



Choice Theory-Based Instruction and Clinical Supervision Training Program for EFL Teachers: The Impact on Their Learners' Reading Comprehension and Autonomy

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision for EFL teachers on their students' autonomy and reading comprehension. To this end, a sample of 30 Iranian EFL teachers, selected based on their willingness to participate, were divided into two groups of 15: one group participated in a choice theory-based instruction program while the other underwent a clinical supervision program. In addition to the teachers, a sample of 445 intermediate EFL learners taught by the teachers participated in the study – 225 learners were taught by the teachers who underwent the choice theory-based instruction while the other 220 learners sat in the classes of the teachers undergoing clinical supervision. The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ) was used both as a pretest and posttest to measure the autonomy of the 445 learners before and after they were taught by the 30 teachers. In addition, a sample Preliminary English Test reading paper was administered to the

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learners prior to their classes (i.e., a general English class instructed through a commonplace task-based procedure) as a pretest and they also took another sample reading test as the posttest. The inferential statistics run in this study comprised two ANCOVAs with the results revealing that the learners being taught by the teachers who underwent the choice theory-based instruction outperformed the learners taught by those teachers who participated in the clinical supervision program in terms of both their autonomy and reading comprehension. The pedagogical implications of these findings are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: choice theory, clinical supervision, learner autonomy, reading comprehension

Introduction

Educational systems establish the ultimate goal of instilling the components of basic skills in learners to achieve success, develop actively, and strive for excellence in the learning process. To this end, the EFL literature is replete with various practical methods and innovative initiatives aimed at enhancing EFL learners' ability in all language skills. One such skill is reading comprehension which is generally considered to be one of the utmost important language skills proven to be challenging in EFL classrooms (Crossley & McNamara, 2016).

Accordingly, "Proficiency in reading is a key target of schooling and a major prerequisite for learning, both within and beyond the context of education" (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007, p. 70). It is probably true to assert that teaching reading comprehension requires more time and energy than any other skill (Nunan, 2001) while remaining cognizant of the fact that reading comprehension is one of the problematic areas for L2 learners (Dreyer & Nel, 2003); this is specifically why reading comprehension skill captures the attention of so many scholars and teachers in the process of language learning and language teaching with the trend of such studies being reported in the field not getting any fewer over time (e.g., Cain & Oakhill, 2009; Chen, 2018; Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Marashi & Mehdizadeh, 2018; Marashi & Rahimpanah, 2019; Nazari & Bagheri, 2014; Ravand, 2016).

The ultimate goal of any reading course is of course very much the

same as any other ELT course, that is the enhancement of autonomy among EFL learners, thus enabling them to continue improving their process of learning more independently. Broadly defined, learner autonomy is “the capacity to take control over one’s own learning” (Benson, 2011, p. 2). Knowles (2001) further asserts that a specific goal of the educational setting is effecting change in individuals’ attitudes in order to conceptualize learning as a lifelong process and self-directed skill.

Furthermore, Little (1995) argues that autonomous learners who accept responsibility for their own learning are more likely to achieve educational goals in such settings. In other words, autonomous learners are able to solve their learning problems and internalize language complexities (Sockett & Toffoli, 2012; Zarei et al., 2016). Given the significance of the construct, it is no surprise then that ample studies have been conducted on learner autonomy globally (e.g., Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Barrantes et al., 2013; Humphreys & Wayatt 2014, Lightbown & Spada, 2013, Sapan & Mede, 2022) and also within the context of Iran (e.g., Farivar & Rahimi, 2015; Gholami, 2016; Marashi & Khosh-Harf, 2020; Nazari, 2014; Shirzad & Ebadi, 2019).

Alongside the sizeable bulk of studies conducted on the effect of different methods and techniques on learners’ achievement, teacher training courses designed to fulfill the latter goal are also extensively emphasized in the literature. One such procedure which is still very much innovative and novel in the ELT domain is choice theory-based instruction. Proposed by the renowned American psychiatrist Glasser (1998), choice theory which is a way to understand human personality and motivation tries to explain why people behave as they do and how they establish a relationship of trust with the people who are important to them. This psychological model is architected upon the premise that the human brain serves a primary function as a monitor which continually gets our feelings under control to determine whether our basic needs are met (Burdenski & Faulkner, 2010).

In this theory, Glasser (1998) postulates that behavior is a choice based on the five basic needs including survival, love and belonging, power,

freedom, and fun. Hence, the feelings of every individual are not entirely controlled by external circumstances. Accordingly, the power within each person enables them to respond to the physical and social environment and sheds light on people's behavior as they behave differently and attempts to elaborate on strengthening positive relationships with the people who seem highly important to them (Tracy, 2017). Choice theory has been applied in many studies around the world mostly with a psychological and psychotherapy orientation (e.g., Beebe & Robey, 2011; Cervantes & Robey, 2018; Fereidouni et al., 2019; Hosseini et al., 2017; Peterson, 2000).

