultural growth of some pupils. This practice must be addressed by school educators because it perpetuates the notion of blaming the families, cultures, and linguistic differences of pupils.

When pupils' academic outcomes are below expectations, teachers, or indeed the whole school, may view this as a problem characteristic within the child's cultural background or within their family or community. Change requires principal that is focused on more than test scores. It requires principal focused on eliminating deficit thinking. Furthermore, research supported the need for professional development as a vital component of increasing pupil achievement (Darling-

Hammond & Richardson, 2015), and the impact of instructional and transformational principal on pupil achievement (Robinson et al., 2018); however, there is also the notion of how radically disconnected principal research is from the core business of teaching (Robinson et al., 2008). As long as principals are burdened with the bureaucracy of standardized tests in a failed attempt to close achievement gaps, they are unable to fully dedicate themselves to the professional development and instructional principal needed to eliminate deficit thinking. Farcas (2008), states that deficit thinking leads to Poor Background knowledge, unawareness of the importance of the skill and lack of concentration in language learning and these lead to learning disabilities. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of the research design based on Farcas theory.
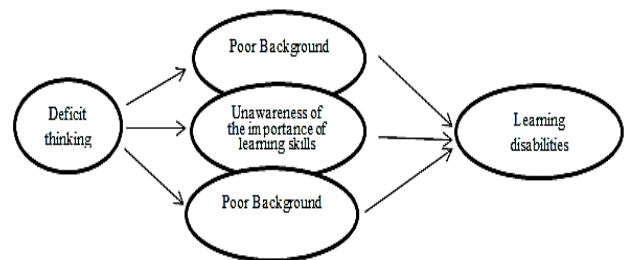

Figure 1: Research design (based on the Farcas (2008))

Thus, in this article, the main problem of the research is to be answered: what are the biggest problems they face when it comes to produce a piece of writing (as one of the most factors in English learning), in the case of marginalized pupils to eliminate of deficit thinking? To do this, the research should answer to the following questions:

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the writing problems in EFL classrooms, concerning both pillars of the teaching and learning process?
2. What is the role of EFL teachers in elimination of deficit thinking?

2. Review of Literature

The literature review defines deficit thinking and builds an understanding of the concepts and strategies that eliminate deficit thinking. Specifically, the literature examines the history of deficit thinking, the challenges associated with overcoming deficit thinking, and the practices that assist in eliminating deficit thinking.

2.1 Deficit Thinking

1. As we continue to study and understand the experience of immigrant children in our school system, we need to make sure that our teachers and

administrators make it an integral part of their policies at the school level and beyond. I'm not talking about having events like "culture days." The difficult work happens in daily engagement. It's asking questions like "How do we deal with diversity?" and "How do we make students feel like they belong?" Deficit thinking is the practice of holding lower expectations for pupils with demographic, linguistic, and socioeconomic characteristics that do not align with the American dream, also known as the American way. Deficit thinking asserts that the low academic achievement of low-income pupils from culturally, racially, and socioeconomically different backgrounds is to be blamed on these external factors—factors not related to the school and the work done within the four walls of a classroom. Those whose thought is based in a deficit perspective attempt to "fix" marginalized pupils by assisting in their assimilation (Abdi et al., 2018).

2. According to Alberta Education, (2013), the pseudo-scientific framework for deficit thinking emerged from using scientific methods in unethical ways that often reproduce untrustworthy "factual" evidence. Pseudo-science offers a causal explanation of why humans act in certain ways (Alberta Education, 2013). These norms set the standards to which everyone is compared and contrasted (ibid) without being culturally sensitive. Scientific research in education has often been misused, misunderstood, and misconceived. Alberta Education (2013) adds that as educators and pupils, we are agents and objects who influence and are influenced by the background and consequences of our social, economic, and cultural conditions.

3. The sociological-cultural framework creates, supports, and often "justifies" deficit thinking; sometimes it uses the results of standardized tests to build stereotypical opinions of marginalized pupils. Aragon, Culpepper, McKee, and Perkins (2014) state . . . because teachers do not want to see Brown and Black children as being impacted by both institutional forces and individual choices, they commit the fallacy of interpreting the collective low achievement of Brown and Black children as being due to their individual lack of tenacity, hard work, or merit, which ends up being a racist belief. (p. 548).

