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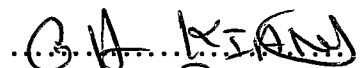



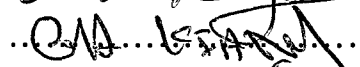
PARVANE SHAYESTEFAR

ENTITLED

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFL TEACHER
CONTROL ORIENTATION AND THEIR PERFORMANCE ON
ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT TEST

BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF ARTS IN TEFL

Committee on Final Examination

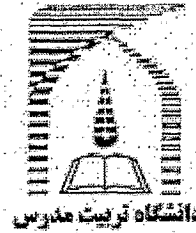
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مقدمه: با عنایت به سیاستهای پژوهشی دانشگاه در راستای تحقق عدالت و کرامت انسانها که لازمه شکوفایی علمی و فنی است و رعایت حقوق مادی و معنوی دانشگاه و پژوهشگران، لازم است اعضای هیأت علمی، دانشجویان، دانش‌آموختگان و دیگر همکاران طرح، در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی که تحت عناوین پایان‌نامه، رساله و طرحهای تحقیقاتی با هماهنگی دانشگاه انجام شده است، موارد ذیل را رعایت نمایند:

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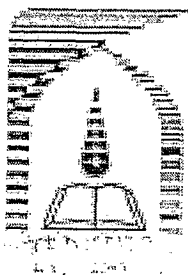
ماده ۳- انتشار کتاب حاصل از نتایج پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی دانشگاه باید با مجوز کتبی صادره از طریق حوزه پژوهشی دانشگاه و براساس آیین‌نامه‌های مصوب انجام شود.

ماده ۴- ثبت اختراع و تدوین دانش فنی و یا ارائه در جشنواره‌های ملی، منطقه‌ای و بین‌المللی که حاصل نتایج مستخرج از پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی دانشگاه باید با هماهنگی استاد راهنما یا مجری طرح از طریق حوزه پژوهشی دانشگاه انجام گیرد.

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۱۳۸۴/۶/۱۰

سایتم فر



**High School Students' Perceptions of EFL Teacher
Control Orientation and Their Performances on
English Achievement Test**

A Thesis

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in
Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

English Department

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*Dedicated to Those who Provided Me With Endless
Support and Encouragement: My Family Particularly My
Mother; and To My Respected Supervisor, Dr. Kiany*

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Acknowledgement is to admit that we are not complete on our own, that pride has got no justification in seeking the truth, and that two heads are better than one. The acknowledgment of this study is also to admit that what has come about is the result of insights, encouragement, and help of many people. The limitation of time and space hampers the enumeration of all. Thus, here follows a heartfelt thank to those who made the most influencing contributions to actualize the concept of the study.

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Needless to say, any possible flaws of the study remain to be my own responsibility.

Abstract

Theories distinguish between student-initiated and teacher-initiated regulations of students' learning activities or between *strong, shared or loose* control teachers employ during learning tasks. The present study through linking high school students' cognitive outcomes to the degrees of EFL teachers' control attempted to provide insights on the ways in which student regulation and teacher regulation act upon one another in the process of language learning. The purpose of the study was then twofold: on the one hand, in a broad sense, it attempted to answer the question of the contribution of teaching in terms of control styles to high school EFL learners' cognitive outcomes which were measured with a national Standardized English Achievement Test at the end of the educational year. On the other hand, it was aimed to normalize the translated Questionnaire of Teachers' Control (QTC) obtained from merging a subscale of Questionnaire of Instructional Behaviors (QIB), adopted and reviewed by den Brok et al. (2004), with another subscale of QLA or Questionnaire of Lesson Activities used by den Brok (2001).

To achieve the abovementioned purposes, the QTC having gone through the restandardization procedures was administered to 732 high school EFL learners at the beginning of the second semester to obtain data revealing the validation processes. Empirical evidences provided three constructs underlying the instrument and consequently three dominant control styles in 27 EFL Iranian high school classes.

To check for any pre-existing differences among groups, a proficiency-like measure, called Pre-Achievement Test was devised and administered to all groups at the beginning of the first semester of the educational year. No significant difference was found between groups' performances on the test which was subjected to Univariate Analysis of Variance for this aim. The nation-wide Standardized Achievement Test with a satisfactory reliability index (0.86) was also given to all the students at the end of the year to measure the cognitive outcomes of the high school EFL learners. In order to seek for performance differences, the data were analyzed using 3-way ANOVA that was also followed by Tukeys' Tests for locating any subgroup differences. Meanwhile the role of *Gender* and *Field* in the participants' performances and the interaction effects of Group, Gender, and Field were taken into account. The results discerned that students of these 27 EFL teachers scored highest on their English Achievement Test when they characterized learning in terms of their own control and scored lowest when they felt that control over learning was mainly their teachers' control styles. The results not only helped to find more empirical supports for the already made distinctions by researchers and teachers but evidenced relationships between English achievement and those constructs. Henceforth, the results of the study were discussed in terms of their implication for language pedagogy and syllabus designs.