Another rather innovative approach designed to improve teachers' classroom performance is clinical supervision which again has its roots in domains other than ELT. As a directive and nontraditional approach, clinical supervision goes through the three main steps of planning conference, classroom observation, and feedback conference (Acheson & Gall, 1992) where the clear reflections of the collected data during observations help teachers improve instructional practices and thus the quality of teaching (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Quite a considerable number of studies have been conducted on clinical supervision from a diverse range of backgrounds (Daresh, 2001; Faas et al., 2018; Gürsoy et al., 2016; Ibrahim, 2013; Kahyalar, & Yazici, 2016; Kayaoglu, 2012; Ozdemir, & Yirci, 2015; Papa, 2017).

Review of the Related Literature

Reading Comprehension

The reading skill is one of the fundamental functions of language learning in all human populations. It is considered as a mental process in which learners go through internally and it cannot be studied directly (Chen, 2018). Accordingly, readers construct meaning dynamically through the process of reading which is considered as a communication way (Sheng, 2000) with the writer and the prime goal is comprehension (Pressley, 2002).

Matas (2020) considered reading as a mode of nonverbal communication established between writers and readers through the interpretation, perception, and realization process. To this end, writers provide

readers with much opportunity to interact through printed materials (Hardy, 2016). In effect, people can obtain different information by reading different texts since this is the actual process of interacting between readers and writers over the nature of the psycholinguistic process of reading (Tanaka, 2017).

It goes without saying that reading is a multifaceted process and that readers need to scrutinize several different processes involved in reading in order to understand the text (Benson, 2009). In addition, reading as a complicated process encompasses a wide range of other processes (Hedge, 2000). It is no surprise then that traditional teaching techniques in reading comprehension do not necessarily solve learners' reading comprehension problems (Grabe, 2009; Hudson, 2007).

Learner Autonomy

Generally, the basis of learning is interaction with interdependence (Little, 2022). As Benson (2000) has pointed out, learner autonomy receives considerable impetus for teachers to attempt to create freedom of action in the learning environment. Therefore, teachers who recognize the importance of cooperation and developing goodwill in the learning context create an effective learning environment (Silver, 2010). Accordingly, scholars recommend that teachers give learners regulatory authority by assigning part of the class responsibility to them in order to have more active learners in the class (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003).

The concept of learner autonomy has been defined differently by various scholars throughout the times (Ramires, 2014; Reinders, 2016). Autonomous learners generally require to be reflective, self-aware, motivated, and proactive (Little, 2022). Furthermore, Demirtas and Sert (2010) mentioned that, "The autonomous learner is one who has the capacity to monitor their learning process and to achieve this, they can determine their own goal and define and follow the path toward them" (p. 160).

Moreover, autonomous learners can also be named as active learners who engage enthusiastically in the whole process of learning and indicate increasing willingness to take complete responsibility for their own learning (Little, 1995). To this end, Egel (2009) defines autonomous learners as active

agents willing to interact with the world and not those who simply allow the world to lay an impact on them. At the same time, teachers can play a decisive role in enhancing learner autonomy by adopting an autonomy-supportive style in the teaching environment rather than a controlling style; such an approach can serve instrumentally to foster learner autonomy (Katz & Shahar, 2015).

Choice Theory

Choice theory posits that all living organisms have a purpose internally driven by genetic instructions (Glasser, 1998). Elaborating on this internal motivation, Holmes (2008) maintains that all human behavior is chosen to meet one or more of the five basic needs (as discussed earlier: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun). To this end, choice theory is set versus external control psychology that explains human behavior as response to external stimuli: “The operating premise of external control psychology that applies would read: punish people who make wrong, so they do what we say it is good; then reward them to continue to do what we want them to” (Glasser, 2000, p. 15).

The human behaviors and the choices they make are aimed at aligning experiments with the *quality world* which is created in every human mind as an album of intellectual pictures about what they wish from birth to death (Wubbolding, 2010). Generally, one of the major concepts in choice theory is an emphasis on this quality world which is an important component of our perceived world. Our quality world as a unique and personal sphere is a type of mental mosaic in our minds to satisfy our basic needs and make us feel better (Peterson, 2000). This quality world contains pictures of things, people, activities, beliefs, and values that are most crucial to us (Glasser, 1999). To this end, the quality world is shaped, developed, and reconstructed in every individual’s memory throughout their lives. It portrays the optimal path to satisfy one or more of those basic needs (Wubbolding, 2010).

Certain scholars claim that choice theory can be used as a framework to manage and modify people’s challenging behaviors (e.g., Bechuke & Debeila, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 2000). To this end, choice theory has been employed by researchers to address such contexts, a few examples of which include: Holland

and Walker (2018) for conflict resolution, LaFond (2012) for improving unfavorable decisions, Valinezhad et al. (2015) for divorced women's self-efficacy, and Farhadi et al. (2020) on newly married women's marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction.

Other scholars have adopted choice theory in educational environments. For instance, Irvine (2015) reported a successful example of choice theory application among third-grade students while Badrkhani (2015) found that applying choice theory significantly increased adjustment among students. In turn, Kianipour and Hoseini (2012) showed the effectiveness of this theory on teaching and the improvement of students' academic qualification and Hardigree (2011) used choice theory to boost first-year biology students' motivation and engagement. In another study, Mirzaee Fandokht et al. (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of control and choice theory training on the reduction of high school students' academic burnout. Furthermore, Goguen (2017) developed the first online basic intensive training course to reach the global community in the realization of teaching the world choice theory.

