Research Paper

Designing Criteria for Evaluating the English Language Quality of Iranian EFL Learners: Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes in Focus

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Abstract

This study designed and validated criteria to evaluate the English language quality of Iranian EFL learners to provide information about the foreign language learning and teaching systems and to improve the quality standards in Iran. the method of this research is descriptive exploratory type. The statistical population of this research includes 20 experienced teachers working at different levels (primary, intermediate & advanced) in a non-profit language institute (Safir Language Institute) in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan, Iran. Sampling was performed theoretically using chain sampling or snowball sampling. In this study, the process of analyzing the data obtained from the interviews was performed in three coding steps (open, axial, and selective) which were performed consecutively, the interviews were collected and analyzed and coded line by line using version 10 of qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA). Results showed that the most important Criteria for Evaluating the English Language Quality of Iranian EFL Learners are learning strategy, individual characteristics, learning dynamics, educational technology, content setting, anxiety and low self-esteem, weaknesses in learning, positive evaluation, negative evaluation, assess knowledge and skills, individual consequences, social consequences, cultural implications, economic consequences, and political consequences.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning is an unavoidable concept of life in the 21st century. In our daily lives, we are constantly in touch with people with different languages and cultures, and we are living in a multilingual and multicultural world. As there is so much demand and need to learn foreign languages, there are many courses and institutions offering language courses. It is important to clarify certain items related to English learning, which are the four language skills, major language areas, and the ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning (NSFLEP, 1996). The reason for choosing these perspectives and practices as important factors in evaluating English learning is because they are connected to the notion of linguistic and communicative competence. On the one hand, linguistic competence can be seen as a major component of language, and it consists of lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse. On the other hand,

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communicative competence, according to Saville-Troike (2006), deals with the question of knowing when and how to say what to whom. That is, while linguistic competence provides a learner with the possible words, word-order, and appropriate grammar for him/her to express one' thoughts, it is communicative competence which helps the learner choose the most appropriate linguistic form depending on different social contexts. We can say that linguistic competence and communicative competence together make up the ability to use a language.

The Oxford English dictionary defines "quality" as "the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something." In language testing the "something" is a language product, which may be a sample of talk or writing. This is "measured" against similar products that have independently assessed as being appropriate for a particular communicative purpose. Latham puts it: "we cannot lay bare the intellectual mechanism and judge of it by inspection, we can only infer the excellence of the internal apparatus and the perfection of its workmanship from the quality of the work turned out" (p. 155). To apply the concept of quality in applied research, the present study aimed at identifying the criteria for evaluating the English language quality of Iranian EFL learners based on grounded theory.

The assessment of language quality in the modern period can be traced directly to the work of George Fisher in the early nineteenth century. The establishment of a scale with benchmark samples and tasks has been replicated through Thorndike (1912) and into the present day. The tension between assessing observable attributes in performance and underlying constructs that makes performance possible is as real today as in the past. The debate impacts upon the way scales and descriptors are produced, and the criteria selected to make judgments about what constitutes a quality performance, whether in speech or writing. The tensions work themselves through the history of practice, and today we find ourselves in a pluralistic philosophical environment in which consensus has largely broken

down. The other model that presented by ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning, which have become one set of the widely accepted professional guidelines is for designing and evaluating language learning activities, mainly considers the concept of "the five Cs", namely communications, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Communications: it is essential for learners to communicate with others in the target language. Learners should try to express their feelings/thoughts, exchange ideas, and obtain information in the target language. In other words, they should have communicative competence in the target language. Cultures: it is essential to include teaching materials related to the culture of the target language, as learners should understand the relationship between the applications and perspectives as well as the products of the culture studied. Connections: learners should gain knowledge of other disciplines through the target language. In addition, they need to recognize the perspectives that are only available in the target language and its culture. Comparisons: learners should make a comparison of the target language and their first language to better understand the nature of language and the concepts embedded in each culture. Communities: learners should use the target language on every possible occasion, because this raises the likelihood of becoming all-time learners who will use the target language for personal delight and improvement in life. They are, in a sense, lifelong learners who use the target language in their living/learning communities. As one can see from the list of the five Cs, learning a foreign or second language does not mean simply achieving linguistic competence, but also building communicative competence. Hence, the integration of language skills, language areas, and the ideas mentioned above are essential in current second language acquisition (SLA) as well as foreign language learning practices (Blake, 2008; Yang & Chen, 2007). According to Watanabe and Swain (2007), interaction involving second language (L2) learners has been greatly debated in the second language acquisition literature for over two decades. They highlight the fact that not every

learner in a language classroom shares the same proficiency level, and individuals may be in pairs or groups with learners who have significantly different abilities. However, Watanabe and Swain also show that such diverse language proficiency levels do not have much impact on learning outcomes, and that as long as the participants are involved in a collaborative learning process, everyone can usually benefit. Thus, this kind of integration of the five Cs is worth considering. Even though some theories and models of criteria have been presented about EFL learners, nobody has presented a model of criteria contributing to English language quality in Iranian EFL learners where English language is considered as a foreign language. This study drew on different notions and variables to render a comprehensive exploration of the model of criteria contributing to English language quality in Iranian EFL learners based on teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes. These concepts include criteria for evaluation, English language quality, EFL learners and EFL teachers which are components of this study.