4. Farcas (2008), states that deficit thinking leads to Poor Background knowledge, unawareness of the importance of the skill and lack of concentration in language learning and these lead to learning disabilities. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of the research design based on Farcas theory.

5. Deficit thinking is the notion that the failure of pupils lies in factors outside the control of the schools. It is a pervasive problem that transcends nearly every facet of education (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). Oakes (2017) referred to deficit thinking as assumptions that lowincome children, children of color, and their families are limited by cultural, situational, and individual deficits that schools cannot alter. As a result, these children received fewer educational and social advantages.

6. Weiner (2016) found that educators may become discouraged when they come face-toface with hitherto unquestioned practices and conditions because they know that they cannot eliminate these practices on their own; what we can all do, however, is acknowledge deficit explanations and examine them critically. The most notable impact of deficit thinking is the achievement gap.

7. Much research exists that examined the achievement gap between pupils of White backgrounds and that of their minority peers. The achievement gap created a tracking system that has a disproportionately larger number of marginalized pupils in a "lower" or "basic" academic track (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). The disadvantages of tracking were most detrimental to minority pupils (Farkas, 2003; Oakes, 2017) because of the imbalance of minority pupils in the lowest academic track (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 2019). Furthermore, Cummins (2001) argued that language-minority pupils failed primarily as a result of a home/school language switch. The literature stressed the importance of taking action to eliminate deficit thinking and replacing it with a democratic education that provided all pupils with the opportunity to succeed in the education world (Pearl & Knight, 2010).

2.2 Transformative Principal Challenges Deficit Thinking

1. Literature provides pupils with mirrors into their own lives and windows into the lives of others. As teachers, it is vital that we provide mirrors and windows for all pupils that respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples. Transformative

principal is leading for social justice (Shields, 2010). As a school educator, the principal is critical in creating a vision of the school that focuses on changing the culture to improve pupil achievement (Robinson et al., 2008). Furthermore, principals advocate and establish a school wide vision of (a) eliminating discrimination, inequity, and exclusion, and (b) fostering the success of all pupils, in part by explicitly recognizing and affirming pupils who are marginalized (Capper, 1993; Riehl, 2000). In order to improve the academic success of pupils, the principal has to play a critical role in creating an environment that challenges deficit thinking.

2. We can provide windows for all pupils to gain perspectives into the lives of people who are similar to them and people who are different from them. We can provide mirrors for all children that are free from bias, stereotypes and racism. Research indicates that it takes more than an effective educator to change a culture. It takes a transformative educator to change the core beliefs and social context of teachers. The section examined how transformative principal is loosely described as principal that creates a transformative and ethical organization with a focus on three pillars: critique, justice, and caring (Starratt, 1991).

3. Shields (2010) described it in the following passage: Transformative principal begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others. Transformative principal, therefore, inextricably links education and educational principal with the wider social context within which it is embedded. Thus, it is my contention that transformative principal and principal for inclusive and socially just learning environments are inextricably related (p. 559).

4. In an attempt to promote social justice, principals facilitated difficult and sensitive conversations that encouraged teachers to develop greater responsibility for (a) understanding the pervasiveness of institutionalized oppressive beliefs and practices (especially institutionalized racism), and (b) subsequently better serving traditionally marginalized pupils (Kose, 2015). Additionally, Kose and Shields (2015) stipulated that such educators examine the structures, norms, or curricular materials that subtly reinforce marginalization of particular groups (e.g.,

ability tracking or pull-out programs).

2.3 Principal Practices in Addressing Deficit Thinking

Identity characteristics are both assumed by and ascribed to individuals and groups, but at times self-identification (assumed identity) is at odds with the dominant views (ascribed or given to) of that person or group. Brown (2006) found educators for social justice examined power relations within schools and society, scrutinized differential schooling, and critiqued social class stratifications. Professional development was vital to improving the learning and achievement of pupils (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2015). It is through specific principal strategies like professional development that a school educator can begin to change a school culture to replace deficit thinking with a democratic education.

