Original Article

A Qualitative Study of Experience in Forming Teachers' Cognition on the Concept of Language Noticing

Zahra Zargaran[1], Mohammad Khatib[2,], Parviz Birjandi[1], Massood Yazdanimoghadam[3]*

[1] Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

[2] Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran,

[3] Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Garmsar, Iran

Abstract

Awareness, in language learning, is a focused area of debate encompassing many different aspects of language teaching research, especially that of grammar. Although the learner's awareness has been widely taken into account, noticing, which embraces the meaning of awareness, is something that lacks empirical data and literature in teacher's cognition when it comes to second language teaching studies. Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to explore the teachers' theoretical and practical cognition in conceptualizing and using noticing in teaching and practicing language; in addition, the congruency between teachers' theoretical beliefs and actual practices were investigated. To this end, a total of 30 novice and experienced teachers were interviewed and the role of teaching experience as an overarching concept affecting teachers' beliefs and performance was detected by using constant comparative analysis. Findings revealed seven conceptual themes out of the collected data as pedagogical effects, type of input, skill type, when to notice, noticing techniques, time allocation, and measurement. Then, six teachers from the same sample group were observed for possible inconsistencies in their teaching practices and their cognition about the concept. The discrepancies between the teachers' stated beliefs and actual practices revealed that teaching experience has a relative impact on teacher's performance.

Keywords: Language Awareness, Language Form, Noticing, Teachers' Cognition, Teaching Experience

Corresponding Author's E- mail: Mkhatib27@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

For many years, attentive input, the input whose language form is markedly noticed, has come to grips as a building block for input internalization and the language learning process. It dates back to Schmidt (1990), who coined the term noticing, a proposal on the substantially important place of awareness in language learning. The noticing hypothesis was simply defined by Schmidt (1990) as awareness and it opened up new horizons for other theories and hypotheses such as input enhancement (Smith, 1993), the techniques that teachers can use to make language features salient to language learners, and output hypothesis (Swain, 1985), stating that language learning occurs if learners encounter their gap in linguistic knowledge when producing the language. No matter what is the focused area, input or, output, each main concern is attention to language form. The strong motto of all the above-mentioned hypotheses is mainly awareness which seems to be highly required to change input into the intake. Although the noticing hypothesis has been the target of the investigation, integrating the importance of language learners' attention in learning language form, the teacher's ecological role has been completely ignored in this area of studies.

In educational ecology, all participants share ideas and interactively affect what goes on in the educational context. Therefore, teachers' cognition in theorizing or using teaching practices in the classroom can also bridge the gap of recognizing influential factors in learning processes. Teacher cognition began to occur as a key concept in teacher education research from a century ago (Richards, 2011) with a more marked place in the 2000s. Borg (2011), as a researcher in this field, defines teacher cognition as teachers' mindset that is the thinking, the knowledge, and beliefs teachers take with them to the actual classroom. He further states that teachers' cognition directly can change and modify their metacognition and practical decision-making in teaching and is truly the reflection of many other personal, educational and contextual factors consciously or subconsciously active in teachers' repertoires (Borg, 2007).

One of the undeniably related factors to forming teachers' cognition is teaching experience which is plainly defined as the number of teaching years (Tsui, 2005). However, teaching experience acts as the teachers' level of productivity (Carter, 1985) and its overarching place in teaching practicum should not be ignored. However, this study takes the former definition as the operational definition of the concept.

What makes this study a revolution in language pedagogy is the new lens through which language noticing has been looked upon. A teacher-oriented insight would make a more justifiable approach to integrate language noticing in language pedagogy and enhance teachers' level of awareness in understanding and using language noticing beyond what has been prescribed by scholars in this field. Exploring teachers thought about noticing can certainly enhance the teaching effects of this concept in language. In other words, language awareness and noticing appeal for more pedagogical tenets rather than mere studies on tasks and learners. If language pedagogy is a system of different components, the outcome of learning should necessarily be examined via all members and elements.

Therefore, this study aimed at widening up the scope of research on language awareness by focusing on teachers' cognition hence shedding light on the role of teaching experience to take track of any theoretical or practical beliefs underpinning the perception of noticing concept in their repertoire.

2. Literature Review

2. 1. Noticing in Second Language Teaching

There is compelling evidence confirming the marked role of input in second language learning (Gass et al., 1998; Schmidt, 1990). However, this importance is target to a host of factors creating varieties of theories and hypotheses whose overriding impression of related studies have made vast theoretical and practical literature on enriching input to boost learners' intake. An immediately relevant concept that has been hypothesized to be effective in activating students' attention to language form is proposed by Schmidt (1990). Noticing is contributed to language rule internalization and to the attention which language learners draw to the language forms and meaning (Batstone, 1996). It is argued that for learning to occur, what must be attended to and noticed is not the input in its extreme sense but certain features which are relevant to the target system instead. However, the more the input is noticed, the better it can be understood, and the more precisely it could be elaborated for other processes to be stored in the mind (Schmidt, 1990).