LITRATURE REVIEW

The first attempt to measure language quality by comparison with other samples is found in Fisher's Scale Book (Fulcher 2015a). Between 1834 and 1836, Fisher developed his scale book, in which language performance was classified into five major levels, each with quarter intervals. This produced a 20-level scale. Each level was characterized by writing samples that represented what a pupil was expected to achieve at that level. For spelling there were word lists, and for speaking there were lists of prompts/tasks that should be undertaken successfully. The Scale Book has not survived, but it is clear that Fisher had invented a method for the measurement of quality that is still in use today. There is clear evidence that Thorndike had seen, or was aware of, Fisher's methods (Fulcher 2015b, pp. 84–88). In a study, Genç, Kuluşaklı, and Aydın (2016) asserted that the learners' beliefs regarding their English learning experience can determine their success or failure. Findings from their study revealed that EFL students

had average scores in their English language learning and strongly believed that motivation could impact the learning process. Also, the participants' views about language learning were influenced by their self-efficacy.

Nasr, Bagheri, Sadighi, and Rassaei (2018) ventured to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions relating to evaluation of learning in respect of scaffolding practices in their demographical context. As this study is confined to assessment for learning (AFL), it leaves an essential space for exploring general perceptions of EFL teachers purely in the scaffolding paradigm. Abdelshaheed, (2019) while evaluating functioning instructional scaffolding strategies at Majmaah University vehemently recommended further investigation into the processes of scaffolding the EFL instructors adhere to while teaching in the classroom. In another study, Purnomo and Yuyun (2019) tried to explore the perception of the learners about how effective direct transmission and scaffolding were in the EFL classroom. This study was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews and pre-posttest tools. A similar study would undoubtedly be useful for exploring the attitudes and perceptions of EFL teachers as well. Other researchers tried to examine the technological dimensions of scaffolding from the EFL learners' point of view. For instance, Mansouri and Mashhadi (2019), in their experimental study investigated the "effect of peer and teacher scaffolding employing a process-approach in technology laden atmosphere exclusively for learning vocabulary". The focus of another study was the undergraduate engineering students whose general academic listening skills were evaluated in relation to the scaffolding strategies the instructors used when teaching them. In the conclusive remarks it was stated that further investigation is required in different courses of technical English for various departments, and that "in another research, instructors can be interviewed to elicit their opinions and approaches regarding the role of scaffolding in communicative skills with a special emphasis on listening skills" (Taghizadeh & Saadatju, 2020).

Muhammad (2020) also delves into scaffolding but confining it to online tasks for the sake of enhancing the critical writing skills of secondary school students. As a pre-posttest study, it also revolved around the students rather than teachers' beliefs and perceptions about scaffolding. Nevertheless, in the recommendations for future research, it was suggested to examine scaffolding as a tool of developing language skills in general rather than writing alone. Then, Krashen's input hypothesis (i+1) is another instance of challenging scaffolding in which "input + one" means that the comprehensible input should be one step higher than the current level of the linguistic competence (or multi-competence for that matter) of the learner. Even the affective filter (a milestone in Krashen's theory) which aims to remove the blockage in the way of comprehensive input would seem to need appropriate scaffolds (Krashen, 1988). These two hypotheses emphasize that teachers should be well aware of the "correct scaffolds" in facilitating the process of language learning and keeping the affective filter as low as possible for uninterrupted language acquisition (Aguilar, 2020). Another recent study exclusively deals with a content language integrated learning (Li & Zhang, 2020), but without any focus on perceptions and the active awareness of employing befitting scaffold while teaching in the classroom. Few studies attempted to investigate the phenomenon from the perception lens. In the same year, the paper by Troudi and Zayani (2020) demonstrated that even scaffolding is imperative for EFL teachers in order to enhance their knowledge by reading in accordance with a theoretical framework for better off delivery to the students in the long run. Scaffolding has also been probed into from the point of view of learner's perception.