Assumed identity makes for a sense of belonging with those perceived to share characteristics and for the 'othering' of those seen as not belonging. To improve the academic outlook for pupils who are marginalized, professional development is critical. In order to promote equality, professional development grounded in democratic principal must create a climate that allows debate, discourse, and deliberation of ideas and issues. Principal cannot do this by focusing completely on the narrow goal of training children to be good employees who can read and do math (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

Hence, the need for educational educators is to ensure that these freedoms are not taken for granted but are cultivated and critiqued in class and staff rooms through professional development. It underscores the need for professional development that enhances teachers' abilities to work with diverse pupils who differ by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability, or socioeconomic status (Shields et al., 2015).

Additionally, dialogue is a critical tool that school educators can use in an effort to eliminate deficit thinking. Dialogue then is more than a process of communication; it is a democratic action that validates the experiences of those who are marginalized because their realities have been pathologies. Buber (1939) also suggested the importance of knowing one's pupils and community, and of educating people through relationships for community which is achieved by fostering dialogic relationships. Furthermore, "We are truly

human only when we are in a dialogical relation with others" (Sidorkin, 1999, p. 12). Dialogue is a vital tool that fosters relationships between pupils who are marginalized and those of the dominant discourse. It is critical in the creation of a culture that works to eliminate deficit thinking.

Uncovering Tacit Assumptions and Practices The graduate program that I coordinate at New Jersey City University provides university based professional development focusing on teaching and learning in urban schools. The program guides teachers in uncovering, contextualizing, and challenging tacit assumptions about pupils' weaknesses. Most of the younger teachers are stunned when we question the pervasive diagnoses of pupil problems. They assume that a "hyperactive" 1st grader requires medication and placement in special education. We challenge them to think about how this explanation makes the teacher a mere referral agent and locates responsibility for pupil achievement beyond the teacher's reach. In our discussions, I describe the racially segregated elementary school I attended in Wilmington, Delaware, where as a 1st grader I had recess three times a day (10:00 a.m., after lunch, and 2:00 p.m.) and a nap after lunch. Back then, "heterogeneity" consisted of mixing children of upwardly-mobile Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic European-American families. None of the children had disabilities.

My blind sister could not attend the school that her siblings attended, and neither could the African American children who lived 10 blocks away. Looking at this historical context, teachers in our graduate program can readily identify some outdated assumptions and practices, such as legal segregation and the exclusion of pupils with disabilities. Other changes in assumptions are more difficult for them to see at first. For example, could the definition of "hyperactivity" that their schools take for granted have something to do with today's decreased opportunities for physical activity and rest during the school day? In one of our online courses, teachers read and analyze research about critical issues in urban education. Most of the teachers work in small suburban or rural districts far away from the university's urban campus.

As a result of our readings and discussions they see, often for the first time, that problems they have considered "urban" are present—but hidden—in their communities and schools. For example, one reading helps teachers examine the disproportionate placement of African American males in special education (Civil Rights Project, 2002), and the teachers look at data for their own schools. Almost without exception, the teachers are surprised to discover that their school's special education placements conform to the skewed demographics we see across the United States. Disrupting the Deficit Paradigm Educators may become discouraged when they come face-to-face with hitherto unquestioned practices and conditions because they know that they cannot eliminate these practices on their own. What we can all do, however, is acknowledge deficit explanations and examine them critically. Invariably this illuminates possibilities that have eluded us, including strategies that focus on pupil strengths. In our graduate program, teachers have designed and carried out interventions in their classrooms that have proven remarkably effective in disrupting the deficit paradigm. Reframing Hyperactivity One project required teachers to address chronic behavior problems that they had been unable to solve. Using a strategy I have found effective in unearthing and challenging deficit paradigm explanations (Weiner, 2003), I guided the teachers in working to reframe the problem behavior of a pupil or colleague.

Many EFL pupils commit mistakes of different kinds when using the target language "English". Indeed, the problem is common in all Arab or Farsi world countries, as it is stated by Tahaineh (2010) "N otwithstanding the exerted attempts to tackle the difficulties and problems of English language learning / teaching at all levels of education in the Middle East World ; Farsi pupils still encounter serious problems in their English - writing" (p.80), "Now, the correction of those errors is the teachers' mission in the first place as it is believed in the following: " when and how to correct pupils errors in the EFL classroom is an issue of concern for every EFL teacher". (Correcting Errors in the EFL Classroom).