Key words: Teacher control, cognitive outcomes, constructivism, self-regulation

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List of Abbreviations

In this study, the following abbreviations have been used:

FA	Factor Analyses
NSEAT	National Standardized English Achievement Test
PQTC	Persian Questionnaire of Teacher Control
QIB	Questionnaire of Instructional Behaviors
QLA	Questionnaire of Lesson Activities
QTC	Questionnaire of Teacher Control
SDMS	Students' Decision Making Scales
SRL	Self Regulated Learning

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Purpose of the Study

"A child is not a vase to be filled,
but a fire to be lit"
Rabelais

The classroom has long been recognized as a critical milieu for students' educational achievement. Most educators and researches claim this social learning environment (Bolhuis, 2003) is important not only for students' social motivation (Akhter, 2003) and affective development (Fraser & Walberg, 1991 in Baek & Choi, 2002) but for their cognitive outcomes as well. Evidently, students' learning processes can not be treated as if they exist separately from this learning environment. In fact, such environment and learning processes influence one another in a continuous interplay (Vermetten, Vermunt & Lodewijks, 2002).

It is inevitable that individuals involved and what they learn are influenced by a variety of factors in classroom context, and the role teacher plays in such environment is undeniable (den Brok, 2001), i.e., teaching and learning have proved to be one another mirror image (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). This perspective implicates that teaching and learning processes including the role played by both teachers and students and the

psychological impacts that teachers and classroom environment have on the students are among the issues deserving more attention in every classroom research to provide more insights on the complexity, richness, and nature of teaching- learning processes in such learning setting.

In an argument of current conception of learning, Shuell (1993) presented his first view, that learning is constructive rather than a reproductive process, that learner does not merely record the materials to be learned rather he/she constructs his/her mental presentations of the materials, selects information and on the basis of his/her existing knowledge, interprets the received information. In another position, he points to learning as " primarily a social, cultural and interpersonal process influenced by social context as by cognitive factors" (p. 294). Conceivably, in these lines of reasoning, according to Shuell (1993), learning is active, constructive, self-regulated and goal-oriented.

Following the epistemological assumption that learners are not regarded as passive pawns (Eshel & Kohavi, 2003) who follow their teachers' instruction, but active participants (Fisher, Waldrip & den Brok, 2005), and teachers should not be the only purveyors of the knowledge, perceptions formed by learners can be considered as a set of mediators between actual teaching and the different learning outcomes of students . Far more attention is, then stressed, to be paid to students' perceptions of their teachers' behaviors within the context of classroom actions and expectations (den

Brok, Bergen, Sthal & Brekelmans, 2004). With reference to the importance of students' perceptions, den Brok (2001) suggests:

.....in order to obtain a complete picture of teaching, students' perceptions are necessary. Students' perceptions might form a starting point for self-reflection and discussion in teacher training, but also in classroom, especially when these perspectives are different from the perceptions of others such as teachers or external observers... (p.193).

In alignment with this, a word to say is that while learning activities are always performed by students, a wide range of behaviors are implemented by teachers to facilitate and regulate students behaviors when they are engaged in completing their learning activities (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). These regulatory behaviors, not always passed unnoticed, are mostly perceived by the students. Whether students engage in and accomplish their learning activities as teacher expects them partially depend on their perceptions of *the quality and the amount of their teachers' control behaviors* (den Brok et al. 2004).

Perception data from students' perspectives, at least is indicative of three constructs behind teachers' control behaviors: *strong, shared, and loose control* (den Brok et al. 2004). *Strong teacher control* or taking over learning activities (cognitive, affective, and meta-cognitive) from students is employed by teachers who try to regulate and control students' processing of subject matter. *Shared control*, or stimulating students to carry out various learning functions or to take active part when learning is another control

style. It is the characteristics of the third strategy that the responsibility for performing the function is handed over to the students. This, according to Vermunt and Verloop (1999), is *loose control* behavior.

Studies on teacher control from students' perspectives have been the topic of some other research (e.g., Akhter (2003); den Brok et al. (2004); Eshel & Kohavi (2003) in ordinary classes; and Walmsely's (2003) examination of learners' perceptions of various technology environment and correlation with students' academic achievement. These studies and a number of other research add to the wealth of research into the more conceptualization of students' perceptions' of classroom learning environment, particularly teacher control behaviors, and augment this train of thought by providing some pointers toward teaching strategies that might assist learners in conceptual reconstruction, attainment of self-regulation and autonomy (Bolhuis, 2003; MaSui and De Corte, 1999; Walmsely, 2003), and of course, meaningful learning (MacDogall, 1996; So, 2002) encompassed by constructivist teaching.

However, given very few of such empirical research, it is of paramount importance to mention that the distinctions made and the relevance to students' outcomes are either mainly based on literature review or assumption-laden theoretical reasoning or even are less grounded in EFL learning. Hence, the primary impetus for the present study was the paucity of empirically based investigations in the field, as is mirrored in den Brok et al.