Previously, the studies predominantly focused on EFL teachers' perceptions relating to evaluation of learning were carried out, but a few. However, in Iran, language teaching especially at the level of guidance and high schools which are the basis of English language teaching, is facing its own problems. The main problem in foreign language teaching in Iran is that after thirty years there is still no clear program or policy on foreign language teaching. Hence, a short-term solution seems unlikely, although the document on the fundamental transformation of education places great emphasis on developing foreign language teaching within the selected (semi-prescriptive) part of the program. Regarding the above discussion, the questions that this line of study aims at answering, are a bit general and have deliberately been meant to be so since in this way themes and categories can be elicited from the data. Two research questions were developed based on the review of the related literature in English language quality research and also from the need the researcher feels in figuring out the criteria for evaluating the English language quality of Iranian EFL learners.

1- What are the criteria for evaluating the English language quality of Iranian EFL learners?

2- Utilizing a grounded theory, what is the model of criteria for evaluating the English language quality of Iranian EFL learners?

METHODS

The present study needs to identify important variables in the field of language quality assessment. Considering that the design and validation of the English language evaluation criteria model with the data-based theory approach are considered, the research is applied research in terms of purpose. In terms of the data collection method, it is descriptive research because the researcher does not intend to interfere or manipulate variables. In terms of the method of conducting research, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. Therefore, research in terms of implementation is done in a combined or qualitative and quantitative form. On the other hand, because the components and indicators are to be extracted and analyzed, it is analytical-exploratory research. Therefore, in general, the method of this research is combined and will be performed as a descriptive exploratory type.

Research Method of Data-based Theory

In the qualitative part, the data-based theory is used. The data-based theory research method

is one of the types of qualitative research methods. The data-based theory begins with a question or questions of the research. This method is used when there is no significant theory to examine. Therefore, in this method, the hypothesis is not formulated based on the existing theory or theories, but the researcher raises the research question or questions and enters the research field to find the answers to present them based on real data.

Participants and Sampling Method

The statistical population of this research includes 20 teachers working in a non-profit language institute (Safir Language Institute). in Bandar Abbas, a southern city in the province of Hormozgan, Iran. These teachers have been teaching at different levels (primary, intermediate and advanced) for more than a decade and thus be considered as experienced ones (according to the regulations of the SLI, the teachers have been taken through interview and then they should take TTC courses). Therefore, sampling was performed theoretically using chain sampling or snowball sampling. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation, and after 20 interviews, data analysis showed that no new data was added to the previous data because a large percentage of the data extracted from the last interviews were duplicates.

Contexts

The interviews of the qualitative phase is carried out in one site. The twenty participants will be interviewed at one of branches of the Safir Language Institute, located in the southern city of Bandar Abbas, which is a non-profit language institute where the teachers occupied there have been teaching nearly all ages (children, young adults, and adults). The Safir language Institute is one of the most prestigious language institutes in Iran and it affiliated with the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Currently this organization is offering language courses in different foreign languages to more than 240000 learners. The levels of proficiency in the adult group (which was the concern of this

study) are Basic, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, High intermediate, and Advanced. Since this institute apparently represents the largest proportion of English language learners in Iran, it seemed the best site for doing this research.

Instruments

Considering the nature and content of the research, information and data were collected in the following ways:

1- Library studies: These studies were conducted by referring to documents and searching the Internet to identify literature and background related to the pattern of English language quality assessment criteria.

2- Semi-structured interview: At the end of the initial studies and knowledge of practical research, it was necessary to conduct interviews with expert. Therefore, the extracted categories and components were analyzed and modified, and the English language quality assessment categories and components were prepared for coding. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview tool with an exploratory approach was used. To design the interview questions, while considering the initial studies and previous documents, the questions were first asked in collaboration with the supervisors and advisors, and then the validity of the questions was confirmed. For those who were supposed to answer the interview questions, before starting, a summary of the research project and the intended objectives were first presented and explained to them.

Validity

In the present study, by providing feedback to the interviewees in a way that does not affect answers; the internal validity has been increased. In addition, after each interview, the results of the coding and the pattern obtained up to that point were presented to the interviewees, so that any point or change and correction has been considered for review. This was done after the

interviews so that the interview would be free of any assumptions or bias. Also, four other activities were performed with the aim of increasing the internal validity of the results, which were:

1- Using various sources with the aim of collecting more and more complementary data.

2- Analysis of data by an assistant.

1- The cooperation of a specialist familiar with the data-based theory.

2- Identify orientations by asking frequently asked questions while analyzing data.

Reliability

In this study, in order to increase the assurance of the quality and accuracy of the coding, the agreement method between the two coders based on Cohen's Kappa coefficient was used. The kappa coefficient can be a number between -1 and +1. In this case, the number +1 means the complete agreement between the two coders and confirms that the agreement between the two coders is not due to chance. The zero kappa coefficients also mean that the probability that these agreements are random is equal to the probability that they are not random. A negative coefficient indicates that this agreement is more likely to have occurred by chance. In calculating the kappa coefficient, attention to the significant number should also be considered, because if the kappa coefficient is not within the acceptable range, it will have no value. In general, if the kappa coefficient is significantly more than 0.7, it will indicate an agreement between the coders (Azimi Dolarestaghi, 2017).

