

A Paradigm Shift Away from Method-Wise Teaching to Strategy-Wise Teaching: Reconstructive Strategy Versus Communicative Strategy

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Abstract: The main purpose of this descriptive exploratory survey is in fact a postmethod-oriented endeavor to arrive at a reasonable conclusion concerning the adoption of the most appropriate teaching strategy, out of the strategic framework proposed by Waldemar Marton, best suiting Iranian educational system. In doing so, two teaching strategies, that is, communicative strategy and reconstructive strategy were selected for examination. Specifically speaking, in parallel with the major function of the study, the underlying purpose this study seeks to accomplish is to diagnose and analyze the characteristic features and particularities of the Iranian educational system through fairly comprehensive exploration of 2 imperative contextual factors, that is, learner and teacher. Accordingly, the researchers take best advantage of the experienced teachers' belief system to identify the features of two contextual factors, that is, learner and teacher as well as examine a couple of strategies at issue. The instruments utilized were 4 distinctive multi-purpose and well-organized questionnaires. The Cronbach's alpha test of reliability yielded a coefficient of 0.78 and 0.67 for the questionnaires of learner and teacher, 0.71 and 0.63 for the questionnaires of the strategies; meaning the survey was reasonably reliable on the whole. A sample population of 40 kg and skilled teachers, both male and female practicing teachers of the province of Khuzestan-Iran, was recruited on a voluntary basis with an average of at least ten years of teaching experience in public schools. Considering the majority as the criterion and decisive factor, in regard to the type of Iranian EFL learners (careful students) and EFL teachers (with poor proficiency and stamina), a non-intensive teaching curriculum and large amount of classes, the best strategy that can correspond with all these conditions and yet result in the successful development of L2 competence was detected to be reconstructive strategy.

Key words: Postmethod pedagogy, strategic framework, contextual factors, learner variable, teacher variable, teacher education

INTRODUCTION

By the end of the twentieth century, mainstream language teaching no longer regarded method (s) as the pivotal dynamic in accounting for success or failure in language teaching. Thanks to recently critical studies and profound insights in the field of L2 education enterprise and as a result of long-felt discontented responses to the restricted and restricting notion of the method, the profession of language teaching has initiated a movement towards fundamental reshaping and restructuring in organizing principles for L2 teaching/learning and teacher education. Richards and Rodgers (2001) refer to the major criticisms made of approaches and methods as follows: Top-down criticism, the role of contextual factors, need for curriculum development processes, lack of research

basis and similarity of classroom practices. Kumaravadivelu (2003) explicitly indicates that based on theoretical, experimental and experiential knowledge, teachers and teacher educators have expressed their dissatisfaction with method in different ways [emphasis is authors']. The explorations by professional figures in the domain of English language teaching have obviously confirmed the fact that even as the methodological theorists recommend the practitioners to follow a specific path, the practicing teachers have been moving toward a different direction (Nunan, 1989; Legutke and Thomas, 1991; Kumaravadivelu, 1993). These pedagogically well-grounded arguments have now made us step in the novel realm of what Kumaravadivelu (1994) first coined and later referred to by Brown (1997) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) as the Post-method era.

In general, despite the fast development and advancement of the profession of second/foreign language teaching, this enterprise is still in the process of maturity. It has gone through numerous changes in its lifetime. Mackey (1965) nicely refers to this subtle point that while sciences have advanced by approximations in which each new stage results from an improvement, not rejection, of what has gone before, language-teaching methods have followed the pendulum of fashion from one extreme to the other. It seems that though there lacks consensus in appreciating several fundamental notions in language teaching over the past few decades (Fries, 1945; Homby, 1950; Lado, 1957, 1977; Darian, 1972; Widdowson, 1978; Strevens, 1980; Howatt, 1984; Rivers and Temerley, 1987; Kumaravadivelu, 1994), we have witnessed dependable body of evaluative reflections on the nature and within the purview of method in the past few years (Pennycook, 1989; Freeman, 1990; Prabhu, 1990; Widdowson, 1990; Brown, 2001, 2002; Allwright, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The materialization of these innovative thoughts that reasonably reinterpret and refigure the concept of method (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001; Rivers, 1992; Stern, 1992; Richards, 1989; Richards and Lockhart, 1994) culminated in creating an atmosphere forewarning uncritical acceptance of untested methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

The most frequently articulated criticism made about the intrinsic limitations of method is that an evident disconnection exists between method as conceptualized by theorists and method as carried out by teachers in the classroom. It is not difficult to ponder over the fact that since language learning and teaching needs, wants and situations are unpredictably numerous (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), no ideal method can address all intervening variables and factors in advance so as to prescribe teachers to tackle the challenges they deal with every day of their professional lives. Entangled in a pendulum-like swinging, methods are inclined to move from one theoretical extreme to the other. For example, at one time grammatical exercises and tests were recommended as best solutions to teach, at another, they were given up in support of communicative activities. At one time explicit correction of errors was regarded as appropriate and crucial; at another, it was rejected. These extreme positions in the methods era overemphasize on several definite dimensions of learning and teaching, but at the expense of quite ignorance of some other prominent facets.

The limitations of the notion of method has paved the ground for the emergence of this heightened fast-creating awareness that the term method is a label without substance (Clarke, 1983), that it has diminished rather than

enhanced our understanding of language teaching (Pennycook, 1989) and that language teaching might be better understood and better executed if the concept of method were not to exist at all (Jarvis, 1991). The appreciation of this specific sharp awareness to get well-actualized within Iranian educational system, with all its relevant intervening factors and accordingly focused efforts to tap it practically seem to be a must. The most important point in realization of such a kind of crucial understanding and thus adopting appropriate measures will be through analyzing and scrutinizing salient aspects of innovative proposals in postmethod condition. As a primarily essential endeavor, an extensive critical analysis of two important contextual factors, most often referred to by postmethod advocates as very crucial variables, that is, learner variable as well as teacher variable is carried out.

This study intends to conduct an exploratory-analytical survey to examine the effectiveness and appropriateness of two strategies proposed by Marton (1988) within Iranian educational system, that is, communicative strategy and reconstructive strategy. Prior to the inquiry over the efficacy of two strategies, a primary crucial study is also conducted to investigate the characteristics of two contextual variables, most often emphasized upon within the postmethod paradigm, that is, teacher and learner. In fact, since particular procedures must be followed to arrive at the conclusion to adopt the most appropriate and functional strategy, the major portion of this research project is inevitably assigned to the relatively comprehensive analysis of the contextual factors. Due to the indispensable role relationships these two important contextual variables play within the framework of a successful postmethod paradigm, exploring the characteristics of these 2 factors directs us to opt for implementation of the most appropriate strategy that is best location-sensitive, situation-specific, system-responsive and consequently most successful and realizable in the Iranian educational structure.

Initial stages of taking purposeful measures in the field of second/foreign language teaching are found to be rather completely short of any theoretical pedestal. The twentieth century has seen the fall and rise of a variety of methods and approaches from the Series Method (Gouin, 1880) to Audio-Lingual method (Fries, 1945), then the Designer Methods (Brown, 2001) and later on to Communicative Language Teaching (Wilkins, 1976; Brumfit and Johnson, 1979).