Using noticing to raise students' consciousness is not completely new but the lens through which language learning has been assessed is extremely limited to learners' attention and the type of language form, specifically grammar. The spectrum of language

learning studies in using attention to language form starts from very simple studies targeting the learning outcome in using input enhancement (Mahvelati & Mukundan, 2012; Rezvani & Ketabi, 2011). Although other research in this area has given insight into many interesting findings such as the investigation of different techniques of input enhancement (Isumi, 2002; kyung, 2012; Lee & Huang, 2008), the examination of noticing techniques in the increasing learners' attention for learning various grammatical structures (Dastjerdi, 2011; Jabbarpoor & Abdollah zadeh, 2012) or finding out effective noticing techniques to enhance input internalization (Asadi, Biria & Sedaghat, 2014; Sarkhosh et al., 2013), there are still cloudy aspects of knowledge underlining how teachers take benefit from noticing concept to enhance language learning outcomes and what shapes teachers' cognition about noticing and its conceptual definition in language teaching.

Voluminous research on using noticing techniques in the form of input enhancement or consciousness-raising activities has produced an assortment of data excluding teachers' status and beliefs. Therefore, a problem that allegedly becomes more apparent is considering teachers' knowledge and beliefs to conceptualize this slippery concept as only 'noticing is awareness' to a more theoretical position in second language teaching. This research investigated the theoretical and practical conceptualization of noticing and examined the congruency between teachers' stated beliefs and actual classroom practices in using noticing to teach/practice language form where teaching experience played a crucial role. Therefore, the following questions were designed to be answered:

1. What beliefs do novice and experienced teachers hold in conceptualizing noticing?
2. To what extent are teachers' beliefs about the concept of noticing consistent with their observed practice?

2.2. Teacher's Cognition

If we take the ecology of teaching into account, teachers are the participants whose personal characteristics in line with other socio-contextual features can create a dramatic change in the teaching practice and learning outcome. Therefore, the way teachers form their thinking and beliefs regarding their teaching methodology would be of great concern.

The very first definition for teacher cognition includes what teachers' think, know, and believe (Borg, 2011) which was later revised to a broader term including "constructs such as attitudes, identities, and emotions, in recognition of the fact that these are all

aspects of the unobservable dimension of teaching" (Borg, 2011, p. 11). According to Borg (2011), teachers are active, context-sensitive decision-makers who personalize their teaching practice and infuse their identity and attitude plus their knowledge and thinking into their practice. Although divergent conceptual meanings are used to draw the image of teacher cognition (Borg, 2011), the core of this concept lies in personal attitudes and experience of practice which can create a multidimensional concept.

Many studies have concentrated their attention on investigating teachers' cognition but the core of these studies has been focused on teaching grammar or teachers' grammar knowledge (Andrews, 1999; Bartels, 1999; Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000). However, considering grammar in exploring teachers' cognition has been limited to the very general status of teachers' views and beliefs on their grammar knowledge or its necessity of instruction without taking a specific ground towards the technical presentation of grammar in the classroom. Therefore, this investigation aims to discover the underlining layers of teachers' trains of thought on what the concept of noticing is and how it is practically reflected in their practicum going beyond the sole focus on grammar.

2.3. Teaching Experience

One of the undeniably effective factors in determining the degree and type of teacher cognition is teaching experience. The inclusion of experience as an influential factor in human resource policies and promotion decisions is so highlighted since experience entails knowledge and skills needed for the productivity and qualification of workers (Rice, 2010). Although experience is a multifaceted area in teaching, it is simply defined as the number of teaching years (Tsui, 2005). Benner (1982), yet another researcher, knows experience as the frequency of exposure to enough real situations to recognize the situational components.

Experience is a context-effective entity and cannot be overgeneralized simply without considering the context-bound features of the place and participants that are the ecology of the classroom can shape, modify and even change the effects of the experience. Moreover, gaining experience of what is done might be consciously or subconsciously formed and it can become a part of teaching repertoire which is freely available to teachers

automatically or cause the implementation of the experience with the commonly shared features of the teaching context.

Therefore, how the experience is shaped and affects teaching practices is of crucial importance since it can expand the scope of knowledge on experience-related performance in teaching. Although the solid knowledge on the nature of teaching experience resumes a general understanding of its place, overt explanations on how experience can affect teacher cognition in conceptualizing language noticing is a slice of reality still in grey. Thus, this study focused on the role of experience in using noticing techniques in teaching/practicing language form and provided pathways to complementary insights into the difference between experienced and novice teachers while using noticing techniques.

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants

This study examined teachers' cognition in conceptualizing noticing theoretically and practically. The target population was both experienced and novice teachers teaching English in the private sector in Ahvaz, Iran. All teachers were chosen from private institutions to control the contextual factors.

30 experienced and novice teachers participated in this study, 15 experienced and 15 novices were randomly selected from a stratified population who taught in different language schools in various city districts to control sociocultural effects reflecting on teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. The teachers were both male and female participants and their age groups were between 23 and 48. One of the main factors considered in this study was teachers' years of teaching. It is usually suggested that teachers engaged in the teaching career for more than five years are grouped as experienced (Tsui, 2005). Therefore, the teacher selection was carried out through purposeful sampling to prevent inserting any unnecessary anti-validity factors into the research. In addition, as the research took a general view of the process of noticing conceptualization, the teachers were selected from different language schools located in different districts in Ahvaz, Iran.