Data Analysis

In this study, the process of analyzing the data obtained from the interviews was performed in three coding steps (open, axial, and selective). In these three steps, which were performed consecutively, the interviews were collected and analyzed and coded line by line using version 10 of qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA). In the open coding case, a label was affixed to each concept extracted from the interview. Thus, a large number of open-source codes emerged. In the axial coding stage, the codes that were conceptually related to each other were organized around a central category. Selective coding was followed by selecting concepts and topics that seemed to be effective in extracting the main theme of the research. During the triple coding process, the paradigm analysis tool according to Strauss and Corbin model was used, which was described earlier. The underlying theory was derived based on the model of Strauss and Corbin. Finally, the English language quality assessment model of Iranian language learners was formed.

RESULTS
Analysis of Qualitative Data

In the qualitative step, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable experts, including 20 teachers working in a non-profit language institute (Safir Language Institute), whose characteristics are given in Table 4-1, were conducted. Interview data were obtained in several sessions with an average time of 15 minutes. Initial note-taking of key issues was done during each interview. Then, before the next interview, the main note was taken by reviewing the recorded interview. The raw data from the interview emerged to conceptualize and generate the theory. At this stage, to confirm the validity of the content, an interpretive strategy of negotiating with the interviewees and two prominent professors has been used. Thus, the findings were presented to both professors and interviewees in the study to express their views on the validity of the content of the inferred categories. The analysis of the comments provided that the validity of the content was confirmed in case of some corrections and revisions in the classification of concepts, which was done. Analysis of data extracted from interviews conducted during the grounded theory approach is done in three coding steps (open, axial, selective). In the following, each of these steps is stated.

Table 1
Classification of the Interviewees

Interviewee	N of Interviewees	Gender	Teaching period	passed courses
Language teacher of elementary, secondary, advanced levels	10 persons	Male	10 years and up	TTC
Language teacher of elementary, secondary, advanced levels	10 persons	Female	10 years and up	TTC

Open Data Coding

Open coding is the first analytical activity of the researcher and conceptualization in the first level of abstraction and its output is the basic code. At this stage, the main focus is on understanding the concept under discussion (Danaei Fard, Alvani, & Azar, 2012; Farhangi, Karroubi & Vaziri, 2015). Immediately after the end of each interview, before the next interview, the analysis of the interview data began and the researcher took notes on the concepts, features, and how they relate to each other in all stages of the research. To achieve a deeper and more accurate analysis, the in terviews and texts were read word by word several times to extract the codes, and finally, the data from the interviews were collected as grouped agents. This process continued continuously from code extraction to naming them in a reciprocal process with a corrective approach. The extracted codes were classified into several categories based on their differences or similarities. In the end, evidence was quoted from the text for each concept. The open coding process continued until the main category emerged at the end of the twentieth interview and theoretical saturation. Table 2, is provided with the specific code of the interviewee.

Table 2
Concepts Extracted from Interviews After Open Coding

	Extracted concepts		Extracted concepts		Extracted concepts
1	Eagerness to acquire language skills	33	Familiarity with test resources and content	65	Exchange ideas and use the experiences of others
2	Learning the correct way to read texts	34	Desire and ability	66	Competitive spirit
3	Proper planning	35	Practice past tests	67	Cognitive development
4	Hope for success	36	Create rankings	68	Optimal use of time
5	Language skills level	37	Practice testing techniques	69	Appropriate evaluation content
6	Test preparation	38	Give desirable assignments	70	No fear
7	Practicing metacognitive strategies	39	Foresight	71	Setting up an evaluation committee
8	Benefit from experienced people	40	Self-centered learning	72	Questioning spirit
9	Dissatisfaction with the instructor in conveying the content	41	Innovative management	73	Having a plan
10	Family and educational activities	42	The spirit of cooperation	74	Practice speed reading techniques
11	High age of language learning	43	Lack of time in the test	75	Pay attention to individual differences
12	Familiarity with testing techniques	44	Unfamiliarity with test rules	76	Orientation of the study course
13	Theory evaluation	45	Learner in learning	77	Language level upgrade
14	Prolonged neglect of language learning	46	Avoiding of wasting time	78	Pay attention to feedback
15	Unrealistic language proficiency score	47	Analytical scoring	79	Benefit from technology
16	Empowerment of professors	48	Increasing the motivation	80	Increased learning motivation
17	Reasonable acceptance of the test	49	The test score is instrumental	81	Learning environment
18	Comprehension	50	Engaging in creating a scientific atmosphere	82	Benefit from participatory learning

