

On the Teaching Methodology of Shiraz EFL Institutes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was, firstly, to investigate the language teaching methodologies used in Shiraz EFL institutes. Secondly, the study aimed at exploring the extent to which these teaching methods were effective from the directors', teachers', and the students' views.

Out of 28 institutes for men in Shiraz, 5 institutes including 17 classes were selected for the study. An observation scheme was used to observe and record the instructional activities taking place in the classrooms. A questionnaire consisting of five variables was also administered to all 205 students of these institutes. In addition, the five educational directors and seventeen teachers of these classes were interviewed.

The findings of the study obtained through statistical analyses indicated that a) the overall methodologies employed in Shiraz EFL institutes benefited from some indices which are in line with the principles of Communicative Approach; b) the classes observed were more in need of supplementary materials; and c) because of the difficulty of writing skill, it was mostly ignored in the classrooms.

Keywords: 1. Methodology 2. EFL institutes 3. Language teaching.

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task in developing countries in general and in our country in particular. English has been included in the curriculum of Iranian schools and universities and considerable attention has been paid to this language in our society for the following reasons. First of all, access to and use of the latest technological and scientific resources mainly written in English calls for an efficient amount of English language proficiency. Secondly, coping with the demands of the era of information explosion and the efficient use of the Internet makes learning English a necessity. Thirdly, mastery of English facilitates cultural exchange among nations including the proposal of the dialog among civilizations. In spite of all these, some studies show that teaching and learning English in Iranian schools has not been able to satisfy the specified goals (see, for example, Moradi, 1996; Rahimi, 1996; Saadat, 1995; Rashidi, 1995; Zanganeh, 1995; Bagheri, 1994). Thus, due to the shortcomings of the formal EFL program at schools on the one hand, and the need for learning English on the other hand, different EFL institutes have been established all over the country including the city of Shiraz. As such, this study aimed, first, to explore the language teaching methodologies used in these institutes in Shiraz especially at advanced levels. Secondly, it aimed to evaluate these language teaching methodologies in terms of their effectiveness. Based on the findings of the study some suggestions have been offered to EFL centers of Iran in general and those of Shiraz in particular.

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1.1 Objectives of the study

In as much as English language instruction in Iran is important, conducting research on English language methodologies is of great necessity. Therefore, the present study aimed at exploring and evaluating the language teaching methodologies of private and semi-private EFL institutes in Shiraz. In particular, the study sought answers to the following questions.

1. What are the teaching methods and approaches and their underlying theories used at advanced levels in private and semi-private EFL institutes in Shiraz?
2. To what extent are these teaching methods effective in teachers' and students' views?
3. What types of materials (books and others) are used in these institutes?
4. What are the criteria for selecting teachers in these institutes?
5. How are language learners assessed in these institutes?

Findings of the present study can be both theoretically and practically significant for the following reasons:

- a. Evaluating the language teaching methodologies used in EFL institutes in Shiraz as an EFL context will reveal all the types of approaches and methods currently in use in such institutes.
- b. The results of the study can be used by EFL institutes of Iran in general and Shiraz in particular to improve their activities.
- c. The findings of the study can serve as a cornerstone for further research since there has been no study in this regard so far.

2. Literature Review

2.1. An overview of language teaching methodologies in Iran

In this part, we are concerned with the methods used for language instruction in Iran. Saadat (1995) pointed out that one could not draw a clear-cut line to distinguish periods during which a specific teaching method was applied. Although a certain method might widely be used during a specific period of time, some features and techniques of other teaching methods could also be observed at the same time.

English teachers in Iran have used a variety of approaches, methods and techniques at different times. Rahimi (1996) demonstrated that Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was used in 1950's all over the country. Celce-Murcia (1991) listed the following characteristics for the GTM.

1. Grammar rules are presented and studied explicitly.
2. Vocabulary is learnt from bilingual word lists.
3. The mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction.
4. Hardly any attention is paid to speaking and listening skills.