Specifically speaking, during 20th century till nearly its last decade, 2 major method-wise trends can be found to come into view. In the first movement, theorists took advantage of premises from various fields of relevant

disciplines such as linguistics, psychology and sociolinguistics to design a particular method. The second trend entailed the endeavors of method-developers on the basis of individual philosophies. In particular, in the late 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, educationists, professional second/foreign language researchers and thinkers came to seriously appraise the limitations of the concept of method and critique its validity and acceptability. As a consequence of such critical attitudes towards the profession of language pedagogy, the innovative paradigms came to light. For example, Marton (1988) proposed his pedagogically well-founded strategic scheme. In consistent with Marton's principles, Kumaravadivelu (1994) also introduced his strategic framework in the postmethod era. In order to better keep track of the cycles and changes the language pedagogy profession has undergone, the researchers split up the history of English language teaching into three separate categories, that is, method-wise era, calculated-detachment-from-method era, postmethod era. The last era is expanded upon due to its immediate relevance to this study.

Postmethod era: By the end of the 1980s, the profession of language pedagogy had grasped its past wanderings (Brown, 2001) and endless cycles of life, death and rebirth (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) methods go through. The gradual emergence of critical thoughts and its speeding-up during the last decade called the nature and scope of method into question. Besides, the appearance of these innovative ideas refigured our understanding of the notion of method. Since, the end of 1980s, language teaching pedagogy has reached the point of maturity (Brown, 2001) and a state of heightened awareness (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) that now it is high time to get rid of the complexity of never-ending quest for finding the best alternative out of the maze of method. As a result of this newly sharp awareness, an outstanding and marked era seemed indispensable to come up, that is, a postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Among significant available proposals, there exist three important and unique ones in the realm of TESOL. They are introduced in this study. It can be witnessed that almost all postmethod proposals are turning around the key notion of strategy. Brown (2001, 2002) suggests a strategies-based instruction (SBI) closely combined with his particular principled and enlightened approach. Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2002, 2003) puts forward a strategic framework taking in macrostrategies and microstrategies. Marton (1988) also proposes a strategic framework comprising four strategies which are highly characteristic and unique of their kinds.

The three proposals being discussed here revolve around the conceptual axis of strategic framework and scheme. Brown (2001) in his book under the title of *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* devotes particularly three chapters of the book to elaborate upon his proposal. The chapters, in order of appearance, are *The Present: An Informed Approach*, *Teaching by Principles and Strategies-based Instruction*. Kumaravadivelu (1994) also proposes a strategic framework in his famous and thought-provoking article entitled. *The Postmethod Condition: (E)merging Strategies for the Second/Foreign Language Teaching* published in *TESOL Quarterly*. Marton (1988) suggests another profound, well-grounded strategic framework and options in his prominent book. The Kumaravadivelu's and Marton's strategic frameworks are touched upon in the following study.

Strategic framework: Macrostrategies and microstrategies: As already stated, the emergence of postmethod has been as a reactive response to the inadequacy and the rigidities of the concept of method. Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003) explains about the postmethod condition by pointing to its three interconnected features. In a nutshell, as he asserts, the postmethod condition signifies three important characteristics. First and foremost, it signifies a search for an alternative to method rather than an alternative method. Secondly, the postmethod condition suggests teacher autonomy. The last and not the least characteristic feature of postmethod pedagogy is principled pragmatism. The three major characteristics of postmethod condition outlined above provide the foundation on which a pedagogic and strategic framework is constructed. To put in practical terms, such a framework is supposed to enable teachers to develop the knowledge, skill, attitude and autonomy necessary to devise for themselves as systematic, coherent and relevant alternative to method that is informed by principled pragmatism (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2003).

Having mentioned the features of the postmethod condition, Kumaravadivelu (1994) sets forth his research-based strategies framework that is not as a dogma for uncritical acceptance but as an option for critical appraisal in light of new and expanding experience and experimentation in L2 learning and teaching. The proposed strategic framework consists of macrostrategies and microstrategies. Macrostrategies are universal tactics derived from theoretical, empirical and experiential knowledge grounded in classroom-oriented research. In fact, a macrostrategy is a general principle on its basis practitioners can generate their own situation-specific,

context-sensitive, need-based microstrategies or classroom techniques. In simple words, the macrostrategies get realized through microstrategies in an educational setting. Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) highlights that macrostrategies may be regarded as theory-neutral and method-neutral. He further asserts that theory-neutral does not mean atheoretical; rather it means that the framework is not constrained by the fundamental premises of any specific established theory of language, language learning, or language teaching. In a similar way, method-neutral does not imply methodless; rather it entails that the framework is not based on any of the specific set of theoretical principles or classroom procedures typically allied with any of the particular established language teaching methods.

The framework comprises ten macrostrategies (Kumaravadivelu, 2003):

- Maximize learning opportunities.
- Minimize perceptual mismatches.
- Facilitate negotiated interaction.
- Promote learner autonomy.
- Foster language awareness.
- Activate intuitive heuristics.
- Contextualize linguistic input.
- Integrate language skills.
- Ensure social relevance.
- Raise cultural consciousness.

Kumaravadivelu (2001) enriches the postmethod condition by proposing a three-dimensional pedagogic system, that is, pedagogy of particularity, practicality and possibility. Having placed the postmethod condition on the foundation of three parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility, Kumaravadivelu (2003) stresses that in order to propel the language teaching pedagogy beyond the restricted and restricting notion of method, we need a coherent framework that can guide us to carry out the salient features of the pedagogy in a classroom context and accordingly, he presents one such a framework-a strategic framework. Ironically speaking, another particular, practical and possible framework is also proposed by Marton (1988) which is the main line of argument throughout the current research. This pedagogically well-based framework is generally introduced below and two relevant strategies (encompassing macro/micro strategies), that is, communicative and reconstructive, which are under the investigative scope of this study, are brought into sharp focus.

Marton's strategic framework: Another salient and prominent strategic framework is proposed by Marton

(1988). According to Marton (1988), teacher training programmes should provide trainers with some form of theoretical scaffolding or general schema which will help them to plan their teaching at the beginning of their careers and to interpret their experiences in a principled and coherent way. This schema is directly connected with the essential issue in language pedagogy, i.e., to the question of how to make teaching so efficient that it would support only genuine and successful learning experiences.

From a technical standpoint, Marton's strategic framework, possessing its own macrostrategies, is hypothetically in line with postmethod pedagogy and fundamentally parallel to its underlying notions and is yet closely interwoven with strategy-wise era. With respect to the notion of possibility and practicality of a framework which are also highlighted by Kumaravadivelu (2001) and Marton (1988) points out possible options and strategies and operationally definable strategy leading to successful development of L2 competence as well. He further nicely refers to a subtle point in such a way that having followed such a strategy-loaded framework, on the basis of the knowledge provided by the programme and after gaining some practical experience, creative and enlightened teachers will be able to construct their own [of course, ongoing and dynamic] teaching theory (xiii). It is precisely consistent with what Kumaravadivelu (2001) explicitly and frequently indicates that the parameter of practicality seeks to enable and inspire teachers to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize.