The teachers' language proficiency was controlled as language knowledge would affect the construction of the teachers' beliefs. The researcher is the manager of studies of a language school and has had more than 17 years of teaching experience in private

language schools thus she thoroughly knew about the conventional teacher hiring criteria. One of the main selection features in private language schools is passing an entrance exam where teachers should take a proficiency test to show their ability in language knowledge which would confirm their language qualification in language teaching. Therefore, one of the main sources of extraneous factors that might have affected the validity of the study, teachers' language knowledge, was controlled.

3. 2. Instruments

To identify the teachers' cognition on the concept of noticing, a semi-structured interview was created in which the questions were generated based on the answers given to an open-ended questionnaire by a similar teacher population. In other words, answers given to the open-ended questionnaire created the basis for writing the interview questions. The semi-structured interview was used as it allowed for more freedom and flexibility to respondents and the encouragement to open-ended answers (Borg, 2008). The interview questions were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor to assess the validity of the questions by checking the correct wording and sequencing of the questions. This semi-structured interview included eight items targeting what the teachers thought, knew, and believed about using noticing in language teaching classrooms when teaching/practicing a language. Items one and two were prompted to allow the teachers to share their real attitudes towards noticing with the researcher and to concentrate on the practical underlining of their beliefs about the noticing concept. In this case, the researcher wrote some closed questions as prompts to the open-ended questions to guide the interviewees for more active participation in responding to the open-ended questions. Items eight and five were more elaborating and tapped into the teachers' verbalization of their classroom practices which could extend the researcher's view on the unobservable theoretical knowledge.

To generate the interview questions, some organizational categories taken from the literature were used to minimize the etic of data collection and interpretation. Using organizational categories included using the categories anticipated before the data collection (Arey et al., 2014) which in this study was born out of some grey areas in noticing hypothesis and its practical uses found in the related literature. The benefit of this approach was that the data would not be categorized based on the etic of research and the

researcher's interpretation could stay at its minimum level. To assess the validity of the coding result, the researcher used intercoder reliability and asked a trained peer with sufficient experience in data coding to check the data analysis process and the coded results. There was about more than 90% of agreement on the generated codes and themes.

The observation was another qualitative source of the data collection in this research. Teacher cognition research always opted for using observation as a complementary step to data collection and analysis, especially when congruency between the data obtained from the interview section and unobservable beliefs, could come to assess with the application of data collected from the observation phase of studies. This study was aimed to explore any theoretical and practical relations between what was verbalized and what was observed, thus a semi-structured observation checklist was created based on the analysis of the interview-based data. This semi-structured approach was deliberately used to check the stated beliefs and unstated beliefs of the teachers since the practicum was undoubtedly shadowed by many internal and external factors to the teachers' thought process, knowledge, and performances.

Therefore, six teachers (three experienced & three novices) from the same sample of the teachers who participated in the interview were also later observed and the created observation checklist plus an observation sheet with a non-predetermined list of actions was used to trace any missing information in the interviews and the observation checklist. The observation checklist was made based on the analytical data obtained from the interview so that the type, frequency, and time of occurrence for each teaching practice were noted.

3. 3. Data Analysis Procedures

To discover teachers' cognition on conceptualizing the term *noticing* in their theoretical knowledge and practical teaching, a purposeful stratified population of thirty experienced and novice teachers were selected. A semi-structured interview was created to explore teachers' cognition of what notice is and how it can be implemented in the actual classroom. To this end, the questions of the interview were written based on the answers a similar teacher population had given to an open-ended questionnaire on the same topic for related purposes.

Implicating a semi-structured interview could promote the quality of collected data since it gives more freedom and flexibility to the participants, the interviewer, and the interviewees (Dornyei, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). All thirty teachers were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher conducted the interview herself as she is certified as an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) ex-speaking examiner and knows about the factors that can question the validity and reliability of the interview results. The interview questions were checked by an expert (the researcher's supervisor) for correct wording and the sequencing of the questions to agree with their reliability.

The qualitative approach to this study sought to theorize teachers' cognition on the concept of noticing, therefore, the data collected from the interview section was analyzed by the constant comparison analysis, one of the techniques of the grounded theory which is systematic data coding (Opdenakhar, 2006); the benefit of grounded theory analysis is the inductive analysis of data which could construct concepts and result in forming a theory (Arey et al., 2014). The reason for using constant comparison analysis was the researcher's ability to compare each code with the previous one to look for similarities and differences. Then the obtained themes were implemented in the observation section to prepare the observation checklist.

To complete the interpretation of the interview results and discover any mismatch between the teachers' stated beliefs and actual practices in conceptualizing and using noticing in teaching/practicing language, a semi-structured observation checklist was created to trace any mismatch and explore any unvoiced state of beliefs to be revealed practically as teacher cognition would act both consciously and unconsciously (Borg, 2007).

Six teachers were selected out of the thirty teachers who participated in the first part of this study, (of whom, 15 were experienced & 15 were novice teachers) who taught in private language schools in various districts of Ahvaz, Iran. Each teacher was observed for one hour each session and to maintain the reliability of the observation result, each teacher was observed for three separate but sequential sessions which means the total time set to observe each teacher was three hours. The researcher was the participant-observer. She preferred to do the observation herself, first as she is a trained observer and, second, for her familiarity with the observation topic.