Providing feedback is quite helpful for the pupils to know their mistakes, so that they avoid them the next time, Harmer stated that" Feedback encompasses not only correcting pupils, but also offering them an assessment of how well they have done,

whether during a drill or after a longer language production exercise". (2001, p.99) Sometimes even with their teachers' correction, pupils still commit the same errors and this what let the teachers wondering "One to the things that puzzle many teachers is why pupils go on making the same mistakes even when such mistakes have been repeatedly pointed out to them." (ibid).

The appearance of those errors refers to the pupils' lack of concentration, lack of vocabulary, and other factors.

To learn from their errors, pupils should receive feedback in a way that pushes them to write more and more and this is the teachers' role. Teachers should not over correct their pupils' written productions and should not use the red ink too much because this may have a negative impact on the pupils. "Most pupils find it very dispiriting if they get a piece of written work back and it is covered in red ink, underlining and crossings out" (Harmer, 2007, p.120) and "of course, some pieces of written work are completely full of mistakes, but even in these cases, overcorrection can have a very demotivating effect."(ibid).

To benefit from the correction, teachers should make their pupils aware of the kind of errors they often commit by providing some symbols standing for each type and this idea is shared by both Harmer (2007, p. 121) who stated that "Another technique which many teachers use is to agree on a list of written symbols (S= spelling, WO= Word order, etc). When they come across a mistake, they underline it discretely and write the symbol in the margin. This makes correction look less damaging.", and we've found a list of symbols suggested in Hedge's work "Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom (2000, p. 316) as it appears in the figure below:

WF	Wrong from: the **best** will be its achievements
WW	Wrong word: patient, funny **kindly** ᵂᵂ
T	Wrong tense: in the last few weeks you **didn't have** much fun
Λ	Something is missing: you arrived in Brighton the 1ˢᵗ Λ
SP	Wrong spelling: **comfortable** ˢᵖ
WO	Wrong word order: you haven't seen [yet] London
P	Wrong punctuation: Look out. ᴾ
V	Wrong verb form: the Titanic **sunk** very quickly
//	New paragraph needed
Ø	Not necessary: John came in and he sat down
∪	You don't need a new sentence
	Join up the ideas
?	I don't understand what you're trying to say
∿	This isn't quite right: it needs clearer expression (usually the teacher provides an alternative)
[ ]	This part needs to be re-arranged or reworded.
!!	You really should know what's wrong here because.
	- We've just done it is class.
	- I've told you so many times.

The errors we found in our pupils' productions include spelling mistakes in the first place, mistakes in tenses, in word choice, in word order. .. etc and the table below comprises a collection of some of those errors.

Table 1: Collection of Pupils' Writing Errors.

Student's Level	Mistakes	Type	Correction
L1	- Will organized	Verb form	- Will organize
	- Leaved	Verb form	- Left
	- Thinked	Verb form	- Thought
	- To Keeped	Verb form	- To keep/ kept
	- Langage	Spelling	- Language
	- Defer	Spelling	- Differ
	- Compoend	Spelling	- Compound
	- Diffinition	Spelling	- Definition
	- Bybies	Spelling	- Babies
L2	- learner have	Subject verb agreement	- Learner has
	- evaluation	Spelling	- Evaluation
	- should aware	Something missing	- Should be aware
	- acceptibal	Spelling	- Acceptable
	- appertionity	Spelling	- Opportunity
	- writing	Spelling	- Writing
	- students are discussed	Verb from	- Students are discussing
4Th Cl	- Own why	Word choice	- Own way
	- Can does	Verb from	- Can do
	- Verity	Spelling	- Variety
	- Will knowing	Verb from	- Will know
	- Choice, the chosing	Word choice	- Choice
	- Education background		- Educational background

Obviously as any EFL teacher, when correcting our pupils' writing errors, we often hope this correction to be taken into consideration seriously but unfortunately most of the time the pupils do not care about it at all "Every English writing teacher would like to imagine that their pupils take their corrected paper home, pulls out a dictionary and grammar book and goes carefully over each correction .Unfortunately, most pupils only check to see how much "red" is on the paper and then file it away, never to be looked at again", (How to Correct English Writing Errors).

3. Research Methodology

This research is applied by purpose and is a descriptive survey based on the method of data collection. In the descriptive research method, the aim is to describe the conditions or phenomena under study, and the survey method, as one of the subsections of the descriptive research method, is used to examine the distribution of the characteristics of the statistical population. In this study, the researcher is going to find the biggest problems, teachers or even students are faced when it comes to learning language in general, and especially when it comes to produce a piece of writing (paragraph or essay). In order to describe the sample characteristics, the data are summarized and categorized, using descriptive statistics indices, then descriptive statistics will be expressed, including those related to the research variables, then using Inferential statistics indices, the research questions will be answered.