Main thesis of Marton's framework is that there are fundamentally and essentially three such options and strategies; listening to or reading texts in the target language (receptive strategy); attempting to communicate via this language (communicative strategy); reproducing, reconstructing and transforming model texts in the L2 (reconstructive strategy). These are three successful language learning procedures logically lead to the idea of three basic teaching strategies, i.e., specific strategies consisting of several macrostrategies signified by the advocates of postmethod pedagogy, by which they can be promoted. Marton (1988) further claims that these 3 strategies can be combined with one another (only consecutively); the various combinations making a fourth strategy-eclectic one. By considering the parameter of particularity as accredited in postmethod era and due to the specific features such as age factor, time-constraints and level of language study, the receptive strategy and eclectic one seem one way or another unsuccessful and far away from practical sense in Iranian educational settings. In doing so, the other two significant strategies,

communicative and reconstructive strategies, which appear to be more applicable and have more likelihood of being successful in Iranian educational contexts (of course, within public settings and classrooms; in public schools) are selected and explored in the present study.

Marton's definition of the term 'strategy': The term strategy and approach are repeatedly used rather synonymously in contemporary literature on language pedagogy, in the sense of a worldwide regarded procedure, philosophy or way of teaching. Yet the principles in terms of which the particular strategies or approaches are described are not homogeneous since they refer to a variety of important parameters of the language learning/teaching process.

Although, all current classifications on defining strategy quite adequately capture some crucial issues and options in language pedagogy, due to the fact that they are based on heterogeneous criteria and connected to parameters of imbalanced importance, they fail to stress the most crucial factors distinguishing various possible language teaching procedures. Thus, to Marton (1988), a language teaching strategy is defined as a globally conceived set of pedagogical procedures imposing a [an operationally] definite learning strategy on the learner directly leading to the development of competence in the target language. These procedures are drawn from a set of correlative, theoretical, empirical and experiential assumptions concerning the nature of language, the nature of second language development and the functions of language teaching. Since, the concept of language teaching strategy is directly associated with the notion of developing competence in L2, it is also connected with the idea of success in gaining a practical command of the target language. Accordingly, procedures which are sometimes treated as language teaching activities but which do not aim at the development of a competence in L2 cannot be considered as language teaching strategies.

Having defined the concept of language teaching strategy, Marton (1988) comes to the conclusion that it can be postulated on the basis of accumulated teaching experience and second language acquisition research that there exist only four basic and successful strategies of language teaching, which can be labeled as the receptive strategy, the communicative strategy, the reconstructive strategy and the eclectic strategy. As already stated, the communicative strategy and the reconstructive strategy are of the major focus of this research.

Communicative strategy: This strategy is a language teaching promoting a specific learning strategy that can

be materialized as attempted communication in the target language. The nature of this process is best understood as to consider it fundamentally similar to the process of first language acquisition (Marton, 1988). In order for communicative strategy of language teaching to be actualized, the procedure is to replicate the natural acquisitional process in the classroom in a deliberate and intentional attempt.

The second/foreign language learner at the outset of pursuing this manner of language acquisition/learning attempts not only to understand messages articulated by other speakers but also to generate his/her own utterances in the target language expressing his own meanings, feelings and ideas. The skeleton of this strategy is grounded on the crucial assumption that learner should be meaningfully exposed to the target language for the reason that without a certain amount of meaningful input there cannot be any acquisition at all. In doing so, it seeks to provide some necessary data for the learners to make their own hypotheses about the language.

Marton (1988) assumes two characteristics for communicative strategy of language teaching. The first feature is that learners pursuing this strategy, most often, at least in the beginning stages, produce highly inaccurate or grammatically ill-formed utterances. These utterances are not taken as a sign of poor and unsuccessful learning rather it is considered as an interim phase in the developing spectrum of learner's hypothesizing about the second/foreign language. The other attribute is allied with the verity that learner, by following this strategy, is almost constantly forced, especially in the beginning stage, to use communication strategies.

To steer clear of any potential misunderstanding, it should be noted that the notion of the communicative strategy of language teaching is not equivalent to the concept of the communicative approach. The communicative strategy of teaching, as proposed by Marton, is nothing but a certain generically conceived teaching procedure which is supposed to activate a specific, psycholinguistically definable strategy of language acquisition. On the other hand, the communicative approach is a more wide-ranging notion because it covers not only a definite teaching strategy but also a certain cluster of objectives, particular kind of syllabuses and curriculums, a variety of methodological principles and specific teaching techniques.

Reconstructive strategy: This teaching strategy prompts a distinctive strategy of language learning encompassing a very controlled and gradual development of competence in the target language through the learners' prolonged

participation in reconstructive tasks. Reconstructive strategy is depicted as skill learning, totally compatible with psychological schema of information processing (Marton, 1988). The essential component and integral part of the reconstructive strategy is that activities are always on the basis of a text, spoken or written, in the target language. The source text provides the learner with the linguistic resources in the form of syntactic structures, lexical items, collocations, phrases, etc. considered necessary for the successful and correct performance of a productive task assigned to him/her by the teacher. All types of texts, irrespective of their functions, can serve as the main and source text. An important point to be highlighted is that the task selected has to be connected with the main text, thus for example, it may involve re-narrating the text, summarizing it, retelling it from a different viewpoint, adopting it to the learner's ideas, thoughts, feelings and experiences.

The underlying principle of such a strategy lies in the fact that on executing the reconstructive activities, the learner has to produce only well-formed sentences and should not employ any communication strategies. In order to pave the ground for successful implementation of this principle, the learners are given all the linguistic items necessary for the successful accomplishment of the task. Another important imperative to follow is that learners, while listening to or reading the source texts, must not only understand them but also pay attention to all the formal features of the target language and attempt to remember them. In this way, a successful realization of a reconstructive activity involves remembering both the surface components and fundamental propositions of the main text.

Concluding remarks: Back to the big controversy over the dissatisfaction with the concept of method, it is clear that some approaches and methods are unlikely to be widely adopted. The reason is that they are difficult to understand and use, lack practical application, require special training and necessitate changes in teachers' practices and beliefs (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Thus, Iranian educational context is no exception as well. Taking a critical look at existing classroom procedures and activities and also available textbooks, one can unquestionably keep track of ill-utilized and somehow non-labeled method (s) and approach (es) in a typical classroom. With regard to the format of available textbooks and existing teaching methods and approaches, one can clearly witness that a combination of grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods in large measure plus a little degree of communicative-loaded tasks are prevailing in an Iranian typical classroom. In a

research conducted by Razmjoo (2007) to evaluate and compare the degree of fulfillment of communicative language teaching principles of high-school and private school textbooks, he draws several important conclusions. He asserts that on the basis of the results and findings of the study CLT principles are not utilized in the Iranian high school textbooks (Razmjoo, 2007). He further emphasizes on the fact that the high school textbooks, which are reading and grammar based (ibid: 11) do not fit EFL communicative teaching and therefore do not meet language learners' communicative needs.