In addition, Musavi (2001) claimed that English in Iranian high schools was more grammar based and teachers put more stress on teaching grammar rather than teaching reading comprehension and communicative skills. He believed that teaching and learning English did not satisfy the specified goals because of the following factors:

1. Students' ignorance of aims and goals of learning a new language and its advantages
2. Unqualified teachers and lack of teaching facilities
3. Old methods and styles of teaching
4. Old, unoriginal and out of date resources
5. Lack of native speakers who have a good command of English
6. No TV programs or satellite to watch in English

Saadat (1995) stated that in 1960's Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was put into

practice in English language classes in Iran, similar to those of other countries. Celce-Murcia (1991) mentioned the main features of ALM as the following:

1. Speaking and listening competence precedes competence in reading and writing.
2. Use of the mother tongue is discouraged in the classroom.
3. Language skills are outgrowth of habit formation.
4. Great importance has been placed on pronunciation.
5. Little or no grammatical explanation is given, i.e. students learn grammar inductively.

Both Saadat (1995) and Rahimi (1996) claimed that GTM was used in most of the English classes in Iran. Rahimi (1996: 9) mentioned that ALM was not successful in Iranian English classes because of the following factors: "Shortage of qualified teachers, teaching aids, time, etc."

2.2. A review of studies related to EFL/ESL institutes

Kuntz (1997) in a study investigated the characteristics of 14 second language institutes available to adults in Sana'a (Yemen). Data were gathered through interviews and observation. It was found that teacher qualifications, program design, evaluation, teacher pay, and tuition varied considerably across programs. Very few of the institutes prepared their own instructional materials; most used commercially published materials. Results indicated that program directors, teachers, and students concurred on several language instruction issues: programs needed to hire trained language teachers; in-service workshops on teaching techniques and curriculum development were needed; teachers should be paid for preparation time; and teachers should be able to observe colleagues teaching and try new teaching techniques without fear for their jobs.

Scholfield and Gitsaki (1996) investigated the differences between language teaching in private and public institutions through focused classroom research. In addition, interviews were done with learners about how they were taught and how they learnt vocabulary as a guide to examine the difference between private institutes of foreign languages and government schools. Contrary to the expectation that private schools would evidence clearly different and better practices, a complex picture emerged. Some marked weaknesses in the methodology of vocabulary teaching, with a consequent reflection in the way vocabulary was learnt by learners, were detected in both. They concluded that the success of the private institutions seemed not to be founded on overwhelmingly better teaching and learning training. It was perhaps because of the following reasons: the stricter environment with more class tests and greater discipline, smaller number of students per classroom, and the greater number of teaching sessions.

Rice and Stavrianos (1995) in a research provided an overview of the issues central to adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs since researchers and policy-makers have shown interest in exploring new possibilities for the ESL components. Four major conclusions were drawn from this examination. First, ESL was different from adult basic education and adult secondary education components of the AEA, which reinforced the importance of examining ESL individually in a study such as this. Next, ESL was a concern specific to a subset of states and urban areas as the ESL population was highly concentrated in individual cities and states and demands associated with this population tended to fall on the shoulders of the areas affected. Third, diversity existed among adult ESL programs in terms of population characteristics, administration and funding, curricular and instructional approaches. Last, while this report provided background on ESL programs and services, in many cases there was limited knowledge about program approaches and practices on which to base future policies.

Schmitz (1995) evaluated the PARADISU program, established by the Micronesian Language Institute in 1992, whose purpose was to strengthen and develop the English literacy. Strengths of the program were the commitment and expertise of the staff and a training program focused on building the capacity of parents. Identified weaknesses included lack of coordinated effort within the program and with outside agencies, a chronic attendance problem and unclear philosophy and strategy. Recommendations such as considering the philosophy of the program; stressing cooperation, unity of purpose, and sharing of ideas; focusing greater resources on recruitment and assessment; and planning beyond the life of the program were offered.