3.1 Statistical Population

The statistical population of this study includes all educators in all three levels of elementary, intermediate and advanced in Shokuh institute and Mahan institute, both in Mashhad province, as well as students in all three levels of elementary, intermediate and advanced in Shokuh and Mahan institute in Mashhad. Total number of teachers in these centers is 24, 10 in Mahan and 14 in Shokuh. Also, totally, there were 341 students in these to institutes, 200 in Shokuh and 140 in Mahan.

3.1.1 Statistical Sample Size

Morgan table was used to determine sample size. In cases where there is no community variance or percentage error, and the number of statistical populations is specified, this table can be used to estimate sample size. This table shows the maximum number of samples. Table 2 shows the Morgan table and how to select the statistical sample of the study. In this table, from left to right, the population size and then the sample number are listed respectively.

Table 2: Morgan Statistical Sample Table

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	180	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

S = sample, N = statistical sample size.

As the statistical population of the students is 340, the sample size is 180 according to Morgan Table. A questionnaire was distributed between the two groups to identify the views of both teachers and students. Thus, the statistical population of the research includes 180 students and 24 teachers. As the number of the teachers is low, and their opinion is very important for the purpose of this study, it was decided to include all of them as statistical population.

3.1.2 Data Collection Method:

In order to describe the sample characteristics, the data are summarized and categorized using descriptive statistics indices, then descriptive statistics will be expressed, including those related to the research variables, then using Inferential statistics indices, the research questions will be answered. This research is in terms of data collection, from library and field research.

3.1.3 Data Collection Tools

The researcher, using existing researches and related books and the Internet, collects data necessary to complete the theoretical literature of the research. Also, in order to answer the research questions in the research, the Farcas (2008) Questionnaire, consisting of 24 questions was used: *The Deficit Thinking questionnaire for Marginalized Pupils*, which deals with the problem of deficit thinking in marginalized pupils and is categorized in 3 factors: (*Poor Background knowledge* (q1 to q 8), *Unawareness of the importance of the skill* (Q9 to Q 16) and *Lack of concentration* (Q17 to Q24)). These questionnaires were distributed among 24 teachers and 180 students.

3.1.4 Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire was entered into computer through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 21). The data was analyzed by descriptive statistics, correlation and independent samples t-test.

3.1.5 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was sent to all participants. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the items, using a five-point Likert-type scale. We emphasized the need for the items to be scored accurately, to ensure the validity of the results: (1) completely disagree; (2) disagree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) agree; and (5) completely agree.

The internal consistency of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha for factor 1 was 0.907, for Factor 2, it was 0.937, for Factor 3, 0.909. Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was 0.902.

We have thus obtained a parsimonious measure of construct. The factor structure of the model also presents good stability with the validation sample obtaining adequate values in the fit statistics, with both the RMSEA and the SRMR yielding optimum values below the reference value of 0.8.

4. Findings from Questionnaires' Analysis and Results' Discussion

4.1 Questionnaires' Description

To find an answer to our main question, we've relied on a questionnaire administered to 24 teachers of the department of Shokuh Language Institution (full-time and part- time teachers) and

another one addressed to 180 pupils of different levels including (Ll,L2,L3, Ml, M2, '4th Cl), 10 pupils of each, The teachers' questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first about teaching the writing skill (six questions) and the second about writing and pupils 'errors (eleven questions), On the other hand, the pupils' questionnaire also induced two sections: one about general information or demography (age, sex .. .etc) and the other about the writing skill (thirteen questions).

4.1.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

From 24 teachers, only 14 have handed back the questionnaire, The first section included items about the importance of the writing skill, the pupils' awareness of such importance, the pupils' writing level in English, their motivation and interest in writing using English, and their preferences in practicing such skill. The answers to these items were as follows:

Concerning their opinion about the importance of the writing skill, around 60% of the respondents stated that it is very important for EFL learners, while 40% didn't answer this question at all. When the question deals with the pupils' awareness of the writing skill importance, also around 60% of the participants agreed on that most if not all of their pupils are not aware enough because of many reasons such as: the biggest problems they face when it comes to produce a piece of writing (paragraph or essay); they come from the high school without being taught about that skill, the majority of the pupils think that speaking is the most important skill and that writing is a difficult and complicated one. Only 10% of the teacher stated that their pupils ignore writing as a basic element in learning any language and they don't know its basic rules. And around 30% of the respondents claimed that the pupils are aware enough of the importance of writing and this is clear from their constant attempts to write better and improve their writing style, the priority that is given to writing over spoken English: the fact that there are more written exams than oral ones.