19	Creating a specialized space	51	Feeling influenced by unrealistic advertising	83	Positive learning environment
20	Access to the master and the possibility of trouble-shooting	52	Access to digital and up-to-date resources	84	Savings the cost of participating in the test
21	Listening skills	53	Electronic learning	85	The feeling of being forced to attend courses
22	Dissatisfaction with the cost of courses	54	Fear of failure despite spending time and money	86	Creating of an incentive system
23	Create a sense of hope for success	55	Practical evaluation	87	Reduction of anxiety
24	Proper speaking skills	56	Waste of costs in scientific research in English	88	Organizations erring about the language level by judging by the test score
25	Commercialization of courses	57	Group learning	89	Width of vocabulary
26	The prevalence of participatory learning	58	Listening skills	90	Reduction of test participation costs
27	Specialized meetings	59	Prevalence of scientific anomalies	91	Self Confidence
28	Communication with international centers	60	Language level development	92	Prevalence of superficial learning by teaching testing techniques
29	Promoting a culture of group research	61	Promoting a culture of learning	93	Imposing the cost of participating in courses
30	Internal dissatisfaction with the actual level of language knowledge after courses	62	Reduction of self-reliance and rely on testing techniques	94	Dissatisfaction with the heterogeneity of learners' levels
31	Intensification of feelings of despair in case of failure after courses	63	The spread of unrealistic propaganda and the expansion of the business view of language learning	95	Expansion of printing of various test sources
32	Upgrading the scientific level to the level of world standards	64	Intensification of underdevelopment due to poor performance in scientific research in English	96	Decreasing the trust of scientific centers about the real level of language knowledge

Axial data coding

In the next step, we tried to place similar and contemporary concepts in the main themes based on the concept they had with each other. Themes were extracted in the form of more abstract categories. At this point, the themes presented for analysis were reviewed. By defining and reviewing, the nature of what the theme is discussing was determined and it was determined which aspect of the information each theme contained. Table 3 shows the categories identified after the axial coding.

Table 3

Axis Categories of Research After Axial Coding

Axial categories	Concepts
Learning strategy	Eagerness to acquire language skills, spirit of competitiveness, spirit of cooperation, fearlessness, foresight, level of language skills, desire and ability, spirit of inquiry, planning, cognitive development
Individual characteristics	Orientation of the study course, benefiting from experienced people, familiarity with test resources and content, familiarity with testing techniques, exchange and using the experiences of others, creating rankings, appropriate evaluation content, giving desirable assignments, analytical scoring, language Learner in learning
Learning dynamics	Innovative management, self-centered learning, faculty empowerment, engaging in the creation of a scientific environment, a positive learning environment, access to digital and up-to-date resources
Educational technology	Benefit from technology, educational environment, creating a specialized space, e-learning, creating an incentive system

Content setting	Pay attention to individual differences, set up an evaluation committee
Anxiety and low self-esteem	Proper planning, practice of past tests, practice of testing techniques, practice of metacognitive strategies, learning the correct way to read texts, practice of speed-reading techniques, unfamiliarity with test rules, lack of time in the test
Weaknesses in learning	Optimal use of time, hope for success, increase learning motivation, benefit from participatory learning, access to the teacher and the possibility of troubleshooting
Positive evaluation	Reasonable acceptance of the test, increase motivation, avoid wasting time, save the cost of taking the test, improve the lg level, pay attention to feedback
Negative evaluation	Feeling of being forced to attend courses, test score being instrumental, unrealistic language proficiency score, long-term neglect of language learning, old age of language learning, family and academic worries, dissatisfaction with the teacher in transferring content, dissatisfaction with financing the courses, Fear of failure despite spending time and money, feeling affected by unrealistic advertising
Assess knowledge and skills	Comprehension, Listening skills, Proper speaking skills, Participatory learning, Vocabulary range, Theory assessment, Practical assessment
Individual consequences	Test preparation, self-confidence, language level improvement, reducing anxiety, creating a sense of hope for success, reducing self-reliance and relying on testing techniques, dissatisfaction with the heterogeneity of learners' level, internal dissatisfaction with the real level of language knowledge after courses, Intensification of feelings of despair in case of failure after courses
Social consequences	Prevalence of participatory learning, Attention to social responsibility, Prevalence of superficial learning with teaching testing techniques, Prevalence of scientific anomalies
Cultural implications	Promoting the culture of group research, promoting the culture of learning, specialized meetings, communicating with international centers
Economic consequences	Prevalence of unrealistic advertisements and expansion of business view of language learning, expansion of printing of test sources, reduction of costs for participation in exams, imposition of costs for participation in courses, commercialization of courses, wastage of costs in scientific research in English, misguidance organizations about language level due to judgment based on scores
Political consequences	Decreasing the trust of scientific centers in the real level of lg knowledge, intensifying the underdevelopment due to poor performance in scientific research in English, raising the scientific level to the level of world standards