Burns (1994) summarized the history, scope, content, and strategies for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction in Australia, particularly in adult education. The history of ESL instruction was traced from post-war immigration policies, through early provision for migrant education and introduction within post-secondary institutions and adult education programs. It was reported that ESL programs were offered through the national Adult Migrant Education Program, post-secondary institutions, adult and community education programs, school districts, and higher education and private institutions. Program types included settlement, labor force development, community-based, vocational and workplace, and pre-college and college support programs. Curriculum development evolved from a teacher-centered approach through local curriculum design, the communicative approach, emergence of decentralized curriculum support units, emphasis on vocational training, and competency-based instruction. A trend toward nationally standardized courses was noted.

Campbell & Yong (1993) in a study investigated the foreign language institutes in the People's Republic of China. Results showed that a combination of the audio-lingual method and traditional teacher-centered grammar translation method were used in these institutes.

Abdan (1991) in a study investigated Saudi private and public EFL center course books and teaching methods. He found that course books and teaching methods were in the same form in private and public centers. The superiority of the private centers was attributed to greater exposure, not from simultaneous attendance but from the fact that English was started at an earlier age in the private centers.

Marottoli (1973) studied the success of the private language schools in French. Observation was made to some of the most prominent private language schools to analyze their methods. Most of these private language schools used Audio lingual method in their classes with special attention to listening, speaking, repetition, mechanical drills and no use of mother tongue.

3. Methodology

3.1. Selection of institutes and participants

Out of 55 EFL institutes in Shiraz, 28 male institutes were selected as the accessible population. Female institutes were excluded because of the limitations the researchers were faced with in attending the classes and performing observations. Since specific textbooks are used in EFL language institutes, the researchers solicited the information from the institutes as what textbook they use in their programs. It was found that some institutes used the same textbooks. Therefore, the institutes were classified into five categories based on textbooks they used for English language instruction. Among each category, one institute was randomly selected. Among different levels of proficiency in those institutes, all the advanced adult language learners (205 students) and their teachers (17 teachers) were chosen for the study. In addition, a face to face interview was done with educational directors as well as the teachers of those EFL institutes.

3.2. Instruments

What follows is a description of the instruments used to collect data and information about their validity and reliability.

3.2.1. Classroom observation scheme: Numerous methods of investigating language teaching and learning are in common use. One current method is direct classroom observation, the most widely used form of which is interaction analysis. As Baily (1978) reported, because of the problems such as lack of reliability, observer's bias, multiplicity of the categories and cumbersome reading system, interaction analysis was found faulty. Hence, the time interval recording was found most effective for observing objectively definable behaviors which were seen in the classrooms.

Studying several carefully developed observation schemes (Allwright & Baily, 1991; Riazi *et al.*, 1995) and gathering daily lesson plans from 20 experienced instructors of Shiraz EFL institutes, the researchers prepared a detailed observation scheme (Appendix A). After several pilot studies, the following items made up the observation scheme.

- a. Warm up consisting of greeting, reviewing, and attracting students' attention
- b. Language skills consisting of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and translation
- c. Language components consisting of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation
- d. Students' doing tasks in groups or individually
- e. Providing feedback by the teacher for the whole class or individual student
- f. Types of interaction between the teacher and students or among the students
- g. Types of materials used including textbooks, handouts, short stories, films and tapes
- h. Students' presentation

3.2.1.1. Validity and reliability of observation scheme: The validity of the observation scheme was approved by three experienced professors of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics at Shiraz University.

To get the reliability of the observation scheme, it was tried to gain both intra-coder and inter-coder reliability for the scheme. For intra-coder reliability, one of the researchers observed and tape recorded the same class at different times and the correlation between the observations and the recordings was computed. To gain inter-coder reliability, two classes were observed by three observers independently at the same time and the correlation of marking the activities done in those classes represented the inter-coder reliability. The intra-coder and inter-coder reliability of the observation scheme was found to be .93 and .85 respectively.