Approximately all the respondents agreed on that the majority of the pupils do not write well in English because they lack self-confidence and the necessary linguistic and stylistic knowledge and training, for others the major problem is the lack of knowledge of grammatical rules and often they misuse them, they encounter many difficulties and constraints at different levels, their writing is very poor in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, they are influenced by their mother-tongue, most of them don't read and don't practice while writing is a skill which needs practice and still according to some teachers writing well in a language means writing without mistakes, errors, or even lapses. It also refers to products which are complete in terms of the absence of any nonnative voice. If this is the denotation of writing well, for that they don't think that their pupils have so far reached this level. And still other teachers stated that few of their pupils even if they write well, they do so as if they are speaking or as if they write in Persian (awkward style and their sentences are ill structured in terms of grammar and spelling).

When asking them about the pupils' motivation to write using the target language "English", there answers were as it is mentioned in the table below:

Table 3: Pupils' Motivation to Write in English

Students' Motivation	High	Medium	Low
Students' Answers %	7.14%	50%	42.85%

In addition, when the question was about the pupils' interest in writing, the teachers' replies were as follows: only a minority of about 14.28% of them said that their pupils are somehow interested in writing in English simply because they noticed that their pupils are trying to improve their writing level even if they start with difficulty but with the introduction of some activities and techniques (introducing the process-genre approach), they showed an improvement. Still 35.7% of the teachers stated that their pupils are really interested to write in English mainly for the simple reason that they need this skill in their academic career, and most of them to get good marks in the first place because most of their academic examinations are in written form, and others have tendency to write rather than to speak because they feel free to express their thoughts and ideas with full concentration. Whereas 50% of the teachers said that the pupils are not interested in writing at all and this goes back to many factors:

Writing demands knowledge and competence in other skills Pupils are not motivated enough.

The majority of pupils refuse to write except when they are given this as a drill in an exam. They feel they are obliged to move their pens (to answer).

Writing is too demanding and severely evaluated.

Writing needs a lot of practice and the class

size (number of pupils per group) doesn't allow for writing activities.

Writing is a very difficult skill and they feel unable to overcome their writing problems.

When we asked the teachers about how their pupils prefer writing whether in small groups (4-5 pupils), in pairs, or individually, their answers showed that the majority of pupils have tendency to work individually and some of them prefer writing in pairs while the minority prefer writing in small groups and as the table below illustrates this, we understand that EFL pupils don't prefer collaborative work in writing.

Table 4: Pupils' Preferences in Writing

Students' Preferences in Writing	In small groups	In pairs	Individually
Students' Answers %	7.14%	35.71%	57.14%

All what is discussed above concerns the first section of the questionnaire. The second section which is composed of 11 items deals with writing and pupils' errors. The first item of the latter was about the number of written assignments given to pupils and the respondents' answers were:

Few of the teachers said rarely because of the number of mistakes they'll struggle to correct.

Others said at the end of each theoretical part to help pupils apply what they have learnt in order to be memorized and it's a chance to teachers to check the pupils 'understanding through these tasks.

Still some teachers said once a week and it lasts more than one session during which pupils improve their drafts based on the teacher's and peers' feedback.

And others give the written assignments as group activities such as posters and word splash weekly or each 15 days.

There is who said just sometimes because of teaching in halls (lectures) and the time allotted, besides the class size is huge and some of their pupils need to see models.

When the question concerns whether pupils ask for more written tasks or not, around 65% of the teachers said no and linked this to: lack of motivation in the first place, they consider writing as a heavy task and some of the pupils don't like it at all, they believe that writing is a very difficult task that requires both linguistic and cultural knowledge, and others abhor producing anything in writing. While around 35% of the respondents said yes, stating that most of the pupils ask for written tasks to improve

their style, so that through intensive writing, they can develop themselves, as they are always eager to write more in order to do better.