Generally speaking, typical Iranian EFL learners are observed to be in search of three salient and ideal expectations to be met. They are presented in order of importance. First and foremost, passing final exam is considered as an urgent and primary need. Second, to make oneself prepared for attending the university entrance exam is taken as another central goal. Eventually, to communicate via English language is the final expectation which is often ignored, put aside and most often remains never to be actualized. In order to fulfill these three ideal expectations to which there is no choice but accept, the investigators try to take advantage of strategy-wise paradigm to justifiably adopt the most practical, particular and possible macrostrategy which is based on Marton's strategic framework so as to remove, or at least highly decrease, the existing weaknesses and deficiencies in Iranian educational contexts. Apart from first two expectations which are attached by great importance, both on the part of learners and teachers, there is particular attempt to heighten and intensify presence and emergence of the last expectation, i.e. communication via target language, in a way to suggest psycholinguistically-and-pedagogically-enriched macrostrategies and microstrategies leading in successful development of an L2 competence. In doing so, the researchers mainly intend to appraise the superiority and efficiency of one of the aforementioned (macro)strategies as being best fit with the current educational context. In particular, the degree of successfulness, practicality and possibility of the techniques suggested by two (macro)strategies is intended to be examined. To draw such a conclusion, specific procedures are inevitably required to be pursued that is actually realized by means of a descriptive-analytical survey to explore in detail the characteristics of two contextual factors, the Iranian learner and teacher. These variables play a significant part in leading the examiner into reasonable singling out the appropriate strategy. Once the distinctive features of these factors are revealed, the investigators justifiably judge upon the appropriateness and practicality of one of

the strategies as most context-sensitive, location-specific and system-responsive in the educational system of the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

One of the major aims of the present descriptive exploratory research is an attempt to have recourse to the experienced teachers' belief system to identify the features of two contextual factors, that is, learner and teacher. The information we get from these two contextual factors guides us to be inclined to safely select an appropriate strategy best fitting with the Iranian educational context and situation. In order to enrich and corroborate the results of the investigation, the possibility and practicality of two strategies in question, i.e. communicative and reconstructive strategies, are also surveyed.

Research questions: On the basis of proposed issues regarding the characteristics of the contextual factors, i.e. learners and teachers and also the two strategies in question, i.e. communicative and reconstructive strategies, the following research questions are put forward:

- What are the characteristics of an Iranian typical learner in reference to the significant notions such as fragility, inhibition, defensiveness, error-tolerance, risk-taking and extroversion/introversion?
- Based on the first question, is an Iranian typical student a careful type or an adventurous type of learner (Marton, 1988)?
- What are the characteristics of an Iranian typical teacher in terms of essential notions of proficiency and stamina (Marton, 1988)?
- Which strategy (communicative or reconstructive) does best suit Iranian educational system?

Participants: A sample population of 40 knowledgeable and skilled teachers was recruited on a voluntary basis with an average of at least ten years of teaching experience in public schools (approximately one-third of the sample had over twenty years' teaching experience). The selected teachers were both male and female teachers of the province of Khuzestan. The participants involved in this evaluation survey were the full-time teaching staffs of the Ministry of Education. They all had teaching experience in public guidance and high schools (mostly in high school and pre-university).

Instrument: The survey instruments utilized in this study were two mainly distinctive multi-purpose and well-organized questionnaires developed by the researchers. The questionnaires were meticulously designed on the basis of deep examination and critical study of the specialized and applied resources so as to get the survey authenticated and validated. They are, in fact, four separate questionnaires. Actually each main instrument encompasses two sub-categories embedded in one questionnaire. The first two embedded categories (which are referred to as the first questionnaire for ease of reporting) were designed to examine the contextual variables. In other words, the first questionnaire (questionnaires of learner and teacher variables) was developed for the investigation of these two contextual factors (Appendix 1). The second questionnaire (questionnaires of communicative and reconstructive strategies) was developed for examination of the practicality and successfulness of these two strategies so as to complement and even warrant the findings of the first questionnaire (Appendixes 2 and 3).

In order to gather quantitative data out of the questionnaires, a type of psychometric response scale got utilized. Accordingly, each item was assigned a polytomous value and assessed on a four-point Likert scale. The Likert scale employed in this investigation is in a forced choice method in which the middle option of neither agree nor disagree or neutral response is not available. This is so much for the reason to compile more focused information and eventually to interpret and analyze the responses more safely and precisely. Respondents are required to indicate the degree of their agreement on a four-point-Likert-type scale by placing a tick in the appropriate column; from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) for the first questionnaire and from 1 (unsuccessful) to (very successful) for the second questionnaire.

Alpha option (Cronbach's Alpha) provides an effective tool for measuring the internal consistency which is a numerical coefficient of reliability. Schommer (1993) points out that the reasonable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) can range from 0.63-0.85. Calculated by the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS for windows, version 15.0), the Cronbach's alpha test of reliability yielded a coefficient of 0.78 for the questionnaire of the learner variable (extremely reliable), 0.67 for the questionnaire of the teacher variable (reasonably reliable), 0.71 for the questionnaire of the communicative strategy (highly reliable) and 0.63 for the questionnaire of the reconstructive strategy (reasonably reliable); meaning the survey was reasonably reliable on the whole.

Materials and data collection procedures: Back to the components of the instruments of the research, the first questionnaire consists of two main categories, fourteen questions in total. The first part includes ten questions as related to the learner variable. The other four ones concern the teacher variable. The first questionnaire was actually developed to appraise two contextual factors, that is, learner variable and teacher variable. The items are formulated and constructed on the basis of the specialized materials and in reference to applied resources (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Guiora, 1972; Heyde, 1979; Busch, 1982; Strong, 1983, 1984; Ely, 1986a, 1986b; Marton, 1988; Stern, 1991; Brown, 2001, 2002; Ellis, 2008). The respondents were required to rate their agreement to each statement. The initial part of the first questionnaire deals with the assessment of the notions related to learners' characteristics and personality factors such as language ego (fragility, defensiveness and inhibition), risk-taking, error-tolerance and concepts of extroversion/introversion. It should be noted that though each learner's characteristic feature is mentioned in a separate statement, all these personality factors are interrelated and interdependent.

The second questionnaire concerns the evaluation of the degree of possibility, practicality and successfulness of two strategies pertinent to the topic under discussion; that is, communicative strategy and reconstructive strategy. The items are, in fact, the particular teaching techniques or teaching microstrategies unique to each single strategy, extracted from Marton's book. Considering the basic assumptions such as Iranian educational system, a typical Iranian teacher's stamina and proficiency and also a typical Iranian learner at present, the participants were required to rate the extent of possibility, successfulness and practicality of each mentioned technique on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (unsuccessful) to 4 (very successful). Once two questionnaires were completed, each item was analyzed separately and also for further analysis, item responses were summed to create a score for a group of items.