4. Result

To discover the teacher's cognitive status of conceptualizing noticing, novice and experienced teachers were interviewed and the answers were analyzed using constant comparative analysis. The answers were coded and some themes were generated out of them. For the second part of the study, the observation results were analyzed and showed a discrepancy in teachers' cognition and practice. The result revealed that although novice and experienced teachers had different beliefs in many aspects, they shared some minor points on the definition of the noticing concept. However, their practice endured a diverting point of verbalized cognition.

4. 1. Differences in Novice and Experienced Teachers' Cognition on Noticing Concept

For the novice teachers noticing was pedagogically effective in *crowded classes* and was a *boost in learning* by highlighting the important parts, while for the experienced teachers three main pedagogically influential roles of noticing were *increasing learners' critical thinking*, *language internalization*, and its use as *direct feedback* to correct learners' language errors. The explanation lies in the managerial strategies and metacognitive awareness of teachers affected by teaching experience.

"M.B (an experienced teacher): I use noticing to make learners aware of the grammar and help them to understand the grammar because if the learner is not conscious about the form, they will not learn it"

"S.M (an experienced teacher): noticing can bring benefits to reluctant students by making some conscious challenges in language learning:

"D.A (a novice teacher): I think explaining the grammar and vocabulary is useful in crowded classes when the teacher cannot use indirect ways to teach"

Another main distinction in the teachers' train of thought under the effect of teaching experience was the *type of input* that was to be noticed. Novice teachers believed that noticing was mostly required in *authentic* and *abstract input* of which language is hard to digest but has a simple function. For experienced teachers, 'grammar' and 'meaning' were the two centers of attention to form.

"S.K (an experienced teacher): I use explanation and other types of noticing to make my learners notice the grammar and clarify the meaning of new vocabulary"

"B.P (a novice teacher): I use noticing when my learners have comprehension problems such as in native speakers' presentation when we listen to a recording"

There was another borderline between what novice and experienced teachers accounted for the concept of noticing. Non-experienced teachers thought that *skill type* would change the kind of noticing application; in other words, differences in noticing application came along with the different type of skills, whereas, teachers with more than five years of teaching experience focused on the *noticing time* that is when to notice was determined by skill type.

"S.R (an experienced teacher): I don't specify noticing to a particular skill, I look for the time needed to use it"

"B.P(a novice teacher): I use noticing if I teach vocabulary, grammar or listening; I think some skills need more noticing:

For the novice teachers, games and finding/circling were two input enhancement techniques; however, for the experienced teachers, drilling (a method of teaching which means repetition), using gestures, and underling (specific words) was on the top list of consciousness-raising activities.

"Z.O(an experienced teacher): when I want to make my students attentive to grammar, I usually underline the word or part"

"S.M (an experienced teacher): ……. for example, when I am teaching past simple and I want to show past I use my hand to show it is not, for now, you know what I mean?......"

"B.P (a novice teacher): When I teach grammar, I use different colors……"

The time of noticing was another generated theme that distinguished teachers' cognitive status on defining and using the concept of noticing. For teachers with less than five years of experience, the type of language form to be noticed and language internalization time were two key factors affecting the time of using noticing techniques. However, it seems that teaching experience took the timing of noticing into account according to the task-dependent and meaning-oriented themes that is the experienced teachers' determination of noticing time was dependent on the type of task and when the task was meaning-focused.

"L.T (an experienced teacher): .... for example, my student does not understand the function of a grammar use, this is the time I think I need to make it clear and activate my learner's consciousness"

"M. A (a novice teacher): I always use noticing when I teach grammar....... If learners don't understand the rule, they will not use it correctly"

Another main category of difference between experienced vs. novice teachers was the 'internalization time' that is the amount of time allocated to notice a language form that was 'form dependent' and time-oriented, when noticing was required, for the novice teachers. While for the experienced teachers, the learner's learning style was the main factor. However, the amount of time to be used for noticing was detected as non-identifiable for some of the experienced teachers.

"L.T(an experienced teacher): I don't think about the amount of time.... sometimes, one minute is enough, sometimes you need to repeat the same thing to make it clear"

"M.T(a novice teacher): it depends on what we do or what I teach, if........."

"L.T (an experienced teacher): I think different learners need to have an explicit explanation but others not...."

'Learner characteristic' was selected as a key category in defining the concept of noticing and the teachers' cognition was examined to know if this factor would be of difference between the two groups of novice and experienced teachers. They both shared the same ideas for the 'personality type' of learners who might benefit most from noticing techniques except for 'age' which was the dividing line between the experienced and the novice teachers.

"L.T (an experienced teacher): ...... I have used noticing in any classes and I think it is age-related"

"S. A (a novice teacher): older learners need more noticing because they cannot concentrate"

In the literature on noticing, what is still a riddle with no answers is finding a measurement method to gauge the noticing concept used by learners. Therefore, this study took this category as one of the crucial questions to explore what teachers might have thought of noticing measurement especially when the role of teaching experience was particularly highlighted. Interestingly, the experienced teachers showed a more precise

understanding of noticing measurement including teachers' experience, noticing techniques to be used, and retrospective methods to measure noticing effects on learners.