Clinical Supervision

In a seminal work, Goldhammer (1969) – arguably the pioneer of clinical supervision – established a directive approach that meets all the characteristics required for responsibly and efficiently monitoring the work of teachers. Accordingly, clinical supervision can be defined as the phase of “instructional supervision which draws its data from first-hand observation of actual teaching events, and involves face-to face (and other supervision associated) interaction between the supervisor and teacher in the analysis of teaching behaviors and activities for the instructional improvement” (Goldhammer et al., 1980, p. 19).

As Smyth (1985) states, the importance and worth of each individual teacher is considered as the main value of the clinical supervision process and it is of crucial importance for teachers to participate in this process willingly and voluntarily to ascertain collaboration of teachers with supervisors. It is thus perhaps rightly emphasized that open, trusting, and flexible supervisory

relationships need to be sought among them in order to establish favorable moral integrity (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Through this modality, ultimate responsibility rests with the organizational leader-supervisors so as to create such relationships: "Leadership, then, is not mobilizing others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed" (Fullan, 2001, p.3).

Furthermore, Jones (1995) asserts that the clinical supervision cycle is generally considered as an in-service supervisory approach that in fact is a cyclic framework encompassing all the supervisory practices; formative teacher evaluation and observation, discussion and constructive feedback, and planning for improvement. Hence, rather than simply adhering to the praxis of scrutinizing and critiquing teachers, the clinical supervision cycle is a well-thought-out and purposeful intervention into the instructional process with the aim of enhancing teaching performance and quality in the working setting (Farhat, 2016).

The literature is perhaps replete with studies on the application of clinical supervision in educational settings. For instance, Nolan and Hoover (2004) reported the effectiveness of such a program in promoting reflection while Holland and Adams (2002) showed that the practice of clinical supervision improved teacher development considerably. Kholid and Rohmatika (2019) demonstrated the impact of clinical supervision on teacher performance. Interestingly, it is not just teachers who benefit from clinical supervision; Kayıkçı et al. (2017) and Khaef and Kariminia (2021) *inter alia* have reported the positive views of educational supervisors too regarding this mode of supervision.

Purpose of the Study

It is an indisputable given that ongoing research – both theoretical and practical – is an inevitable necessity to enhance EFL learners' reading skill and autonomy in the classroom environment. To this end, novel procedures seeking the aforesaid goal need to be investigated continuously thereby enabling an increasing awareness on the efficacy of these procedures. Such studies of course comprise a multiplicity of domains including teaching techniques,

learner styles, materials preparation, assessment, etc. One such domain bearing paramount importance is teacher education due to not only its immense practical effect on the learners' learning (Kehrwald, 2005) but also the general well-being and subsequently efficacy of teachers themselves (Pillay et al., 2005; Sharplin et al., 2011).

As detailed in the literature review section, choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision have been very scarcely applied within ELT. This scarcity is vividly observed more in the Iranian context as, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, only four studies have been reported on clinical supervision (i.e., Beh-Afarin & Dehghan Banadaki, 2013; Khaef & Kariminia, 2021; Marashi & Bani-Ardalani, 2017; Mehrabian et al., 2023) while two studies on choice theory-based instruction in ELT have been carried out: one by Marashi and Erami (2021) showing that this method could be applied to boost learners' vocabulary achievement while Naderi et al. (2018) concluded that this method enhances learners' self-efficacy. Accordingly, it appears that there is a need to conduct a study aiming at the comparison of the impact of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision for EFL teachers on learners' reading and autonomy.

With respect to the aforementioned purpose of the study, the following two research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a significant difference between the effect of clinical supervision and choice theory-based training program for EFL teachers on the autonomy of their learners?
2. Is there a significant difference between the effect of clinical supervision and choice theory-based training program for EFL teachers on the reading comprehension of their learners?

Method

Participants

This study consists of two categories of participants: teachers and the learners being taught by those teachers. In the first category, a total of 30 female university professors at Tehran's Alzahra University teaching general English courses who expressed an interest in participating in the program were

selected as the participant teachers of this study; these teachers had at least five years of teaching experience and held graduate/doctoral degrees in majors related to English. The 30 teachers aged 26-42 were divided into two groups of 15, each of whom underwent either of the treatments, i.e., choice theory-based instruction or clinical supervision.

In addition to the teacher participants, a sample of 445 female intermediate EFL learners taking general English courses at the same university and studying in the classes taught by the 30 teachers with their ages ranging from 18 to 20 participated in the study. These participants were selected through nonrandom convenience sampling. Out of the above total, 225 learners were taught by the 15 teachers who had undergone the choice theory treatment while 220 learners participated in the classes held by the 15 teachers receiving the clinical surveillance program. The assignment of both the teachers and the learners into the groups was done randomly.

Instrumentations and Materials

Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ). In order to measure the degree of the student participants' autonomy in learning both prior to the study and after the treatment as a posttest, the Zhang and Li (2004) questionnaire including 21 questions in the Likert scale (1 = Never True, 2 = Rarely True, 3 = Sometimes True, 4 = Mostly True, 5 = Always True) was used by the researchers. This is a highly valid instrument (Dafei, 2007) tapping general autonomy. The time allotted to complete this instrument was 15 minutes.