Moreover, we've asked the teachers about how often they correct their pupils' writing errors and we received the following:

Only a few of them said that they don't correct their pupils' errors because of the large number of pupils per group.

Still few others said sometimes because of using cooperative strategies in which there is peer feedback and peer evaluation.

The majority of teachers, correct pupils' writing errors very often or we can say always especially while correcting their exam papers, homework ... etc. They do so in order to follow their pupils' writing so that they'll do enough efforts to strengthen them. They believe that immediate correction is an effective strategy and that correcting pupils' writing errors is the language teacher's job.

When the question deals with the way used by teachers to attract their pupils' attention to their writing errors, the teachers' answers can be summarized in the following:

The use of check lists.

Writing the common mistakes on the blackboard or mentioning them openly in class and try to ask so many questions about them for collective correction.

Highlighting them using circles or lines.

Underlining them using symbols and different colors.

Taking one performance as a sample, write it on the blackboard to be corrected (whole class is involved).

As far as the pupils' level in writing is concerned, the respondents' answers were as shown in the table:

Table 5: Pupils' Level in Writing

Students' Writing Level	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Students' answers %	50%	2.85%	7.14%	0%

50% of the teachers claimed that their pupils have a poor level in writing, 42.85% stated that their pupils' level is average, 7.14% said that the level is good, and none of them thought of their pupils' level to be very good and this is explicit in their writing performance.

After asking the teachers about the pupils' level in writing, we moved to know about their pupils' satisfaction of this level, and all of them agreed on that they are not satisfied at all because they usually ask for

correction, guidance, and clarification; they claim all the time of having problems with this skill in terms of accuracy, shortage in vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. Even though they acknowledged that their style of writing is very poor, yet they believed that it's not their mistake and they do not want to do much effort to improve themselves.

In addition, we've tried to know how teachers correct their pupils' errors a how they help them to improve their level in writing and in their replies they stated that some of them believe that the best strategy to correct pupils' errors is to give them more and more drills with concentration on common weaknesses, for others collective correction in class is very effective, rereading pupils' written productions to help them discover their faults, making comments on some of their errors, giving remedial activities in the areas in which they notice any kind of weaknesses, sensitize them to write according to the rules of the English style, providing them with documents and samples, but still other teachers who said that they don't use any specific strategy or technique but they cope with the situation according to the nature of the course they're teaching.

Besides, we've asked them about the strategies and techniques they use to deal with pupils' errors and help them eliminating their occurrence again, their replies vary from one to the other, some of them rely on self-evaluation quizzes, dictation, encourage pupils to use simple statements use dictionaries and handbooks, encourage them to read short stories as a step toward being familiar with the Eng way of writing, encourage internet activities as Google documents by Gmail writing emails to motivate them write, give hem general remarks about common mistakes to raise their awareness and avoid making (causing) anxiety, give intensive writing tasks, provide them with practical sessions with weekly given written assignments insisting on classroom correction, doing reading comprehension in class, usually draw their attention to the fact that reading and practice are the most important ingredients of the learning process.

At the end of the questionnaire, we've tried to know the pupils' deficiencies in writing are linked to what exactly. The results revealed that the great majority of teachers with around 85.71 % claimed that the main source of those deficiencies is the pupils' background knowledge in the target language, about 42.85% of them believed

that it's a question of concentration while writing, but 21.42%of the teachers thought that it's their pupils' unwillingness to learn Eng in general which is behind such serious problem in EFL classes.

4.1.2 Pupils' Questionnaire findings

As it is mentioned in the questionnaire's description previously, this questionnaire was addressed to 180 pupils at the English Department, 10 of each of the following levels (Ll, L2, L3, Ml, M2; 4th Cl) and who answered were 90% of the population of the study. Their age is between 18-29 years old, 24.07% male and 75, 92% female, 48, 14% of them were Literary in their BAC stream, 31, 48% were scientific, and only 20.37% of them were in language classes. When it comes to their will to study English, the participants' replies showed that the great majority with 87.03%. of them have a strong will whereas only 12.96% their will is weak. From this section, we get the result that most of our pupils suffer from weaknesses in writing as EFL learners despite of their age, gender, back stream and even their will to study English.