Data analysis: From a technical standpoint, due to the fact that this study is a descriptive exploratory survey in nature, the most convenient and effective means for analyzing the data is to draw on descriptive statistics. In this way, the obtained data will be interpreted and analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistical procedures. In the first questionnaire, the percentages and frequencies of the initial ten questions are computed to reveal the personality features of the majority of Iranian EFL learners and consequently to identify the particular character of the most of learners on the whole in a way Marton (1988)

tends to classify as a careful type or adventurous type of learner. Thanks to many additional and supplementary resources studied and employed to enrich the notion of careful and adventurous types of learner as in parallel reference to Marton's remarks, the researchers have attempted to present an extended definition of these two types of character. In this extended definition, the authors precisely and meticulously enrich the relevant facets of mentioned learner types where Marton has just pointed out a little or perhaps found it unnecessary to explain more on several important factors. For example, he doesn't put forward a detailed description of the crucial notion of language ego. In particular reference to this case, the investigators expand upon the notion of language ego by having recourse to consider its three essential components (Brown, 2001; Ellis, 2008) as fragility, defensiveness and inhibition.

The percentages and frequencies of the other four questions (11-14) are also calculated to verify the characteristics of the majority of Iranian EFL teachers. The first two questions assess the feature of teachers' proficiency and the other two evaluate the characteristics of teachers' stamina in terms of time and energy utilized for teaching purposes.

The second questionnaire is statistically treated like the first questionnaire in terms of the calculation and analysis of data. It should be reminded that the initial part of the second questionnaire is supposed to assess techniques of communicative strategy and the subsequent section deals with evaluating the techniques of reconstructive strategy.

A crucial point concerning the calculation of obtained data is that, as it is customary, scales are collapsed for ease of reporting (Tumposky, 1991; Peacock, 1999; Tercanlioglu, 2005). As a result, values representing percentages are actually collapsed scores for Agree (strongly agree and agree) and Disagree (strongly disagree and disagree) for the first questionnaire and also Successful (successful and relative successfulness) and Unsuccessful (little successfulness and unsuccessful) for the second questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present exploratory survey is intended to work out one of the most important proposed strategy-wise framework in the domain of postmethod pedagogy. Among available considerable proposals, this study lays stress on Marton's (1988) strategic framework. Contextual factors play crucial parts in getting a postmethod program successfully actualized. The central features such as being context-sensitive and location-specific demand a

focal attention to particularity parameter in this paradigm. As a result, first and foremost, this investigation attempts to depict the particularity of two imperative contextual factors, that is, teacher and learner. The learner variable is studied on the basis of personality factors, as it is the criterion for Marton to place a learner in one of his proposed dichotomous category, careful or adventurous types of learner. The teacher variable is also examined in terms of two parameters, that is, proficiency and stamina. Having explored the learner variable and teacher variable, the researchers conduct a cross-study as well to evaluate the possibility, practicality and successfulness of two strategies, communicative strategy and reconstructive strategy, within Iranian educational system. The detailed discussion will be presented in the subsequent parts.

Contextual factors: learner variable and teacher variable:

Correct recognition of the particularities of the contextual factors is frequently referred to as the decisive factor of success of a strategy-wise plan in the postmethod literature. Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006) suggests the parameter of particularity to expand upon the specificity of a context in which a teaching program is supposed to be conducted. Richards (1990) refers to the situational needs or the context of teaching and Brown (2002) introduces the concept of diagnosis in his principled approach to elaborate on the significance of context. Specifically speaking, Marton (1988) maintains that effectiveness of his proposed strategies is just subject to the personality of learner and the teaching context. In this way, it seems sensible to identify the personality of an Iranian typical learner and then the variable of teacher to have a better understanding of the existing teaching context in our country.

Learner variable: Marton (1988) introduces two basic types of learner, careful type and adventurous type of learner. The most important point to be noted is that he demonstrates these learners from a general perspective and discusses on them in terms of dichotomous contrasting pairs. He tends to refer to an adventurous type of learner within the scope of affective domain by resorting to notions such as relatively permeable language ego, risk-taking, extroversion, sociable, large emphatic capacity and certainly not very ethnocentric. On the other hand, the careful type is characterized by traits and tendencies opposite to the adventurous type.

It should be noted that Marton represents these two types of learner from a general standpoint and in a broad sense. He does not elaborate upon the issue of personality factor and specifically affective domain, in a planned and systematic manner. For this reason, from a research-based viewpoint and exactly due to the

immediate relevance of the present study, the researchers find it highly urgent to go through these traits in a more systematic way to better capture the facets of affective domain. In this way, based on close examination and study of specialized and applied resources (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Guiora, 1972; Heyde, 1979; Busch, 1982; Strong, 1983, 1984; Ely, 1986a, 1986b; Marton, 1988; Stern, 1991; Brown, 2001, 2002; Ellis, 2008), the investigators expand and enrich the notions of adventurous and careful types of learner so as to better judge upon the relative identification of the character of learners.

The personality traits examined in this study are as follows (Appendix 1 for the initial part of the first questionnaire-learner variable):

- Language ego involvement/permeability (its important facets are sense of fragility, sense of inhibition and sense of defensiveness while learning a new language)-Questions 1, 2 and 3.
- Risk-taking-Question 4.
- Error-tolerance-Questions 5 and 6.
- Self-confidence-Question 7.
- Extroversion/Introversion-Questions 8, 9 and 10.

From a holistic point of view, over 75% (a high percent) of teachers implied that the Iranian EFL learners have characteristic features of a careful type of learner and as result are classified in this personality category (Table 1).

Teacher variable: This variable is attached by great importance in the postmethod pedagogy because it plays a vital role in getting a postmethod program successfully actualized. Proposing the postmethod pedagogy, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003) extends the implications of this paradigm even to the field of teacher education. Postmethod teachers should be autonomous, in a sense that they should possess a sensible extent of competence and confidence to construct and implement their own theory of practice that is sensitive, specific and responsive to the particularities of their educational context. Kumaravadivelu (2001) refers to teacher autonomy as defining the heart of postmethod pedagogy. Identifying the characteristics of an Iranian typical learner is one of the most crucial particularities the teacher should be aware of and acquainted with. On the other hand, a postmethod proposal should be cognizant of the characteristics of the teachers available in the educational settings. Generally speaking, Marton (1988) explores the characteristics of the teachers from 2 important interrelated viewpoints. The first element refers to teacher proficiency, that is, whether a teacher is high-proficient or

Table 1: The summarized results of the beliefs in personality traits of the majority of Iranian EFL learners

Personality traits	Predominantly careful	Predominantly adventurous
Language ego Sense of Fragility	82.5	17.5
involvement Sense of Inhibition	90	10
(permeability) Sense of Defensiveness	70	30
Mean	80.83	19.17
Risk-taking	72.5	27.5
Error-tolerance		
Sense of fear and hesitation (Aspect A)	82.5	17.5
Apprehension of being humiliated and ridiculed (Aspect B)	77.5	22.5
Mean	80	20
Self-confidence	80	20
Extraversion/Introversion		
Individual work	50	50
Non-argumentative position	70	30
Difficulty in expressing thoughts	77.5	22.5
Mean	65.83	34.17
Total Sum	379.16	120.84
Mean	75.83	24.16