Reading Pretest and Posttest. A sample Preliminary English Test (PET) reading paper was administered to EFL learners participating in this study as the pretest. This test included 35 items in five parts and the time allotted was 40 minutes which was used to determine the learners' reading ability at the outset. Another sample PET reading paper was administered as the posttest.

Procedure

Choice Theory-Based Instruction. The 15 teachers who comprised this experimental group underwent four 90-minute training sessions on choice-theory based instruction. The goal of this treatment was for the teachers to

become acquainted with this mode of instruction and consequently apply it in their own classrooms. It has to be noted that the model of the instruction employed in this study was adopted in its entirety from Marashi and Erami (2021) with only few minor alterations.

In the opening session, the trainer – one of the researchers – explained to the 15 teachers the importance of making a list of objectives for the course based on mutual goals in order to cater for the learners' needs of power and belonging. In this way, they would collaboratively develop a holistic long-term lesson plan for the whole semester so that the learners would feel involved. In addition, the teacher would have to work to expand the lesson plan into a more detailed format for each session. During this session, the trainer explained the concept of Glasser's (1998) quality world to the teachers and told them how they need to convey to the learners that part of all individual or group assignments is assessing the quality of their work. As Glasser (2000) suggests, students' learning activities in the classroom starts from internal locus rather than external control. In this view, learning becomes part of their quality world.

In the second session, the trainer provided the 15 teachers with the concept of the real world (reality) and the perceived world (perception) and demonstrated how it would give them a true understanding of the value of things that have been learned. This discussion guided them in the development of holding better perceptions of the real and the perceived world. Beside the two mentioned worlds, this session prepared the teachers to comprehend a process that happens continuously in the brain which is labeled the comparing place. Life experience allows a constant comparison between what the individual wants with what they actually have. Accordingly, they would learn to create a balance between these two in order to feel fine and satisfied in any environment.

In the third session, the trainer introduced the concept of total behavior to the teacher participants so that they would understand how four components (thinking, feeling, acting, and body physiology) are active and present all the time by teaching them that each behavior is a choice. They went through the related activities to be applied in the classroom considering the five

basic needs described below. It is highly recommended by Glasser (1998) that the learning context should provide learners with some classroom activities so as to meet their basic needs as a source of all human motivation.

- *Fun*: The learners' need for fun should be met in the learning context. In order to bring laughter and fun to the learning context, the teacher can use different games (e.g., those presented at <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Jones-LessonsIntoGames.html>) to teach them the text each session.
- *Power*: Power is defined as the sense of competence, achievement, and the need to be listened to and have a sense of self-worth (Glasser, 2000); accordingly, the teachers were advised to make a list of objectives with the learners in each class to display competence and achievement and also to have a sense of self-worth. In this case, a reading text would be assigned to learners by the teacher and the learners would assess each other's comprehension and assess its quality through peer-scaffolding.
- *Love and belonging*: The need for love and belonging includes building relationships between the students and the teacher, social connections, reciprocal affection, and being part of a group. Engaging the learners in team building activities so as to feel being part of a group would be an example of a caring learning environment. While these tasks would be in process during teamwork, the students would validate each other's work and feelings by addressing problems.
- *Freedom*: The essence of the need for freedom is making wise choices (Glasser, 1998). To help learners feel autonomous, two metacognitive strategies based on Lovett's (2008) classification including planning success and setting goals and monitoring would be introduced.
- *Survival*: In order to prevent neglecting the learners' need for survival which includes not only physical comfort but also psychological component needs, the teacher would allow them to have light snacks and drinks whenever they wished inside the class. Also, the learners could be allowed to stand up in class whenever they feel tired provided

that they would not block anyone's view.

During the fourth session, there was an open discussion among the trainer and the teachers regarding any point needing further clarification and disambiguation. There were also further hints and points on how to develop and utilize choice theory-based instruction and strategies to be used in their classrooms.

Clinical Supervision. The other 15 teachers who comprised this experimental group underwent the clinical supervision program by the trainer (one of the researchers) while they were teaching their classes comprising the 220 learners who were part of the learner participants in this study. The goal of this treatment was to investigate how such a supervision would impact the learning outcomes of the learners in their own classrooms. It has to be noted that the model of clinical supervision employed in this study was adopted in its entirety with few minor alterations from Marashi and Bani-Ardalani (2017).

At the beginning, the trainer – who served as the supervisor of the 15 teachers in this program – explained the three steps of pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation feedback conference of the program. The teachers were briefed about the purpose and procedure of each step of the observation sessions to record every single event happening in the class to be analyzed and interpreted with the aim of helping the improvement of their teaching habits.

The supervisor/researcher subsequently created a group on WhatsApp to manage the teachers and their observation schedules. Furthermore, relevant ELT articles, books, teaching tips, short clips on different teaching areas, and helpful strategies were uploaded. The teachers were also asked to share their ideas, teaching experiences, problematic areas in and outside the class, and feelings about the whole process of clinical supervision in an anxiety-free ambience. This group made them feel as if they were members of a family where they could share with no fear of being screened or judged.