3.2.2. Questionnaire: A questionnaire was used in this study to gather data from EFL learners about the effectiveness of instruction in the institutes they attended. The questionnaire was taken from Shahini (1996) with some adaptations (Appendix B). After a pilot study some parts of the questionnaire were revised or discarded. The final version contained 24 items in the form of Likert scale. As a whole it consisted of the following five main variables:

- a. The first variable dealt with how much importance was given to teaching the skills and components of language.
- b. The second variable was about how much improvement the language learners had in terms of language skills and components.
- c. Variable three dealt with how much the textbooks met language learners' needs and their merits and demerits.
- d. Variable four was concerned with the amount of availability and use of teaching aids in the EFL institutes.
- e. The last variable included a general evaluation of the EFL institutes from

language learners' viewpoints.

3.2.2.1. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire: The validity of the questionnaire was approved by a panel of experts in the department of foreign languages and linguistics at Shiraz University.

To get the reliability of the questionnaire Coefficient Alpha or Cronbach Alpha was used for three different variables of the questionnaire. Reliability was not reported for the other two variables of the questionnaire because they consisted of just one item.

Table 1. Reliability of the questionnaire.

Variables of the questionnaire	Internal consistency index
Variable 1: Importance of language skills and components	.70
Variable 2: Improvement of language skills and components	.75
Variable 4: Availability of teaching aids	.85

3.2.3. Interview: Interview was used as another means of data collection in this study. Face to face unstructured interviews were conducted to gather information from the EFL institute educational directors and the teachers. Some of the interviewees preferred to answer the questions in written form.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

A real time method of data collection in each classroom was used, noting at 3-minute intervals on the observation scheme which of the instructional routines was practiced. Each class was observed for five sessions. The observation was done in appropriate time, i.e. it was not done on days in which institutes were busy with quizzes, mid terms or finals. This information provided a nearly complete record of each teacher's methodology. After observing the teachers' methodologies, EFL institute educational directors as well as the teachers were interviewed in their offices. The topic of the interviews was directly related to the language teaching methodologies they used, their justification of using a particular methodology, the historical background of the institutes, types of training teachers received, types of tests, materials, and supplementary materials used. In addition, the questionnaire was administered to the language learners in their classes. They were asked to answer the questions anonymously.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data gathered by means of observation scheme were subjected to descriptive statistics utilizing frequency, percentage, and mean of the amount of time spent in minutes on each specific activity. The data collected through language learners' questionnaire were also subjected to descriptive statistics utilizing frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. They were, also, subjected to the Chi-square test. In addition, data gathered through interviewing were tabulated and discussed especially to substantiate the data gathered through observation scheme and language learners' questionnaires. Specifically, interviews were useful in formulating suggestions on the part of the teachers and in reporting an overall view of EFL institutes on the part of the educational directors. The findings of the study are reported in the following section.

4. Results and Discussion

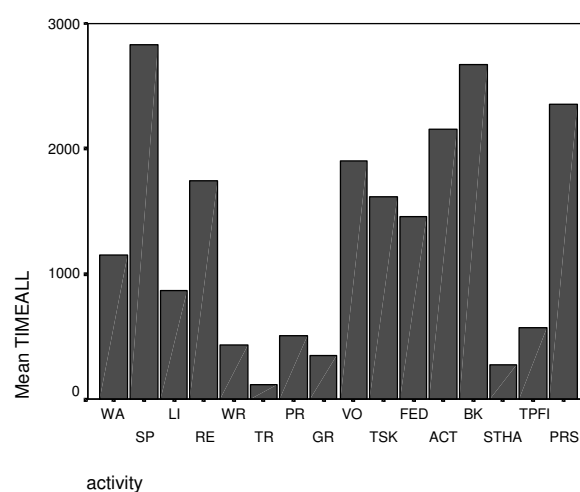
4.1. Findings of the Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were subjected to descriptive statistics utilizing amount of time spent on each activity in minutes, percentage and mean of the time spent. Table 2. presents the amount of time spent on different activities in observed classes.

Table 2. Amount of time spent on different activities in Shiraz EFL institutes in terms of time (in minutes), percentage & mean.