Values represent percentages

not. The second one is about teacher's stamina. The notion of stamina can be better understood through two interconnected concepts of time and energy a teacher employs for teaching purposes. In other words, first, the amount of time teachers allot in advance to study enough necessary sources, techniques and strategies to utilize in the classroom and get themselves prepared beforehand. Second, the amounts of energy teachers spend in the classroom to patiently follow up the actual matter of teaching in general and correct the students in particular. Four questions were developed to survey the characteristic features of the majority of Iranian EFL teachers (Appendix 1 for the second part of the first questionnaire-teacher variable). Since, the concept of proficiency is subtle and important, the researchers designed two questions to study this attribute. As a result, questions ten and eleven were devoted to this concept and their total scales were taken as indicator of teacher's proficiency. The two last questions (thirteen and fourteen) surveyed the feature of stamina with the aid of its integral notions which were time and energy. The teachers' responses to these four questions are in fact reflective assertions of what they figure out as real and true within the educational setting in reference to the abilities of teachers. Besides, they are actually invisible confessions teachers make, possessing clear and important signals for teacher education programs and policies in our country.

Three-fourths of the teachers believed that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers have low proficiency in English language. The findings of this part, place the teacher in the category that Marton tends to call teacher with poor proficiency. As one of the most important implications of this study, existence of teachers with low

Table 2: The summarized results of the beliefs in attributes of the majority of Iranian EFL teachers

Attributes	High	Low
Proficiency		
Proficiency in general	17.5	82.5
Proficiency in particular/practice	32.5	67.5
Mean	25	75
Stamina		
Time	27.5	72.5
Energy	42.5	57.5
Mean	35	65

Values represent percentages, percentages have been rounded to the whole number and thus add up to 100

proficiency or in other words educating and training teachers with poor proficiency definitely do not seem to be an index of a successful educational program. This fact should be taken into account that there is in fact weaknesses and shortcoming in the teacher education and training program in Iran. These limitations, weak points and inadequacies should be diagnosed and removed as soon as possible. Without doubt, one of the Achilles' heels of an educational system is to rely on the teachers with poor and low proficiency. The diagnosis of the deficiencies and inefficiencies of the educational system and specifically the teachers as leading figures, is a must in a remedial and constructive plan. Total 65% of respondents believed that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers have poor stamina. It is another challenging issue that needs to be considered carefully in a teacher education program. In sum, the majority of respondents confirmed the fact that most of the Iranian EFL teachers seem to be with low proficiency and poor stamina (Table 2).

Several contextual factors: The two above examined contextual factors demanded such a kind of thorough analysis and exploration. This is so much due to the complex and multi-faceted nature of these factors. The other relevant contextual dynamics are the intensity of teaching, size of classes and level of language study. On the basis of a general observation of a typical classroom, it is not hard to capture appropriate information regarding these factors.

Specifically speaking, Marton (1988) considers a program as an intensive teaching course in which from twenty to over 30 h per week are assigned to classroom instruction. Since, in the Iranian educational system the language teaching program has been designed for a long-term period, it is evident that the existing curriculum has been developed to seek a non-intensive teaching course. As for the size of the classes, it seems that we, with about over twenty students in a typical classroom, have got large classes. The level of language manipulated for teaching and accordingly corresponding to the level

Table 3: Learner and contextual factors marked with respect to favoring the choice of the communicative and reconstructive strategies and also in Iranian educational system

Factors	Communicative strategy	Reconstructive strategy	Iranian educational setting
A. Learner factors			
Personality/affective variables			
(a) The careful type	-	+	+
(b) The adventurous type	+	0	-
Age			
(a) Children	+	+	+
(b) Adults	$\left\{ \begin{matrix} + \\ - \end{matrix} \right\}$ (depending on personality type)	+	+
Aptitude			
(a) High-aptitude learners	+	+	+
(b) Low-aptitude learners	0	+	+
B. Contextual factors			
Intensity of teaching			
(a) Intensive teaching	+	+	-
(b) Non-intensive teaching	-	+	+
Size of class			
(a) Small classes	+	+	-
(b) Large classes	$\left\{ \begin{matrix} - \\ + \end{matrix} \right\}$ (depending on whether group work is used)	+	+
Level of language study			
(a) Beginning learners	+	+	+
(b) Intermediate and advanced learners	+	+	+
Teacher characteristics			
(a) Teacher with poor proficiency	-	+	+
(b) Teacher with poor stamina	0	+	+

of language utilized for language learning, seems to range from beginning to optimistically (upper-) intermediate.

In the Table 3, the plus sign marks a given factor as positively recommended, i.e. as distinctly favoring the choice of that strategy; the minus sign marks it negatively as being counter-indication concerning the implementation of that strategy and zero marks the factor as neutral.

By comparing the proposed outline of the identified features of relevant variables in the Iranian educational system with the characteristics of the two sketches of both communicative and reconstructive strategies, the reconstructive strategy appears to best suit Iranian educational system (Table 2). Taking the factors of language aptitude, age and level of language study as being generally equal in both strategies, the crucial roles of learner, teacher, intensity of teaching and size of classes come to shape the focus of a critical study. The factors of the intensity of teaching and size of classes are among the principles determined and developed by the responsible authorities in the ministry of education and offered within a nation-wide curriculum. Those who devise policies for the profession of language teaching in the country generally establish the limits and specifications of these factors beforehand. Thanks to the long-run teaching program, continuously from guidance school to the end of pre-university and average number

of students attending a class, it is so much obvious that Iranian educational system seeks to pursue a non-intensive teaching with a large class in terms of the number of students. That is why the researchers found it crucial and vital to go through the other factors, i.e., teacher and learner variables to be reasonably identified so that they can safely judge upon the appropriateness of one of the strategies to be utilized. As a result, in regards to the couple influential and vital contextual factors, that is, teacher and learner, the adoption of the reconstructive strategy (or even would-be proposed strategies sharing common characteristics with the reconstructive strategy) is in fact a strategic and technical step in the process of decision-and-policy making toward developing a programmatic and speculative plan for teaching English language in the country. The diagnosis of the characteristics of the majority of Iranian EFL learners and most of the Iranian EFL teachers reveals the fact that a communicative strategy in particular (and communicative approach in general) does not seem to be a successful program in the country on the basis of the current conditions.

On the basis of the total score, 68% of the respondents pointed out the fact that, at least with regard to the present condition, the specific techniques of communicative strategy won't be practical, possible and successful in the Iranian educational setting. On the other hand, 66.75% of the respondents believed that the above

Table 4: Frequencies and cumulative percent on the success of each technique (communicative/reconstructive strategy)

Items (Techniques)	Communicative strategy		Reconstructive strategy	
	S	U	S	U
1	25	75	47.5	52.5
2	7.5	92.5	57.5	42.5
3	10	90	60	40
4	7.5	92.5	77.5	22.5
5	10	90	90	10
6	27.5	72.5	75	25
7	75	25	55	45
8	65	35	70	30
9	32.5	67.5	62.5	37.5
10	60	40	72.5	27.5
Total sum	320	680	667.5	332.5
Mean	32.0	68.0	66.75	33.25

Values represent percentages. Percentages have been rounded to the whole number and thus add up to 100. S = collapsed scores for relative successfulness and successful; U = collapsed scores for little successfulness and unsuccessful

mentioned techniques of reconstructive strategy will be practical, possible and successful in the Iranian educational setting (Table 4).