4.2. Similarities between Novice and Experienced Teachers' Cognition

Comparing the teachers' beliefs about the theoretical concept of noticing explored interesting results due to similar cognitively oriented positions of thought which likely had some pedagogical roots regardless of the degree of teaching experience. Experienced and novice teachers all shared some common beliefs in defining the concept of noticing in teaching/practicing language form. All teachers, ignoring teaching experience, were on the consensus of three generated themes of personality type, learning styles, and language level to conceptualize noticing.

"M.M (an experienced teacher): well, I use less noticing at higher language levels…….."

"M. A (a novice teacher): …. some learners need explanation or translation……."

L.T (an experienced teacher): in my experience of teaching, some learners need more clarity……. this makes me think that some learners personally look for noticing signs…."

Priority of language form to be noticed was another interjected point in the teachers' beliefs and all of them agreed upon the grammar-focused nature of noticing that is noticing is technically used to notice grammar mostly.

"S.K (an experienced teacher): …. certainly, grammar for me is the most important part that needs noticing"

"M. A(a novice teacher): I always use noticing in teaching grammar or when I correct my learner's grammar mistakes"

The appropriate time to notice language form was also one of the inquiries and all the teachers agreed upon placing noticing after teaching or task performance; that is noticing should be applied after teaching language form or practicing them in tasks and activities.

"L.T (an experienced teacher): …… when I am teaching or when we are doing a practice…. mostly after the activity is done"

"D. A (a novice teacher): …. I make learners notice the mistakes or some difficult parts in the activity…."

"B.P (a novice teacher): …. In teaching, I need to make learners understand the form or vocabulary……"

All of the teachers had the same idea upon the degree of attention to language form in various language skills which were detected as 'priority of productive skills. Interestingly, when teachers were asked about the type of tasks that could be used to draw students 'attention to language form they all agreed that 'explanation' was a key task in enhancing input awareness.

"L.T(an experienced teacher): if learners do not understand grammar or vocabulary, they cannot use them, I think speaking and writing need more noticing"

"S.F(a novice teacher): …. in speaking and when I correct my learners writing"

Although measurement was one of the areas which contained the most cognitive difference between the experienced and the novice teachers, both groups believed that students' feedback could be used as a method of noticing measurement.

"L.T(an experienced teacher): If learners give me correct answers, I will know they noticed and learned"

"A.S(a novice teacher): …. I ask them, they have correct answers or in quizzes or exams"

4.3. Observing Teachers' Actual Teaching Practice

To discover any mismatch between the teachers' stated and practiced cognition on the concept of noticing, six novice and experienced teachers from three different language levels including elementary, intermediate, and advanced were observed semi structurally based on the pre-achieved categories and themes from the interview phase of the study and the whole practices of the teachers. The reason for including all three main language levels in the observational study was the commonly shared idea among all teachers who thought learners' language level was one of the major influences on using noticing in language teaching.

The observational data showed some compatible cases of the teachers' stated beliefs and actual practices between two groups of novice and experienced teachers. However, some areas of inconsistencies were also found in the conceptualization of language noticing among the teachers. The point of experience certainly had its trace in explaining the type and degree of incompatibility between what the teachers' cognition showed in the

interview data and what they did in the actual classroom. Teaching experience enhances teachers' metacognitive awareness and related self-regulation affecting their power of decision making in immediate contexts. This is in line with Tei and Stewart (1985) pointing out the necessity of metacognition to make teaching a conscious process.

New teachers approached the concept of noticing in relatively distinguished practices from experienced teachers. The most motivating reason for drawing learners' attention to language form was detected as 'item saliency' that is the importance of making language form noticed. Learners were guided to notice language form according to their language levels. Moreover, two language inputs of grammar and meaning were found to need more noticing with priority to grammar. Two language skills of speaking and reading were the target of attention. However, the extent of attention to either skill was most in-demand of learners' language level. New teachers made use of different tasks and techniques to highlight language form during teaching and task performance, however, technique variety was also observed in the teaching of different language levels. Noticing measurement was absent in teaching of elementary level teachers but learners' feedback was seen to be the main tool of noticing measurement at intermediate and advanced levels. Novice teachers' decision to notice language form was mostly based on the language level they taught, from form-oriented at the elementary level to nearly none at the advanced level.

In contrast, experienced teachers used noticing during task performance and after speaking tasks to highlight grammar and in minor situations when teaching vocabulary. Direct feedback was found as one of the main reasons for using noticing and language forms. Although both grammar and meaning were two pivotal parts of language learning on the part of the experienced teachers, they put the scale of attention on grammar rather than meaning and only for speaking skills. To measure noticing and the degrees of its effect, learners' feedback was constantly used to trace the effect of making the language form noticed. However, in addition to learners' language level, the type of grammar rule played an important role as a determining factor to estimate the time needed to keep students noticed to the language form.

Language level was discovered to affect teacher's decisions on how to grab students' attention. At three levels of elementary, intermediate, and advanced, teachers with more than five years of experience made use of various noticing techniques to shed light on the

selected language form albeit a variety of techniques had a decline related to students' language level; in other words, the teachers in this group strived to take benefit from more ways to raise students' awareness inferring a wider cognitive strand of noticing concept.