Based on the arrangements made in the WhatsApp group, the researcher/supervisor created a timetable for observing the teachers' classes. Prior to the observations, the pre-observation conferences were held for each

teacher individually. The length of these pre- observation conferences ranged from 20 to 30 minutes. During these pre-observation sessions, an atmosphere of teacher empowerment and support was created. The teachers were the leaders and the researcher/supervisor acted as a facilitator and both collaboratively agreed upon the method and what to be observed. The researcher/supervisor also asked some questions to clarify what the teacher had in mind for the observation session. These questions referred to the type of the data to be recorded such as students' behaviors and movement patterns, methods of recording the data, and steps to be taken in the following post-observation session.

For a period of 12 weeks, the researcher/supervisor observed the 15 teachers. Three observations were done for each teacher and three feedback sessions were held individually after each observation session. The researcher/supervisor recorded the voice of the class of the teachers with their consent in order to have a clearer picture to be discussed in post-observation sessions. The teachers were fully aware that some of the information of these recordings would be transcribed and were used only for the purpose of analyzing the working environment. During the observation, the supervisor/researcher also took some notes of the areas to be discussed in the post-observation conference.

Following each observation session, the researcher/supervisor analyzed the data collected and developed a plan to be discussed by her in the post-observation conference. The researcher/supervisor highlighted the most important concerns to be addressed in the conference through preparing the following questions:

- How do you feel about your working environment? Does it affect your working life?
- What kinds of situations do you find particularly emotionally demanding in teaching and in what ways?
- Can you give an example of a difficult interaction with a student or other teachers?
- Have you ever been subjected to verbal abuse by a student, parent, or

other teachers?

- Is there anything outside of the working environment that affects your working life?
- Do you feel burdened by preparing for classes?
- Have you experienced any physical symptoms that might relate to your daily working life such as tiredness?

During the post-conference sessions, the researcher/supervisor and each teacher critically examined and discussed the problems related to the students (mentioned earlier) to determine an approach which could reduce the burden of the problems. The length of these sessions ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. In these post-conference sessions, the teachers' needs were addressed through a mutual understanding of the problems and also the reflection process.

Participant Teachers' Instruction. As noted earlier, the 30 teachers who underwent either of the two treatments also taught a total of 445 learners. The learners in both groups sat for the two pretests – autonomy and reading – as described earlier before they were taught by the 30 teachers. All the classes were taught through a conventional task-based teaching program in line with the policies of the educational establishment. At the end of this instruction period, all the 445 learners sat for the autonomy and reading posttests (again as described earlier).

It should be noted here that the instruction procedure of the aforesaid learners was not the focus of this study; rather, the two programs of clinical supervision and choice theory were the independent variables. To this end, the researchers deliberately avoided any intervention regarding the actual teaching of the teachers as the latter was not the independent variable and thus not the treatment in this study. As explained earlier, this research was designed and implemented to investigate the impact of the two programs for teachers on the reading performance and autonomy of the EFL learners that they taught.

Results

Pretests

Prior to the commencement of the treatment for the teachers, two

pretests were administered to the learners who were to participate in those teachers' classes. The descriptive statistics of these administrations appear in separate sections below.

Learner Autonomy Pretest. Once the two experimental groups of the EFL learners participating in the classes taught by teachers who had undergone the choice theory-based instruction (CT) and the teachers under the clinical supervision program (CS) were put in place (225 in the CT group and 220 in the CS group), the learner autonomy questionnaire was administered as the first pretest in this study. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for this pretest administration. The mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 64.89 and 3.33, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 63.64 and 3.17, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 ($0.146 / 0.162 = 0.901$ and $0.082 / 0.164 = 0.500$). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.89 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CT group	225	29	87	64.89	3.327	.146	.162
CS group	220	35	88	63.64	3.167	.082	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Learners' Reading Pretest. Following the administration of the learner autonomy pretest, the reading comprehension test was administered as the second pretest. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for this pretest. The mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 17.02 and 3.10, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 16.84 and 3.02, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 (1.704 and 0.982). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this

administration was 0.91 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
CT group	225	10	27	17.02	3.100	.276	.162
CS group	220	9	25	16.84	3.019	.161	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Posttests

Following the termination of the classes taught by the teachers, the two posttests were administered to the learners with details of the descriptive statistics presented below.

Learner Autonomy Posttest. As displayed in Table 3, the mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 73.65 and 3.87, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 64.46 and 4.41, respectively. The skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range (1.741 and 0.414) too.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
CT group	225	31	90	73.65	3.868	.282	.162
CS group	220	37	89	64.46	4.411	.068	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.88 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Learners' Reading Posttest. The final administration in this study was the reading comprehension posttest for the learners in both groups. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for this administration: the mean and the standard deviation of the CT group were 25.80 and 3.28, respectively, while those of the CS group stood at 20.82 and 3.22, respectively. Furthermore, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range (-0.883 and 1.317). In addition, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.91 (using Cronbach's alpha).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
CT group	225	16	35	25.80	3.276	-.143	.162
CS group	220	13	30	20.82	3.219	.216	.164
Valid (listwise)	N 220						

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Following the administration of the posttests as detailed above, the researcher set out to test the two null hypotheses of the study, each of which is discussed separately below. As this study adopted a pretest-posttest design, both hypotheses were tested through an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for each.