Activities	Time spent on activities	Percentage %	Mean of time
1. Warm up	1155	5.50	231.00
2. Speaking	2835	13.49	567.00
3. Listening	870	4.14	174.00
4. Reading	1740	8.28	348.00
5. Writing	435	2.07	87.00
6. Translation	120	.57	24.00
7. Pronunciation	510	2.43	102.00
8. Grammar	345	1.64	69.00
9. Vocabulary	1905	9.06	381.00
10. Tasks	1620	7.71	324.00
11. Feedback	1455	6.92	291.00
12. Interaction	2160	10.28	432.00
13. Textbook	2670	12.70	534.00
14. Short Story & Handout	270	1.28	54.00
15. Tape & Film	570	2.71	114.00
16. St.'s Presentation	2355	11.22	471.00
Total	21015	100	

Table 2 shows that among language skills, the highest amount of time was spent on speaking (with the mean of 567 minutes) whereas the lowest amount of time was spent on translation (with the mean of 24). More attention has been paid to vocabulary than grammar and pronunciation. The students did a lot of tasks individually in classes. Feedback was mostly provided for the whole class rather than to individuals. Textbooks received the highest importance among the instructional materials; that is, most of the time the teachers stuck to the textbooks and little attention was given to supplementary materials such as tapes, short stories and so on. In addition, most of the time, the students gave lectures and mini-talks in the classes. Because of this, most of the interactions were among language learners rather than teachers and learners. Based on the findings of classroom observations, it can be concluded that the overall methodologies of Shiraz EFL institutes benefit from some indexes which are in line with the principles of communicative approach. Figure 1 below represents these facts.



WA: Warm up	WR: Writing	VO: Vocabulary	BK: Book
SP: Speaking	TR: Translation	TSK: Task	STHA: Story

LI: Listening	PR: Pronunciation	FED: Feedback	TPFL: Tape film
RE: Reading	GR: Grammar	ACT: Interaction	PRS: Presentation

Figure 1: Activities observed in classrooms of Shiraz EFL institutes.

4.2. Findings from questionnaires administered to EFL learners of the institutes

This part deals with the analysis of data gathered through questionnaires given to language learners. Frequency, percentage and the Chi-square are presented in the following table (Table 3).

Regarding the five variables of the questionnaire, most of the students expressed their satisfaction with the effectiveness of English language instruction used at Shiraz EFL institutes. Considering the fact that the two alternatives **Very Much** and **Much** indicate students' satisfaction whereas the alternatives **Very Little** and **None** indicate students' dissatisfaction, the majority of students appreciated: a) the importance that their teachers gave to the language skills and components (except writing); b) the improvement that they made in language skills and components (except writing); c) the suitability of textbooks and d) the general aspect of the institutes. Regarding variable 4, the availability of supplementary materials, most of the students indicated their dissatisfaction. They indicated that they needed more supplementary materials and equipment to improve their ability in English.

Table 3 shows that the obtained X^2 for all of the items of the questionnaire was greater than the critical value (7.81) at .05 level of significance.

Table 3: Language learners' answers regarding the effectiveness of instruction in Shiraz EFL Institutes in terms of frequency & percentage.