In addition, we've tried in the second section to spot the light on the writing skill in EFL classes particularly including: their motivation to write in English, the number of written assignments they get, how often they write in English, their level in writing, the number and type of mistakes, the ways of correction and feedback.

At first, we've tried to have an idea of the pupils' practice using the target language "English", and the results as they appear in the table below indicated that even those 29.62% who write more than twice a week commit mistakes when writing in English; i.e. it's not a question of practice but it may refer to other factors.

Table 6: Number of Pupils' Practice Times per Week

Number of Practice Times	Once week	Twice week	Once a month	More
Students' answers %	28.92%	20.37%	20.37%	29.62%

Then, we moved to know about their motivation to write in English, we found that only a minority of about 22.22% of the respondents who stated that they're not motivated to write in English because of; lack of time, lack of feedback, lack of vocabulary, lack of interest and interesting topics and lack of objective (why writing?), and most of them claimed that they like writing in Farsi rather than English because of the previously stated factors, and some others don't like writing at all, but still some others 77.77% stated that despite their weaknesses, they are motivated to write in

English simply because it's their favorite language; they have passion to express themselves in that language, and they feel at ease in doing so.

Table 7: Pupils' Evaluation of their Level in Writing

Students' opinion of their writing level	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Students' answers %	7.40%	33.33%	50%	9.25%

As it appears in the table above, 50% of the participants judge themselves to have a good level in English, 33.33% of them think that their level is average, 9.25% others believe that they have a very good level, but still 7.40% of the pupils believe that their level is poor.

In addition, we've asked them about how often they commit mistakes they commit when writing in English and the kind of those mistakes the results revealed that the majority with 55.55% stated that they commit mistakes sometimes, 35.18% rarely, and only 9.25% who said that they often do so. When it comes to the kind of errors 27.77%, spelling with 33.33% and word choice 27, 77% whereas word order takes only 12.96% of their errors and 38.88% said others without précising the type.

Moreover, when asking the pupils about the factors behind their errors in writing, we found that the major factor is the lack of concentration when writing with 48.14%; 31.48% goes back to the lack of mastering the Eng Gram rules, 20.37% link their problem in writing to their poor background knowledge in English, still 11.11 % link it to their unawareness of the writing skill importance, while 12.96% stated other factors such as: the French language impact on their English and the lack of well -ordered ideas.

In what concerns the pupils' way of asking for the correct form of a word when they doubt about it, most of them with 61.11 % stated that they consult a dictionary, 27.77% of them use all of the suggested ways in during the teacher's help, the classmates' help; and consulting the dictionary, whereas 16, 66% of them prefer asking for their teachers' help and 11.11 % others prefer asking for their classmates' help instead.

Then, we've tried to focus on feedback particularly asking about how many times pupils receive feedback, from whom, and in what manner. The results showed that most of the pupils receive feedback sometimes from both their teachers and their peers as written remarks with 9.25%, oral remark with 35.18%, and both with 53.70%.

When the question deals the number of writing assignments they have, some of them said regularly and others said sometimes or even rarely.

Then, we finished the pupils' questionnaire with a question about their opinion concerning their teachers' correction in improving their writing level, almost all of them believed that it's really beneficial for them because they feel gradual improvement at all levels (grammar, vocabulary, ... etc) thanks to their teachers' remarks that help them in knowing their deficiencies and work hard to decrease their number or avoid their appearance again at all.

5. Conclusion

After discussing both the teachers' and the pupils' questionnaires, the results revealed that pupils' errors in writing should be taken into account seriously and work on eliminating or at least reducing their number. Therefore, at the end of this paper we come to the conclusion that writing problems in EFL classrooms concern both pillars of the teaching learning process. The pupils' responsibility goes back mainly to their poor background knowledge in the target language "English" and their unawareness of the importance of the writing skill. In addition their lack of concentration while writing in English stands as the major obstacle in their way of improving their writing style. As far as EFL teachers are concerned, their responsibility is in attracting their pupils' attention to the importance of writing, providing enough and immediate feedback in a way that enhances their pupils' motivation to write more and more, giving enough written tasks taking into consideration their pupils' needs and wants to raise their interest in such a crucial skill, encourage them to read a lot so that they'll enrich their vocabulary as it is stated in the following: "Each time and every single time you read, you should keep growing your database of words, keep looking for new prominent words. "(How to Write Good English).

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