Testing the First Null Hypothesis. In order to test the first null hypothesis, i.e., whether there was a significant difference in the degree of the two groups of learners' autonomy as a result of the treatment for their teachers, another ANCOVA was run on both groups' scores on the autonomy pre- and posttest. First, the prerequisites for running this parametric test are discussed.

To begin with, all sets of scores of course enjoyed normalcy as demonstrated earlier (Tables 1 and 2); hence, this prerequisite was met. Secondly, the Levene's test was run and the variances were not significantly different [$F_{(1,443)} = 68.291, p = 0.224 > 0.05$]. Thirdly, as one covariate is being investigated (autonomy pretest), the third assumption of the correlation among covariates did not apply in this case. As for linearity, Figure 1 demonstrates that the general distribution of the scores is very much linear.

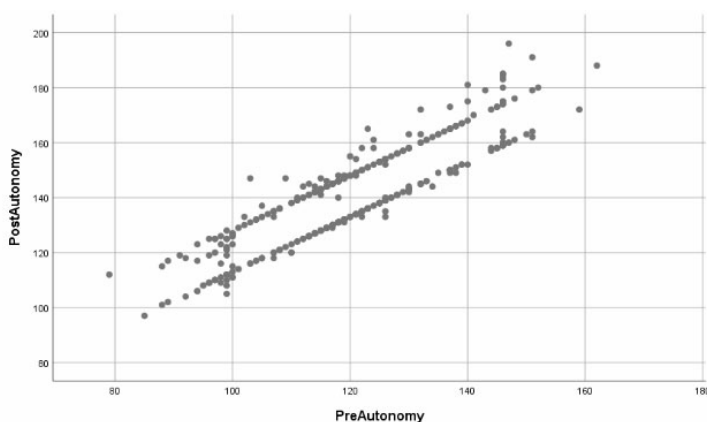


Figure 1

Scatterplot of the Linearity of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Autonomy Pretest and Posttest

Finally, Table 5 shows that the interaction (i.e. Group * Autonomy Pretest) is 0.176 which is larger than 0.05 thus indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes has not been violated in this set of scores.

Table 5*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	124864.803 ^a	3	41621.601	6871.292	.112	.979
Intercept	1362.588	1	1362.588	224.949	.000	.338
Group	92.026	1	92.026	15.193	.099	.033
Pretest	98914.541	1	98914.541	16329.757	.000	.974
Group * Autonomy Pretest	105.082	1	105.082	17.348	.176	.038
Error	2671.277	441	6.057			
Total	8992356.000	445				
Corrected Total	127536.081	444				

^a. R Squared = 0.979 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.979)

With the above assumptions in place, running an ANCOVA was legitimized. According to Table 6, the autonomy pretest scores (the covariate in the model) were significant ($F = 15778.830$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$) thus demonstrating that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their autonomy. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (the autonomy pretest) and the dependent variable (the autonomy posttest) while controlling for the independent variable ($F = 4515.996$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference between the impact of clinical supervision and choice theory-based instruction for EFL teachers on the autonomy of the EFL learners' participating in those teachers' classes was rejected with those in the CT group who gained a higher mean (Table 3) bearing a significantly higher degree of autonomy than those in the CS group. Furthermore, the effect size was 0.911 which is reckoned a strong effect size by Larson-Hall (2010).

Table 6*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	124759.722 ^a	2	62379.861	9930.955	.000	.978
Intercept	1344.282	1	1344.282	214.012	.000	.326
Autonomy	99109.612	1	99109.612	15778.380	.000	.973
Pretest						
Group	28366.578	1	28366.578	4515.996	.000	.911
Error	2776.359	442	6.281			
Total	8992356.000	445				
Corrected Total	127536.081	444				

^a. R Squared = .978 (Adjusted R Squared = .978)

Testing the Second Null Hypothesis. In order to test the second null hypothesis, i.e., whether there were a significant difference in the degree of the two groups of learners' reading comprehension as a result of the treatment for their teachers, another ANCOVA was run on both groups' scores on the reading pre- and posttest. Again, the prerequisites for running this parametric test are discussed. First and foremost, all sets of scores of course enjoyed normalcy as demonstrated earlier (Tables 2 and 4); hence, this prerequisite was met. Secondly, the Levene's test shows that the variances were not significantly different: $F_{(1,443)} = 2.973, p = 0.085 > 0.05$.

Similar to the previous case, as one covariate is being investigated (reading pretest), the third assumption of the correlation among covariates did not apply in this case. Regarding linearity, Figure 2 demonstrates that the general distribution of the scores is again very much linear.