Variables	Sub-categories	V M + M		A Little		V L + N		X^2
		F	P %	F	P %	F	P %	
1. Importance Of Language Skills And Components	1.1. Conv.	157	76.58	30	14.64	18	8.78	188.52*
	1.2. Gram.	115	56.10	62	30.24	28	13.66	61.88*
	1.3. Reading	144	70.24	48	23.41	13	6.35	146.47*
	1.4. Pronun.	144	70.24	48	23.41	13	6.35	146.47*
	1.5 Listening	103	50.24	66	32.20	36	17.56	36.71*
	1.6 Speaking	149	72.68	40	19.51	16	7.81	159.85*
	1.7. Writing	62	30.25	100	48.79	43	20.96	27.77*
	1.8. Trans.	105	51.22	36	17.55	64	31.23	36.21*
	1.9. Vocab.	133	64.88	44	21.46	28	13.66	102.24*
2. Improvement Of Language Skills And Components	2.1. Gram.	108	52.68	55	26.83	42	20.49	39.77*
	2.2. Reading	150	73.17	31	15.12	24	11.71	159.53*
	2.3. Pronun.	132	64.39	53	25.85	20	9.76	105.78*
	2.4 Listening	106	51.71	68	33.17	31	15.12	45.58*
	2.5 Speaking	137	66.82	57	27.80	11	5.38	129.56*
	2.6. Writing	98	47.81	64	31.23	43	20.96	25.51*
	2.7. Trans.	113	55.13	70	34.15	22	10.72	66.62*
	2.8. Vocab.	124	60.47	64	31.22	17	8.30	92.02*
3. Textbooks	3. Textbooks	133	64.89	52	25.36	20	9.75	108.31*
4. Supplementary Materials	4.1. Lab	32	15.62	18	8.78	155	75.60	137.19*
	4.2. Film	42	20.48	58	28.29	105	51.23	32.13*
	4.3. Tape	85	41.46	70	34.15	50	24.39	10.22*
	4.4. Story	81	39.52	81	39.52	43	20.96	16.38*
	4.5. Journals	20	9.76	37	18.04	148	72.20	154.77*
5. G. Question	5. General	143	69.76	52	25.36	10	4.88	147.97*

* $P < .05$

4.3. Findings from interviews

This part consists of two sections. The first section describes the teachers' ideas, and the second section is a description of educational directors' interviews.

4.3.1. Findings from interviews of EFL institute teachers: Table 4 displays the results of the interviews with the teachers. What follows is a description and discussion of the frequency and percentage of major points.

Table 4: Display of teachers' interviews.

Major points	Frequency*	Percentage %
1. Using communicative approach	14	82.35
2. Simultaneity of institute and school exams	14	82.35
3. Translation in the form of code switching	13	76.47
4. Importance of speaking	12	70.58
5. Improving students' range of vocabulary	12	70.58
6. Lack of supplementary materials	10	58.82
7. Difficulty of teaching writing skill	9	52.94
8. Long duration of class time	9	52.94

*N= 17

As Table 4 indicates, 82.35% of the teachers claimed that they tried to follow the principles of the communicative approach. Because of this, they paid more attention to students' speaking. They stated that they encouraged the learners to expand their knowledge of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. They believed that other language skills and components were practiced as much as needed. About 74 percent of the teachers stated that they used translation in the form of code switching when needed. Because teaching writing is difficult and takes a lot of time, it was ignored in the classes.

Of the EFL teachers 70.58% believed that there were not enough supplementary materials in institutes. They indicated their dissatisfaction about the long duration of class time (each session was about 105 minutes). They also indicated that one of the main problems in EFL institutes was that school exams had a bad effect on students' performance in the class and their mid-terms and finals because they were simultaneous.

4.3.2. Findings from interviews of educational directors at EFL institutes: Educational directors, like teachers, expressed the same ideas about EFL methodology. They believed that the main purpose of teaching a foreign language was communication and that was why they put more emphasis on the Communicative Approach. They also stated that they wanted the teachers to use an eclectic approach in their classes through benefiting from the positive points of all methods. Figure 2 depicts the procedure for selecting EFL teachers as described by the educational directors.