5. Discussion

This study produced a set of qualitative data to explore the role of teacher cognition in conceptualization and use of language noticing. The data collected from the interview showed some similarities and differences between the two groups of novice and experienced teachers. The themes generated out of the interview data explored that experienced and novice teachers were on different poles of noticing conceptualization in terms of pedagogical effects, type of input, skill type, time to notice, noticing techniques, time allocation, and measurement.

From the pedagogical perspective, Unlu (2015) confirms the role of noticing in language pedagogy concentrating on the language direction it gives to learners to enhance learning and this directed learning should be boosted by the teacher's guide while providing notice. Besides, teaching experience may develop a different perspective from the pedagogical effects of noticing use in language classes. In terms of using noticing-boosting tasks, findings showed a wider range of perception of teaching concepts through experience which is in line with the explanations offered by Berger et al. (2018) identifying teacher experience as a main factor in teacher efficacy.

When both groups of teachers were assessed for the use of noticing in particular skill types, the difference showed a shallow perception of language noticing in new teachers. The more teaching experience, the more reliable their inspection of the learning context (Podolskey et al., 2019). What makes this difference intriguing to investigate for more findings is experienced teachers' consensus on the time of noticing giving priority to skill type; future research should take it into account.

Language awareness comes along with a wide spectrum of techniques as suggested in Jones and Lock (2010), however teaching experience shows completely different strategies to grab students' attention to language form due to their level of metacognitive awareness namely using gestures, highlighting, explanation, etc. For instance, experienced teachers inclined their cognition on noticing based on learners' language level.

Another interesting point to mention is the task-oriented concept of noticing for experienced teachers which showed that they have a multidimensional insight into the use of language noticing. It is comparable with novice teachers who restricted language noticing to focus on single language forms. This finding needs more investigation to see if noticing works fruitfully in the case of a single-spotted view or a multivariant perspective.

In terms of noticing measurement, experienced teachers were fully aware of a variety of ways to touch upon students' fully-grasped attention. It is a double check for the crucial role of teacher metacognition in successful teaching. (Nahrkhalaji, 2014). All findings promoted understanding of the role of teacher experience in perception of noticing concept which is in line with Donkoh (2017) insisting the place of teacher experience in the development and modification of teacher knowledge.

Therefore, teaching experience could be taken as the main point of difference among the teachers since this major factor would modify or activate the contextual awareness and turn their attention from the mutual transmission of immature learning experience and theoretical knowledge of teaching to their calculated steps in teaching practices. As Borg (2007,2011) asserts the teachers' performance is undoubtedly in the effect of teachers' cognition which includes teaching experience as one of its main constructive features. Furthermore, the teachers' cognition as a dynamic system of beliefs should undertake non-static mini-systems including teaching experience.

Novice teachers' metacognition seemed to not have been sufficiently developed. This study is a confirmation of what Nahrkhalaji (2014) knows as the relation between teaching experience and pedagogical success. New teachers' low level of teaching confidence might not have allowed them to go beyond what they brought with themselves as past language learners or teacher students, or perhaps they preferred to stand on the safe side of teaching.

Experienced teachers were mostly post-graduate teachers or had participated in in-service courses and on the top, had the opportunity to make theories out of practice therefore their teaching knowledge could have had a more precise realization. Teacher development programs will increase the sense of metacognition integration planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the teaching situation (Seraphin et al., 2012). They knew the pedagogical influence of noticing as a tool to increase learners' critical learning and language internalization which both showed a deeper understanding of what noticing could

gift to learners. In other words, experienced teachers thought more realistically on the concept of noticing. Therefore, their theoretical and practical experience could help them change disciplinary knowledge to pedagogical knowledge (Richards, 2011).

To create some classroom techniques to practice noticing, experienced teachers had more theoretically bound techniques on their mind including more use of contextual features to practice noticing. In this case, teaching experience could help teachers to go beyond the knowledge (disciplinary knowledge) which was obtained from the teaching books. It confirms the major role of metacognitive awareness in shaping conditional knowledge (Brown, 1987).