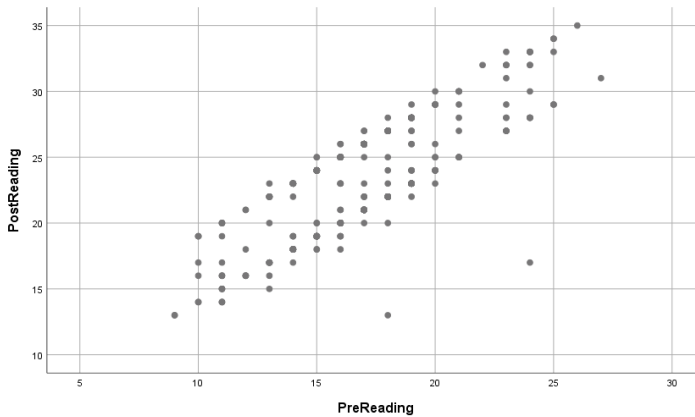


Figure 2

Scatterplot of the Linearity of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Reading Pretest and Posttest

Lastly, Table 7 shows that the interaction (i.e. Group * Reading Pretest) is 0.581 which is larger than 0.05 thus indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes has not been violated in this set of scores.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6949.236 ^a	3	2316.412	2128.762	.000	.935
Intercept	553.738	1	553.738	508.880	.000	.536
Group	70.624	1	70.624	64.903	.000	.128
Pretest	4184.246	1	4184.246	3845.284	.000	.897
Group * Reading Pretest	.332	1	.332	.305	.581	.001
Error	479.874	441	1.088			
Total	249738.000	445				
Corrected Total	6949.236 ^a	3	2316.412	2128.762	.000	.935

^a. R Squared = 0.935 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.935)

With the above assumptions in place, running an ANCOVA was legitimized.

Table 8*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6948.904 ^a	2	3474.452	3198.018	.000	.935
Intercept	553.438	1	553.438	509.406	.000	.535
Reading Pretest	4193.117	1	4193.117	3859.505	.000	.897
Group	2555.377	1	2555.377	2352.067	.000	.842
Error	480.206	442	1.086			
Total	249738.000	445				
Corrected Total	7429.110	444				

^a. R Squared = .935 (Adjusted R Squared = .935)

According to Table 8, the reading pretest scores (the covariate in the model) were significant ($F = 3859.505$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$) thus demonstrating that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their reading. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (the reading pretest) and the dependent variable (the reading posttest) while controlling for the independent variable ($F = 2352.067$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference between the impact of clinical supervision and choice theory-based instruction for EFL teachers on the reading comprehension of the EFL learners' participating in those teachers' classes was rejected with those in the CT group who gained a higher mean (Table 4) bearing a significantly higher degree of reading comprehension than those in the CS group. Furthermore, the effect size was 0.842 which is reckoned a strong effect size by Larson-Hall (2010).

Discussion

In recent years, there have been studies demonstrating that choice theory generally bears a positive impact on the outcomes of learning and

therapy treatments (e.g., Beebe & Robey 2011; Bilodeau, 2010; Mateo et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2011; Valinezhad et al., 2015). Additionally, numerous studies have indicated the positive impact of choice theory on learning achievements and the improvement of students' academic qualification (e.g., Glanz 2018; Holland & Walker 2018; Irvine 2015; Mirzaee Fandokht et al. 2014; Naderi et al., 2018).

As shown through the above data analysis, applying choice theory-based instruction had a significant effect on EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension. In other words, the application of choice theory in the educational context, applying the caring habits fully described in detail earlier, catering for learners' basic needs in the classroom and establishing need-satisfying activities so as to meet their quality world in real life, as well as using the axioms of choice theory improved EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension.

A plethora of studies have been conducted in the field of psychology and application of choice theory-based instruction in different environments with positive reported results. One such study was conducted by Bechuke and Debeila (2012), who concluded that the challenging behaviors of learners can be managed and modified through the application of choice theory. In another study, Badrkhani (2015) states that using choice theory is effective in increasing learners' adjustment in group counseling and their emotional, social, and general transitions. Furthermore, Shafi Abadi et al.(2010) indicated that using choice theory has positive results on enhancing learners' adjustment.

The findings of this study also proved that clinical supervision of teachers enabled them to enhance EFL learners' autonomy and reading (albeit to a lesser degree compared with choice theory-based instruction). This result is perhaps consistent with that of many studies, such as those reported earlier in this paper demonstrating the positive impact of clinical supervision in both psychological and educational in contexts (e.g., Abbott & Carter, 1985; Alba Papa, 2017; Gürsoy et al., 2016; Kahyalar & Yazici, 2016; Rodgers & Ketl, 2007). To this end, Marashi and Bani-Ardalani (2017) reported that clinical supervision lowered significantly EFL teachers' level of burnout. Beh-Afarin

and Dequan Banadaki (2013) also demonstrated that teachers' sense of efficacy was significantly enhanced as a result of implementing a clinical supervision program. The consistency perhaps lies in the fact that clinical supervision is conducted in an interactive manner in comparison with traditional methods of supervision.

The findings of the present study are supported by Marashi and Erami (2021) who suggest that choice theory-based instruction had a significantly positive effect on EFL learners' vocabulary. Applying choice theory in the classroom creates a supportive, stimulating, and protected environment for learners in which EFL learners demonstrate a sense of competence, assume power, achieve freedom, and enjoy themselves in a safe, comfortable, secure, and friendly environment as well as increasing the level of learning and being able to connect closely. The rationale underlying this fact is that perhaps choice theory-based instruction is designed to facilitate the grounds for the learners to exchange their ideas to achieve their stated goals in a nonthreatening setting.