Considering the obtained results out of the second questionnaire, not only do the results complement the findings of the first questionnaire but also warrant the prospective use of reconstructive teaching framework as an appropriate strategy. The results indicate that over 66% of practicing teachers found the reconstructive techniques possible, practical and successful to be implemented in the classroom with regards to the current condition of the Iranian educational setting, considering all intervening variables (teacher, learner and whole educational system). On the other hand, just 32% of the teachers stated that the communicative teaching techniques are appropriate, practical and successful in the educational system. A high percent of agreement with the practicality and successfulness of reconstructive techniques and tasks is the other side of the coin of this investigation that guarantees the success of this teaching program.

CONCLUSION

The core function of this study was a postmethod-oriented endeavor to arrive at a reasonable conclusion concerning the adoption of the most appropriate teaching strategy out of the strategic framework proposed by Marton (1988), best suiting Iranian educational system. In doing so, two teaching strategies, that is, communicative strategy and reconstructive strategy were selected to be investigated. The pedagogically ultimate purpose of both strategies is maintained to be similar. They both set up a process through which L2 competence is supposed to

successfully develop. The superiority of any of them over another is entirely subject to the particularities of the context. The particularity of the context is interconnected with the parameters of possibility and practicality as well. To put another way, in case the contextual factors are most consistent with the particularities of a particular teaching/learning program and proposal, the program will successfully be possible and practical to get well actualized and accordingly develop the learner's L2 competence.

Specifically speaking, in parallel with the core function of the study, the underlying objective this study sought to accomplish was to diagnose and analyze the characteristic features and particularities of the Iranian educational system through fairly comprehensive exploration of two imperative contextual factors, that is, learner and teacher. This critical diagnosis of the distinctive features of the existing teaching/learning context is precisely and hypothetically consistent with the parameter of particularity in the postmethod paradigm. The possibility and practicality of an educational scheme will be in fact dependent upon the appraisal and identification of the particularities. As a result, the focal and main line of this exploratory-analytical research was assigned to the quest for assessment and detection of the particularities (characteristic features of contextual elements).

Bearing in mind that, on the basis of dependable theoretical, experimental and experiential knowledge, Marton had already specified conditions and factors required for adoption and implementation of a particular strategy, this investigation adopted a procedure to identify the context-specific and local-sensitive conditions and factors existing in Iranian educational system. The results and findings indicated that reconstructive strategy mostly meshes with the current particularities of the educational context. For example, the majority of Iranian learners were found to be classified as careful types of learner. Besides, most of the teachers were found to have low proficiency and poor stamina. The reconstructive strategy seems to be the best strategy that can be initiated and proceed gradually and successfully in a way it compensates the weaknesses of the most of practicing teachers and be in harmony with the general psychological make-up of the majority of the students.

In closing, primarily in line with the postmethod paradigm seeking to propose and adopt a practical and possible approach on the basis of the realities and particularities of the teaching and learning context and secondly based on the idea that now it is high time to appreciate the postmethod condition, the researchers intended to carry out a research to work out a postmethod

scheme so as to judge upon the selection and adoption of a teaching strategy in a comparative analysis of two strategies proposed by Marton (1988). Moving along a postmethod course to reach a logical and practical conclusion in order to prefer employment of one strategy, the researchers knowingly intended to take a calculated and research-oriented measure to theoretically keep pace with the sharp and heightened awareness currently prevailing in the profession of language teaching pedagogy, that is, postmethod condition and also make an in-depth and detailed analysis of the teaching/learning context in the Iranian educational setting so as to capture invaluable information for the success of English language teaching/learning program in the country. This theoretically heightened awareness concerning postmethod condition as introduced briefly in the section of literature review as well as tailoring precisely the facets of this paradigm in practice as actualized through the body of this research are in fact a must to be grasped by policy makers and authorities in the domain of Iranian educational system and by the practicing teachers as well. Considering the majority as the criterion and decisive factor, with respect to the type of learners (careful students) and teachers (with poor proficiency and stamina), a non-intensive teaching curriculum and large amount of classes, the best strategy that can correspond with all these conditions and yet result in the successful development of L2 competence was detected to be reconstructive strategy.

Pedagogical implications: One of the most significant implications of this research lies in the thorough and meticulous analysis of more facets of a teaching and learning context. In order for a teaching/learning scheme to be successful, dimensions of particularity, possibility and practicality of the educational system must be explored. First, researchers play a crucial part in the actualization of a practical postmethod program by conducting pedagogically in-depth investigation of the available context to scrutinize the central components and relevant aspects of the educational setting. Studies as such establish the theoretical and curricular scaffolding of a teaching/learning program via which postmethod teachers and postmethod learners know evidently their duties and responsibilities. Second, practicing teachers play a significant role in the successful manifestation of the postmethod pedagogy. Specifically speaking, a teacher has to do action research (mini-research) to attain required information concerning the characteristics of the learners (at least students of the context in which he/she teaches), weaknesses and shortcomings of the available syllabuses, short-term and long-term educational objectives, educational macro/micro-policies and all relevant minor and major effective factors. In this way,

teachers must reflect upon issues in the social, cultural and political context in which teaching/learning occurs. Teachers' ideas and information developed from critical observation, experimental mini-research, experiential knowledge, rational evaluation and analysis of the pertinent intervening factors in the education should be scanned, rescanned and tested through the practice of the teaching.

Teachers and learners are vital contextual variables in an educational setting that have not been yet meticulously and appropriately investigated with respect to the particular context in which they practice. This study attempted to step onto this ignored filed of study and explore and analyze Iranian typical teachers and learners in a systematic manner. This exploratory investigation in fact tried to open a new horizon in this regard so as to let the particularities of these contextual factors be better discovered and grasped. This pointed and intelligent awareness of the context aids teachers and learners know their weaknesses and deficiencies so that they can take planned actions and devise remedial sketches to guarantee their success in the profession of language pedagogy. On the other hand, policy-makers and authorities in the educational profession can take best advantage of solid theoretical and research-based findings out of critical studies of the teaching/learning contexts as such to consciously develop a practical curriculum in proportion to the particularities of the educational setting.

Appendix 1:

Learner and Teacher Variable

Dear teacher, the present questionnaire is supposed to conduct a descriptive-analytical survey on the state of educational structure of the country in the mould of this opinion poll. In this way, it attempts to study several factors effective and connected with educational system so as to be able to present an efficient and useful strategy for teaching English language in the country. This questionnaire has been developed in four parts (variables of student and teacher-communicative and reconstructive strategies). Teachers are expected to rate the items on the basis of their experiential knowledge, observations and reasonable evaluation and analysis. Meticulousness and precision in responding definitely helps the researcher in drawing a realistic conclusion and judicious evaluation.