In this vein, experienced teachers acted differently because of being armed with plenty of resources namely1. Taking risks in using new teaching practices and actualizing teaching theories and knowledge2. creating and activating the teachers' metacognition, 3. Using an active intuition about the implementation of their teaching syllabus and learners' needs at the point in time, 4. Having the expertise to modify course books, 5. Freely integrating their practices (teaching style) into their teaching practices, 6. Making a more precise realization of contextual features and 7. Being less worried about classroom management issues. Figure 1 illustrates the causes and effects of teaching experience as a model.
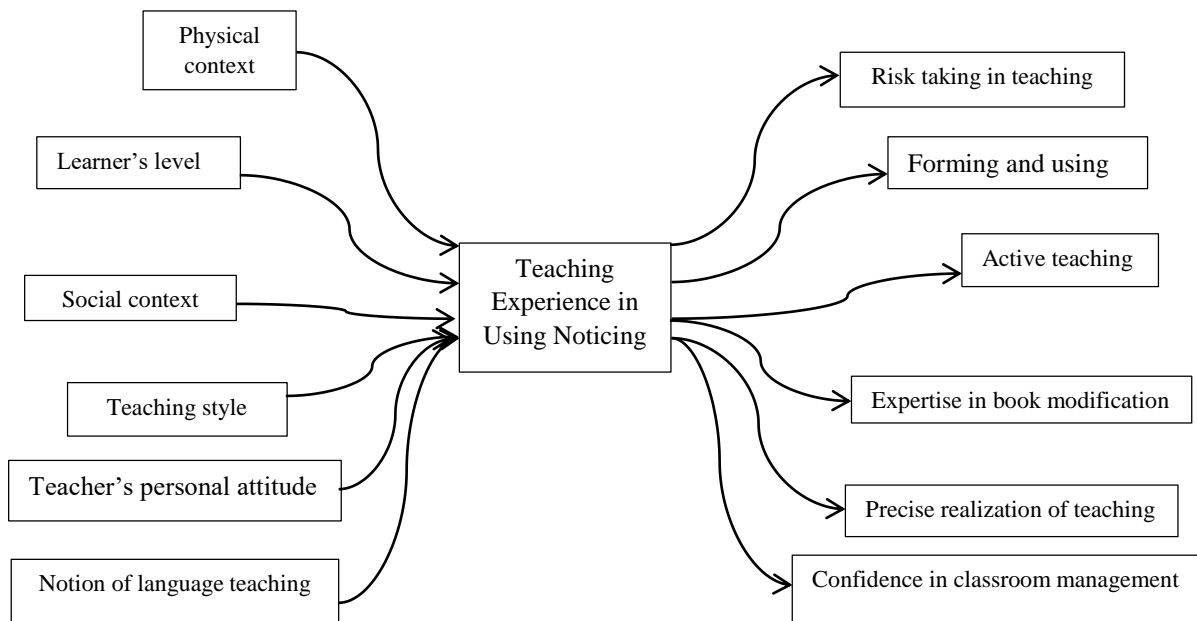

Figure 1. Role of teaching experience in using noticing model

There were some overwhelming parts in theoretical and practical understanding of noticing concept between two groups of novice and experienced teachers namely as 'personality type', 'learning styles', and 'language level'. It can show that teaching experience might stay mute in some areas. One explanation would be that all teachers, regardless of teaching experience had been educated with the same teaching syllabus at universities, thus, a similar educational background was normally formed their cognition on noticing concepts. According to Borg (2009), learning experience formulated teacher cognition.

In addition, there are some externally motivated forces imposed on teachers such as the syllabus they should teach in schools or universities after graduation, or the social issues shadowing the teachers' thoughts of the usefulness of particular language forms. Then, in this study, it was explored that such hidden values in teachers' cognition made their votes for the priority of teaching grammar or giving feedback after doing activities. This view was extended to form the belief on the noticing measurement as a direct correction. The academics of teacher education illustrated a traceable impact on the English teachers' beliefs regardless of teaching years.   It can be explained as the outcome of centralizing grammar knowledge in the Iranian language learning context. Besides, all teachers were selected from private institutions where production skills especially speaking received the most attention, then, once more, contextual constraints or motives would render some cognitive building blocks which can stay with teachers for good regardless of the number of teaching years.

The differences discovered between new and experienced teachers were not restricted to the theoretical beliefs they just made; observational data were also collected to search for any discrepancies between stated beliefs and observed practice between and within two groups of teachers. In this case, all new and experienced teachers showed degrees of inconsistency between what they believed and what they practically did in the classroom.

The most observable place of difference between the teachers' stated beliefs and actual classroom teaching was in the number and variety of noticing techniques. Both novice and experienced teachers used more noticing techniques than what they claimed they would use based on their beliefs and surprisingly this variety in technique types had its most rise at the Elementary level following a decline at the Advance level; that is, both

groups of teachers did not use much noticing at the advance level. It might rise from the belief that advanced learners are competent enough to spend class time on turning learners' attention to grammar or it would be the cause of the learners' needs to focus on fluency rather than accuracy which have dramatically ended up in disastrous results of learners' language plateau in grammar use after intermediate level (Richards, 2008).

This finding is similar to the result gained in Barturkmen etc. (2004), and Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) on the inconsistency of teachers' beliefs and their actual practice. One of the reasons stated for this result is the interview as a research tool, which is a decontextualized method through which only abstract ideas are collected stressing technical knowledge rather than practical knowledge. In other words, interviews usually do not take contextual constraints into account, therefore, inferences on teachers' stated beliefs should be based on what they say, what they intend to do and their actual practices (Pajares, 1992) For example, experienced teachers claimed that noticing was prompt to make students' think critically and increase the chance of language internalization whereas they only took a single-spotted area of pedagogical use in their practice.

It might also have shown a mismatch between their teaching syllabus and its content. Novice teachers stated a restricted range of noticing techniques while in practice they demonstrated a wider selection of techniques to draw learners' attention to language form. Another reason for this discrepancy between belief and action might have been teachers' personalization of their knowledge (Basturkmen et al., 2004). However, it might also be due to the teachers' lack of personalizing technical knowledge. In addition, it is difficult to elicit the subconscious nature of belief (Donaghue, 2003) which might result in a mismatch between the teachers' teaching knowledge and actions.