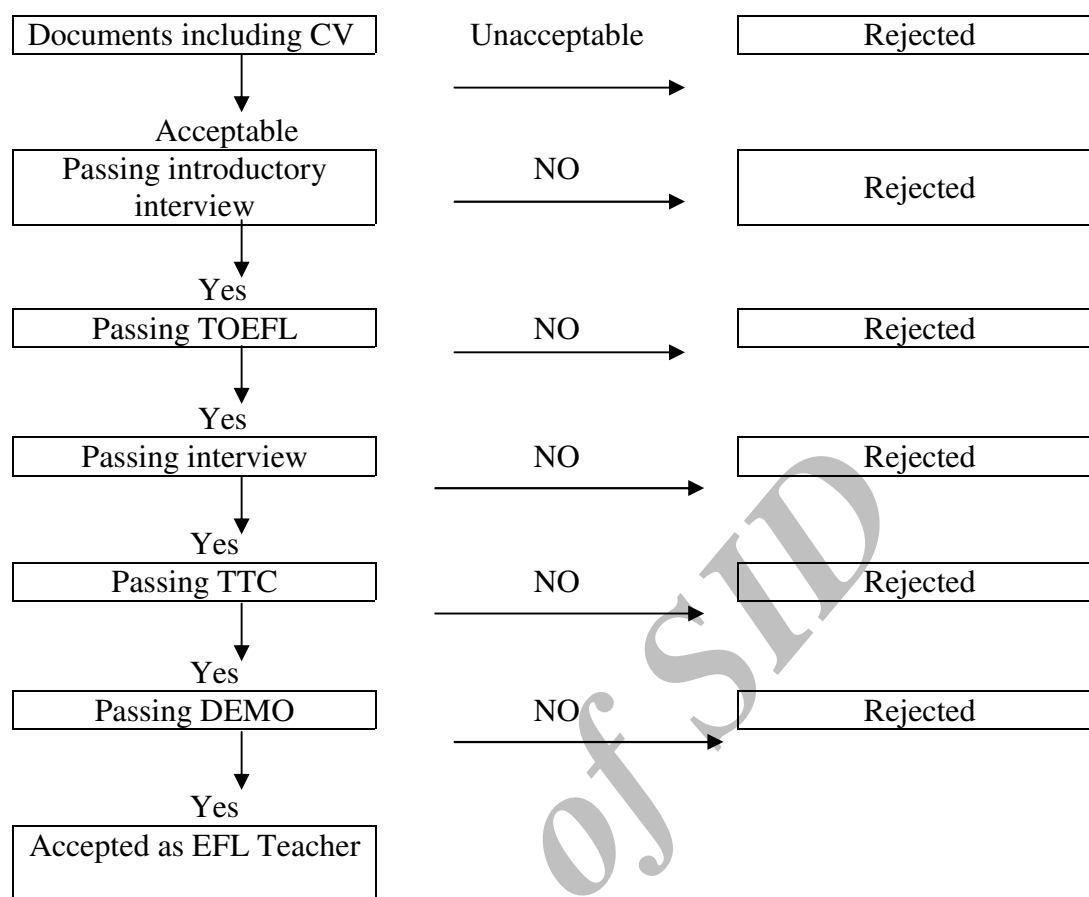


Figure 2: Procedure for selecting teachers in EFL institutes.

EFL educational directors claimed that textbooks, films, short stories, and instructional CDs were the most available types of supplementary materials used in the institutes.

They stated that language learners were selected and evaluated according to the following procedure (Figure 3).

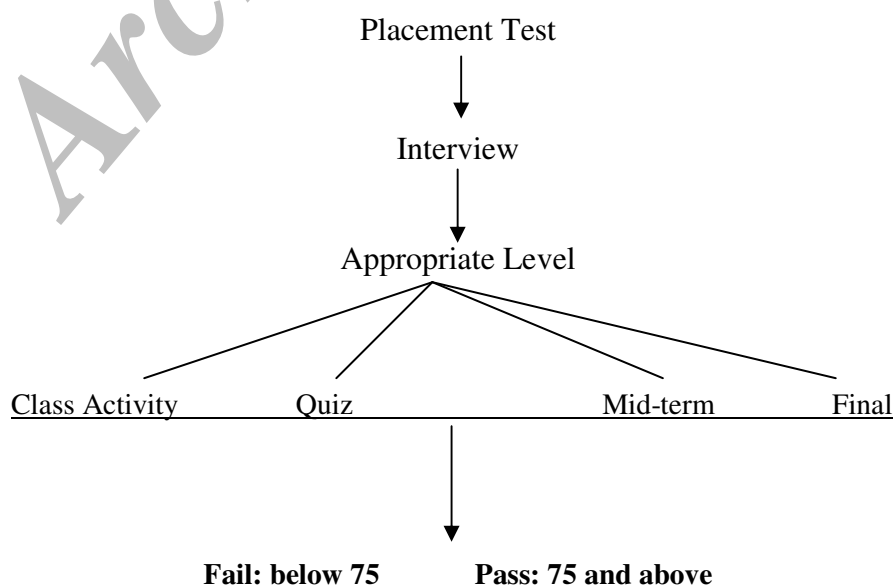


Figure 3: Selecting and evaluating language learners.