Selective Data Coding

Conceptual codes that had semantic and content similarity with each other, were combined in a broader category, and in the last stage of coding, the English language quality assessment of Iranian learners was considered as the basis and main pillar of the research (central category). Those categories that are considered as causes that have played an active role in assessing the quality of language learners are listed under the causal conditions. Those that under certain conditions are the basis for the favorable assessment of language learners are referred to as contextual conditions. Also, those categories that have been adopted in response to the central category and under the influence of intervening conditions, are referred to as strategies. Finally, the categories that reflect the results and consequences of the strategies are listed below.
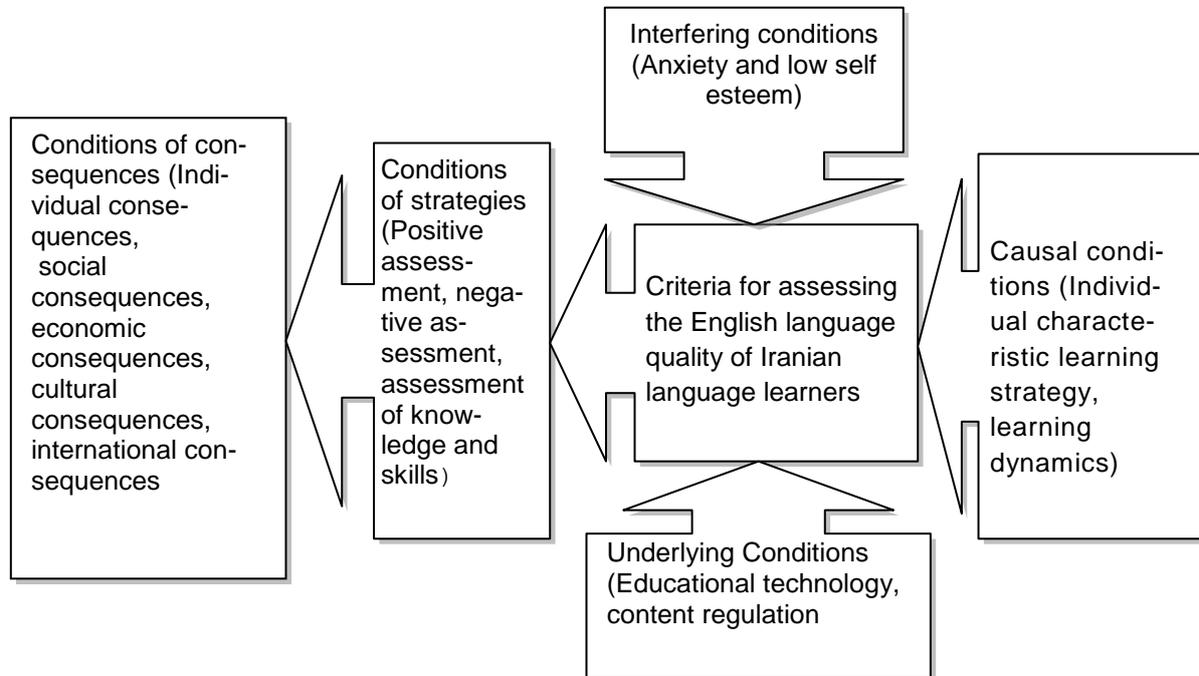
Table 4
Selective Coding Results