Furthermore, Hardigree (2011) suggested that student motivation and engagement will increase with the application of choice theory in the classroom while Moshiri Farahi et al. (2014) stress that choice theory has an important role in effective learning because of considering need and relationships in all human activities. Choice theory approaches contribute to the promotion of EFL learners' immense success in the learning environment while also exerting autonomy support and major achievement; Baezzat and Motaghedifard (2019) assert that learners' autonomy is increased as a result of applying choice theory in group sessions.

It may be safely concluded that since learners' basic needs of freedom, power, belonging, and fun were met in the classroom through a choice theory-based instruction, their autonomy and reading comprehension improved considerably. Additionally, this theory assists learners with feeling self-satisfied when they meet their basic needs, foster friendship, and build a sense of community in the classroom and thus promote the quality of classroom activities.

The fact of matter is that perhaps choice theory-based instruction

provides an environment in which learners feel comfortable and actively engaged in comparison to many other instructions of the teaching process to be followed by the teachers. The researchers vividly observed in the classes throughout the instruction period that choice theory-based instruction goes through a step-by-step process to help learners be able to accomplish the tasks successfully, to facilitate the learning process effectively, to take control over their learning, and to become responsible for their own learning. Additionally, in the investigation led by Kianipour and Hoseini (2012), it is expressed that removing the existing psychological and emotional barriers in the classroom is of crucial importance due to its effect on learners' achievement and success. It remains imperative that teachers handle this difficult role well by carrying out challenging tasks for real life activity.

In sum, the attitude and practice of the teachers who underwent the choice theory program encouraged the learners to feel that their teachers are supporting, motivating, listening, accepting, trusting, and respecting so they put them in their quality world as the most important people and build and develop relationship with them so as to learn and achieve their basic needs. Consequently, more willingness to learn and satisfy basic needs, growing satisfaction among learners, and mutual trust were witnessed among this group of learners. The foundational tenets of choice theory-based instruction including identifying relationship problems, understanding diverse viewpoints, participation in group activities, and feeling belonged to a group were taken into consideration in the case of EFL learners to take charge of their learning; applying and using the above principles and methods in the process of teaching could enhance students' alacrity and participation in the learning process as well as encouraging them to feel involved and valued which noticeably increased their confidence in producing the language.

Conclusion

The present study has implications in several aspects regarding the productive application of choice theory in the educational environment. The findings of the study can, to a large extent, contribute to both teachers as well

as syllabus designers' effective use of choice theory in their teaching program in practice.

The environment of a choice theory-based class provides a need satisfying atmosphere to meet their basic needs. Teachers can benefit from the findings of the study as they can implement choice theory-based instruction to foster learners' autonomy, leading to more achievement in the classroom. Since most teachers are aiming at better teaching, they can apply choice theory-based instruction in their classes to boost the learners' achievement, involvement, and practice in the classroom which may help the learners become autonomous and creative.

Choice theory could be introduced into the ELT programs of teaching training centers so as to familiarize teachers with its concept, techniques, and methodology. Such training could be done for teachers who are engaged in the teaching and learning process in the form of in-service courses as well as those who are being trained to become teachers. In addition, this specific psychological approach to teaching suggests greater involvement in the decision-making process in class and need satisfying.

Furthermore, teachers can benefit from the positive results of this study as they can apply this psychological theory in their classes to observe the learners' willingness to participate in classroom activities, to share their feelings openly, to involve them in lesson plan designing, and to facilitate interaction through which effective learning would occur. Teachers who join the choice theory program experience a good relationship with their students as these programs allow teachers to care and to satisfy basic needs. As a result, they benefit from specific patterns of interaction in the classroom.

Syllabus designers are also the beneficiaries of the present study. In fact, they can incorporate choice theory principles and axioms to develop and design the course syllabus according to its approaches to be applied by English teachers. Materials could focus on methods to meet learners' basic needs, to foster learners' interaction and their engagement which can be fulfilled by the application of choice theory-based instruction in the syllabus. Syllabus designers could also use choice theory programs in designing training courses

and curricula for teachers and trainers to establish a positive relationship between teachers and students and promote learning in EFL contexts. These courses can also build up complete trust among students. In addition, teaching courses based on choice theory instruction encourages teachers to work on caring habits in their classes to get better results. Also syllabus designers may design *seven* caring habit courses as well as *seven* deadly habit courses (Glasser, 1999) which could help both teachers and students recognize and cope with their strange behavior practically.

In the process of conducting this study, certain limitations were at work; accordingly, the researchers suggest the following studies to possibly address those limitations thereby expanding the power to generalize the findings.

- 1) Male language learners can also be studied to investigate the effect of choice theory-based instruction and clinical supervision on EFL learners' autonomy and reading comprehension.
- 2) This study can be conducted on other language proficiency levels of EFL learners.
- 3) This research was focused on only one component of the language, namely reading. To, this end, the study could be conducted on other language skills and components to see whether the same positive outcomes would be obtained or not.
- 4) The learners in this research were aged 18 to 20. The same study can be carried out with different age cohorts to see whether age is also a variable or not when it comes to assessing the efficacy of choice theory-based instruction.
- 5) Learner autonomy is a construct which by its very nature develops over a relatively long period of time. To this end, studies with a longer duration than one-semester interventions could be conducted to see whether the results would be different.

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