They indicate their future plans as follows:

- Establishing language laboratory
- Expanding their supplementary materials
- Setting up more branches in neighboring cities
- Providing more facilities

5. Conclusion

In what follows, the main research questions presented in the first part of the paper will be answered to conclude the study.

Question 1: What are the teaching methods and approaches and their underlying theories used at advanced levels in private and semi-private EFL institutes in Shiraz?

It was indicated that among language skills and components, the highest amount of time was spent on speaking and vocabulary in all institutes. Teachers gave much importance to class activity. Because of this, most of the time students presented lectures in the class and interacted with each other. In a nutshell, the findings of the classroom observations showed that the overall methodology of Shiraz EFL institutes was in line with the principles and theories of Communicative Approach which, according to Rodgers (2001), are as follows:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

Question 2: To what extent are these teaching methods effective in teachers' and students' views?

The majority of the students (above 55%) appreciated the importance given to language skills and components (except writing), the improvement they made in language skills and components (except writing), the suitability of the textbooks and the general aspect of the institutes. Most of the students expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the availability of supplementary materials and equipment especially language laboratories. The results of the Chi-square analysis showed that there were significant differences between the observed and expected frequencies in this regard.

Analysis of teachers' views can be classified into two parts: their methodology and the problems they confronted in EFL institutes.

Regarding methodology, most of the teachers indicated the following points:

- a) Using principles of communicative approach in their classes
- b) Using code switching when necessary
- c) Paying much attention to speaking and vocabulary

The major problems that they pointed out included the following:

- a) Simultaneity of institutes and schools exams
- b) Lack of enough supplementary materials
- c) Difficulty of teaching writing skill
- d) Long duration of each class session

Question 3: What types of materials (books and others) are used in these institutes?

Educational directors claimed that in addition to the textbooks, films, short stories, tapes, and CDs were used in the institutes.

Question 4: What are the criteria for selecting teachers in these institutes?

The criteria to select teachers consisted of the following six stages: a) Submitting

documents; b) Introductory interview; c) Passing TOFEL exam; d) Interview; e) Participating in teacher training course; f) Participating in teaching demonstration. If the teachers passed all these stages successfully, they were employed as EFL institute teachers.

Question 5: How are language learners assessed in these institutes?

Students were evaluated based on the following criteria:

a) Class activity; b) Quizzes; c) Mid-term; d) and Final exam

Those students whose total scores were above 75 passed and those below this cut-off point failed and should repeat the course.

6. Implications

With regard to the results of the study, some practical implications can be provided which may be useful to EFL institutes of Iran in general and Shiraz in particular.

1. The results of the study indicated that Shiraz EFL institutes gave priority to the principles of Communicative approach which is in line with the purpose of teaching English. Therefore, it is recommended that all the EFL institutes follow and build on the principles and techniques of the same method.

2. Although writing skill is difficult and takes a lot of time, we can provide opportunities to improve students' writing. This can be done through assigning topics to the students to write about and providing feedback on their drafts.

3. Teachers should not just stick to the textbooks. Supplementary materials such as short stories, films, tapes, handouts, and so on should also be used. Furthermore, EFL institutes should install modern language laboratories and a situation should be provided so that the students use the laboratories whenever they need to.

4. Class time should be reduced. In case this is not possible, there should be breaks between each class session.

5. It is recommended that classes be held three times a week instead of twice a week. This will have more pedagogical justification. Moreover, the problem of simultaneity of institute and school exams should be avoided.

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