Conditions	Axial Categories	Concepts
Causal conditions	Learning strategy	Eagerness to acquire language skills, spirit of competitiveness, spirit of cooperation, fearlessness, foresight, level of language skills, desire and ability, spirit of inquiry, planning, cognitive development
	Individual characteristics	Orientation of the study course, benefiting from experienced people, familiarity with test resources and content, familiarity with testing techniques, exchange and using the experiences of others, creating rankings, appropriate evaluation content, giving desirable assignments, analytical scoring, language Learner in learning
	Learning dynamics	Innovative management, self-centered learning, faculty empowerment, engaging in the creation of a scientific environment, a positive learning environment, access to digital and up-to-date resources
Underlying conditions	Educational technology	Benefit from technology, educational environment, creating a specialized space, e-learning, creating an incentive system
	Content setting	Pay attention to individual differences, set up an evaluation committee
Interfering conditions	Anxiety and low self-esteem	Proper planning, practice of past tests, practice of testing techniques, practice of metacognitive strategies, learning the correct way to read texts, practice of speed-reading techniques, unfamiliarity with test rules, lack of time in the test
	Weaknesses in learning	Optimal use of time, hope for success, increase learning motivation, benefit from participatory learning, access to the teacher and the possibility of troubleshooting
Strategies	Positive evaluation	Reasonable acceptance of the test, increase motivation, avoid wasting time, save the cost of taking the test, improve the language level, pay attention to feedback
	Negative evaluation	Feeling of being forced to attend courses, test score being instrumental, unrealistic language proficiency score, long-term neglect of language learning, old age of language learning, family and academic worries, dissatisfaction with the teacher in transferring content, dissatisfaction with financing the courses, Fear of failure despite spending time and money, feeling affected by unrealistic advertising
	Assess nowledge and skills	Comprehension, Listening skills, Listening skills, Proper speaking skills, Participatory learning, Vocabulary range, Theory assessment, Practical assessment
consequences	Individual consequences	Test preparation, self-confidence, language level improvement, reducing anxiety, creating a sense of hope for success, reducing self-reliance and relying on testing techniques, dissatisfaction with the heterogeneity of learners' level, internal dissatisfaction with the real level of language knowledge after courses, Intensification of feelings of despair in case of failure after courses
	Social consequences	Prevalence of participatory learning, Attention to social responsibility, Prevalence of superficial learning with teaching testing techniques, Prevalence of scientific anomalies
	Cultural implications	Promoting the culture of group research, promoting the culture of learning, specialized meetings, communicating with international centers
	Economic consequences	Prevalence of unrealistic advertisements and expansion of business view of language learning, expansion of printing of various test sources, reduction of costs for participation in exams, imposition of costs for participation in courses, commercialization of courses, wastage of costs in scientific research in English, misguidance Organizations about language level due to judgment based on scores
	Political consequences	Decreasing the trust of scientific centers in the real level of language knowledge, intensifying the underdevelopment due to poor performance in scientific research in English, raising the scientific level to the level of world standards

Providing an English language Quality Assessment Model for Iranian Language Learners

To improve the process of classifying codes into categories, a theoretical comparison tool by Strauss and Corbin has been proposed. Accordingly, 96 concepts are categorized into 15 categories. In Figure 1, the conceptual pattern of English language quality assessment criteria for Iranian learners can be seen.

Interfering conditions (Anxiety and low self esteem)

Conditions of consequences (Individual consequences, social consequences, economic consequences, cultural consequences, international consequences

Conditions of strategies (Positive assessment, negative assessment, assessment of knowledge and skills)

Criteria for assessing the English language quality of Iranian language learners

Causal conditions (Individual characteristic learning strategy, learning dynamics)

Underlying Conditions (Educational technology, content regulation

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of English Language Quality Assessment Criteria for Iranian Learners Based on Data-based Method

DISUSSION

The results showed that some of the most important reasons for improving the quality of English in Iranian language learners are individual characteristics, learning strategy, and learning dynamics. English language teaching has become a global priority due to the development of information, technology, and communication. The teacher, as the facilitator of the language teaching curriculum, can always eliminate the shortcomings and deficiencies of the curriculum design stage, which will not happen unless he can use active and participatory teaching approaches in the implementation of the English language teaching curriculum. Of course, the implementation of this approach also requires the necessary professional potentials and competencies. Overall, it can be said that English language books play an important role in a learner's success. These books reflect the goals of language learning and address the learner's needs, goals, me-

thods, and values of language learning. As much as the activities are in a way that activates learners from a passive state of learning so that they can think, organize hypothesize, ask questions, discuss, comment, solve problems, and they are challenged. They will not be interested in the textbook. The real world of language is a world of sound. While our education system has been a text-based world, this adds to the myriad problems of pronunciation.

The results also showed that educational technology and content regulation, as background conditions, are effective in assessing the English language quality of Iranian learners. Teaching aids should be considered as a facilitator and deepener of teaching and learning. This factor, along with other effective factors in learning, has always been considered by education experts. The educational system can manage and control the coordination between the English language teaching curriculum and the purpose, textbook content, evalua-

tion and time, as elements of the curriculum in this field. However, other elements of the curriculum such as teaching and learning activities, teaching methods, learning tools and resources, and grouping are largely outside the scope of management and control of the educational system and are influenced by individual variables, including emotional and cognitive variables. Learners and teachers, as well as interpersonal variables between teachers and learners and between learners and learners, by creating the desired coordination and alignment of the curriculum and the four objectives, i.e., elements, textbook content, evaluation, and time will strength language communication skills.

Another result of the study is that anxiety and low self-esteem and weaknesses in learning can play an interfering role in the quality of English language learners. This important research result sends a clear message to officials, planners, teachers and other stakeholders involved in teacher education to flexibly transform the learning environment from a clichéd learning space to an engaging environment and increase students' interest in the subject. Increasing the interest and gaining a positive attitude towards the foreign language learning environment is an issue that requires the efforts of future researchers to be active in developing this theory. Horowitz, Horowitz, & Koop (1986) stated that certain types of classroom activities, especially assignments that expose language learners to a negative evaluation of teachers and classmates, may increase language anxiety and decrease language confidence. Thus, language anxiety and its development, that is, the classroom programs for decreasing anxiety, are closely related to classroom processes. Therefore, classroom programs can help boost language confidence.