With special thanks

Full name (optional): ...
city/town...

Place of teaching:

Teaching experience: ...

Gender: ...

Please, indicate the degree of your agreement with the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate column. It is worth mentioning that in evaluating the variables, factors and proposed issues, the majority is as criterion and decisive factor, therefore the special and exceptional cases are not in question.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

*** Learner Variable**

- 1 The student feels afraid and finds himself vulnerable and weak on expressing himself in the target language (English); as a result, instead of speaking in the target language, he prefers to remain silent.
- 2 The student, due to the lack of adequate and perfect command of target language (English), has inhibitions and feels concerned for venturing into expressing his thoughts and feelings in English language; as a result, the core of his personality tends to use and rely on the mother language (Farsi).
- 3 In the process of learning the target language (English), a new identity is constructed under the influence of such a learning of language – language ego. It places student in a conservative and even defensive position; thus it doesn't allow him to express himself easily and without susceptibility.
- 4 Students, in classroom activities (answering the questions, solving the exercises and expression of thoughts) are less willing to take a risk; as a result, they prefer to wait for the others to be volunteered to reply and then after hearing volunteers' responses, they make their mind to respond.
- 5 The student feels afraid of committing errors on answering the questions and he does not kind of tolerate such a condition; hence he hesitates over the responding (often after the others) and attempts to rehearse the answer in order for ensuring the accuracy.
- 6 The student prefers not to take a risk and keeps silent with respect to the belief that committing errors on using the target language (speaking, writing, reading and listening) might cause others to humiliate and make a fool of him.
- 7 Our students have no profound and deep self-confidence of their real capacities in learning the target language (English). As a result, in the educational context, they have not adequate and necessary self-confidence to function and interact effectively and in a goal-oriented manner with the teachers and other students to prove their abilities and the competence of their talents.

- 8 The students, in the classroom situation, prefer to work individually and alone rather than group work and interacting with others (their prevailing assumption is that the degree of efficiency and successfulness is higher in individual work)
- 9 While discussing about a topic (or getting into an argument), students prefer to remain silent (hoping the issue will resolve itself) and as a result they don't participate in expressing their thoughts and getting into the argument with the teachers and the class.
- 10 When tending to put their important thoughts and ideas into words in the classroom, they don't do it so fairly easily and find it difficult; as a result they remain silent.

*** Teacher Variable**

- 11 Our teachers possess a high proficiency (near-native or native-like) in the target language (English) in a way that the accuracy and correctness of their functions stands at a very high level, for example in pronouncing the words, stress, intonation and use of correct grammatical structures and proper lexical items.
- 12 Teachers, relying on their high proficiency in the target language (English), are ready for handle any unpredictable and emergency communicative activities and are able to manage them successfully and satisfactorily.
- 13 In order to teach successfully and implement pertinent principles and techniques, our teachers spend much time to study and get themselves prepared before attending the classroom.
- 14 Our teachers, by spending much energy in the classroom, are able to patiently follow up their teaching and correct all students' errors.

Appendix 2

Communicative Strategy

Please, indicate the degree of your agreement with the successfulness, practicality and possibility of the following techniques by placing a tick in the appropriate column. It is worth mentioning that in evaluating the variables, factors and proposed issues, the majority is as criterion and decisive factor, therefore the special and exceptional cases are not in question.

Unsuccessful, Little Successfulness, Relative Successfulness, Successful

- 1 Most of the class time should be spent on speaking activities.
- 2 Only the target language should be used in the class.
- 3 Most of the speaking activities practiced in class should involve spontaneous exchanges in real and unplanned discourse. In other words, the modeled language use and dialogues should not be utilized for communicative language use.
- 4 The focus of all classroom activities is on negotiation of meaning and exchange of information and not on the language and its forms.
- 5 The structure of the target language should not be taught explicitly. Therefore, there are no grammar explanations and exercises, no drills of any kind, no grammar tests.
- 6 Speaking activities should be structured in such a way that students can overcome an information gap or solve a problem. For instance, they may be given a set of maps and timetables and told to find the most economical way of reaching a certain destination by a certain fixed time.
- 7 Games and recreational activities should be used in the classroom (role-plays, simulations,...).
- 8 Class activities should be organized in a way that get students emotionally-mentally involved and they can express their own ideas, values, feelings and experiences.
- 9 As far as meaning is transferred (message is comprehensible), teacher's feed back is positive and there is no need of occurred errors. But in case errors make a block in effective communication and stream of meaning-transfer process, teacher's feedback is negative and the error should be corrected.
- 10 Teacher, for correcting an error, uses a special technique (expansion). He should repeat the learner's erroneous utterance in a completely correct structure with minor additional changes. For example,
Teacher: Where did you go on Monday?
Student: I go cinema.
Teacher: Oh, I see. You went to the cinema on Monday.

Unsuccessful, Little Successfulness, Relative Successfulness, Successful

- 1 A large amount of activities should be done by student outside class (often at home).
- 2 When student uses a wrong structure, the teacher quickly lets him know of his error and asks him to self-correct the error immediately and seriously.
- 3 In case student is not able to self-correct the error, the teacher should certainly correct it. In general, all students' errors (major or minor) should be corrected.
- 4 A specific time during the class should be devoted to teach and explain pedagogical grammar rules explicitly.
- 5 The teacher should place a special emphasis on his pronunciation because he is the main source of modeling and learning of correct pronunciation in the classroom.
- 6 In the beginning stages of learning, students are asked to read or listen to a text (very simple and short) in advance and then reproduce a part or whole of it in the class by heart. They are required to get themselves prepared for answering to would-be raised questions from the text or even the translation of some words or phrases (English to Farsi and vice versa).
- 7 Students are asked to apply only the structures and sentences out of the source text, of course in a completely correct form. In this way, the use of compensating strategies such as communication strategies in order to evade applying pertinent structures and phrases should be avoided.
- 8 A text is given to students to study it well in advance (with a tape or the text is read aloud by teacher to assure the correct pronunciation of words), then teacher provides sentences in Farsi (these sentences are novel combinations constructed with the aid of elements of the source text) and students are asked to translate the new sentences in English. The other techniques are the use of visual tools (image – film) to prompt students to create novel recombinations in response to them.
- 9 A text (fairly long) is given to students and they are asked to re-narrate or give a summary of it in the class. They have to use novel utterances and phrases in summarizing or re-narrating the source text.
- 10 A text (long) is given to students in advance and then in the class, they are asked to: retell the source text from a different viewpoint, retell the source text to another situation (for example, changing a dialogue in a railway station to a conversation at an

Appendix 3

Reconstructive Strategy

Please, indicate the degree of your agreement with the successfulness, practicality and possibility of the following techniques by placing a tick in the appropriate column. It is worth mentioning that in evaluating the variables, factors and proposed issues, the majority is as criterion and decisive factor, therefore the special and exceptional cases are not in question.

airport), discuss about the subject of text, adapting his personal experiences and change the rhetorical structure and functional type of the source text to retell it in another mould (for instance, a narrative text can be expanded and transformed into a dramatic activity [role-play]).

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