Among many factors influencing student learning, teacher quality is the most determining one (Snook et al. 2013). Teaching quality is an important criterion for quality assessment of education utilized by students, parents, and authorities (Feistauer and Richter 2016) as it is the most determining factor in students' achievement (Sanders et al. 1997). As Green (2014) and Herppich et al. (2018) claimed,

assessment and the results drawn from it have crucial effects on the test takers' lives. It also has a straight influence on matters such as making decisions at the level of program and might even lead to organizational changes. As a result of such points, examiners, who are usually seen to be the teachers themselves, are regarded as influential factors within any assessment cycle, and especially in examining speaking and writing tests whose results are very much dependent on the examiners' subjective point of views. According to Atkins and Vasu (2000), teachers' attitudes or concerns have a significant influence on the use of computers in the classroom. Lam (2000) also emphasizes that teachers' personal beliefs of the advantages of using technology for language teaching influence teachers' decision regarding technology use. Teachers' use of the first language of the learners to teach EFL has made the debate re-emerge whether or not the first language could be used in the EFL classroom. Turbull (2018) comes to conclude that most of the teachers who deny L1 use are the teachers who do not have experience of learning a foreign language. Inal and Turhanli (2019) support the use of L1 with lowproficiency level students particularly when making students aware of the differences and similarities between L1 and L2. Christo Moskovsky and Fakieh Alrabai demonstrate in research on 'Intrinsic Motivation in Saudi Learners of English as a Foreign Language' in relation to the role of motivation in the attainment of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Saudi educational setting that Saudis possess fairly substantial 'dormant' reserves of motivation which in more favourable conditions could be deployed to produce better learning outcomes (Moskovsky & Alrabai, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the most important Criteria for Evaluating the English Language Quality of Iranian EFL Learners are learning strategy, individual characteristics, learning dynamics, educational technology, content setting, anxiety and low self-esteem, weaknesses in learning, positive evaluation, negative evaluation, assess knowledge and skills,

individual consequences, social consequences, cultural implications, economic consequences, political consequences. English language teaching has become a global priority due to the development of information, technology, and communication. However, in Iran, language teaching, especially at the level of guidance and high schools, which are the basis of English language teaching, is facing its own problems. The main problem in foreign language teaching in Iran is that after thirty years there is still no clear program or policy on foreign language teaching. Hence, a short-term solution seems unlikely, although the document on the fundamental transformation of education places great emphasis on developing foreign language teaching within the selected part of the program. The teacher, as the facilitator of the language teaching curriculum, can always eliminate the shortcomings and deficiencies of the curriculum design stage, which will not happen unless he can use active and participatory teaching approaches in the implementation of the English language teaching curriculum.

As much as the activities are in a way that activates learners from a passive state of learning so that they can think, organize hypothesize, ask questions, discuss, comment, solve problems, and they are challenged. Having better quality schools, a more attractive learning environment, more experienced teachers and instructors can lead to a more positive attitude and thus higher performance in learning English. On the other hand, the quality of the schools where the students are present, such as busy classrooms, poor quality teachers, and lack of required resources, may reduce the motivation level of learners. At the end, it is suggested that research in this field be carried out in wider communities with higher generalizability, as well as in different cities, and be compared with the results of research in various institutions.

According to the research results, positive assessment, negative assessment, and assessment of knowledge and skills can be a strategy to improve the quality of English in Iranian language learners. Considering the many effects of the language knowledge assessment

system on determining the teaching method of teachers and students' learning, especially in Iran, making this test mandatory is a great help to language teaching in schools. Since all the methods used to evaluate teachers, teaching have both positive and negative aspects, and none of them alone can provide a true image of the teacher's performance, it is necessary to It is possible to use several different methods to evaluate the performance of teachers.In assessment, the teacher pays attention to how to organize learning, the quality of collaboration with classmates, and how to use available resources.

Assessment is based on the student's performance and what has been produced, according to the criteria agreed upon by the teacher and the students. Ecological studies of language teaching indicate that in order to properly understand the developmental process of the child in different dimensions, it is necessary to penetrate and study different layers of language teaching. Language learning experiences (or, in other words, attitudes towards the immediate language learning environment) have the strongest relationship with English language learning skills. Therefore, the mechanism of training language teachers should be in a way that maximizes the attractiveness and interest in the learning environment. Inspired by the findings of this study, language teachers can produce and apply content and teaching methods that lead to a positive attitude according to the needs of learners.

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