Basturkmen et al. (2004) propose that experience can delete the inconsistency which is in complete contrast with the result gained in this study. As it was mentioned, experience is a key feature of teachers' cognition (Borg, 2003) producing and even disabling teaching options available to teachers, therefore contextual constraints in the absence or presence of the teaching experience can result in various teaching practice. However, teachers' decision-making or unplanned use of noticing should be taken into account while comparing teachers' stated beliefs and their actual practice (Basturkmen et al., 2004). In other words, teachers' metacognition would be closely connected to teachers' evaluation of the situational features and instant planning to act in the classroom. Here, in this study, it

was inferred that teaching experience, though not completely, can have a relative impact on the existence and degree of teachers' metacognition which might be the core of incongruence between teachers' theoretical beliefs and actual classroom practices. This argument has been further studies in research by Zargaran (2020) finding procedural knowledge of teachers as a predicator of understanding noticing concepts.

This study was a renewal of the past research examining the role of noticing embracing other similar terms namely consciousness-raising, language flooding, and input enhancement and could open up a wide horizon of an incomplete distribution of knowledge focusing on a learner-oriented aspect of studies. The findings especially in the first phase of the study, where the conceptual features of language noticing were discovered, can enrich the teacher development programs particularly pre-service courses to make a transformative approach to enhance teachers' awareness of language noticing. The next practical implication is in the area of material design; there is a need to implicate the results of this study to increase the level of language noticing. In this vein, future research should study the second language learning materials in terms of language noticing inclination.

There might be some limitations to the study for not including a reflective stage allowing teachers to make their cognitive knowledge conscious and take an individualized awareness pathway to their practical cognition; in other words, what teachers need to gain from results in similar studies is practicing their cognition, being aware of their cognitive repertoire and being able to consciously regulate this knowledge in their teaching practice. Future studies can take a transformative approach to assess teachers' conceptualization of language noticing.

References

Abdi, R., & Tarbali, G. (2016). The effect of noticing and input enhancement in reading on speaking skills by intermediate learners. *The Book of Extended Abstracts*, *1*(41). Retrieved from https://uma.ac.ir/files/tgss/files/The_book_of_full_papers.pdf#page=141

Andrews, S. (1999). Why do L2 teachers need to know about language'? Teacher metalinguistic awareness and input for learning. *Language and Education, 13*(3), 161-177. doi.org/10.1080/09500789908666766

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. (2018). *Introduction to research in education*: Cengage Learning.

AsadiAmirabadi, Y., Biria, R., & Sedaghat, A. (2014). Efficacy of input flood vs. input enhancement in the learning and long-term retention of conditionals by intermediate Iranian EFL students. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW), 7*(3), 562-575.

Bartels, N. (1999). About language: Tasks for teachers of English. *TESOL, 8*(4), 80-88.

Basturkmen, H., Loewen, S., & Ellis, R. (2004). Teachers' stated beliefs about incidental focus on form and their classroom practices. *Applied linguistics, 25*(2), 243-272. doi.org/10.1093/applin/25.2.243

Batstone, R. (1996). Key concepts in ELT. *ELT Journal, 50*(3), 25-73. doi.org/10.1093/elt/55.2.186

Benner, P. (1982). From novice to expert. *American Journal of nursing, 82*(3), 402-407. doi.org/10.1093/elt/47.3.275

Berger, J.-L., Girardet, C., Vaudroz, C., & Crahay, M. (2018). Teaching Experience, teachers' beliefs, and self-reported classroom management practices: A coherent network. *SAGE open, 8*(1), 2158244017754119. doi.org/10.1177/2158244017754119

Berger, J.-L., Girardet, C., Vaudroz, C., & Crahay, M. (2018). Teaching Experience, teachers' beliefs, and self-reported classroom management practices: A coherent network. *SAGE open, 8*(1), 2158244017754119. doi.org/10.1177/2158244017754119

Borg, S. (1999). The use of grammatical terminology in the second language classroom: A quality study of teachers' practices and cognitions. *Applied Linguistics, 20*(1), 95-124. doi.org/10.1093/applin/20.1.95

Borg, S. (2009). English language teachers' conceptions of research. *Applied Linguistics, 30*(3), 358-388. doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp007

Borg, S. (2011). The impact of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs. *System, 39*(3), 370-380. doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.07.009

Burgess, J., & Etherington, S. (2002). Focus on grammatical form: explicit or implicit? *System, 30*(4), 433-458. doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(02)00048-9

Carter, D. M. (1985). Common sense inference in a focus-guided anaphor resolver. *Journal of Semantics, 4*(3), 237-246. doi.org/10.1093/jos/4.3.237

Dastjerdi, H. V., & Farshid, M. (2011). The role of input enhancement in teaching compliments. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 2*(2), 460. doi:10.4304/jltr.2.2.460-466

Donaghue, H. (2003). An instrument to elicit teachers' beliefs and assumptions. *ELT Journal, 57*(4), 344-351. doi.org/10.1093/elt/57.4.344

Donkoh, S. (2017). Investigating the Effect of Teaching Experience on Teacher Knowledge. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 7*(6), 319-327. doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(02)00003-4

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Gass, S. M., Mackey, A., & Pica, T. (1998). The role of input and interaction in second language acquisition: Introduction to the special issue. *Modern Language Journal*, 299-307. jstor.org/stable/329956

Izumi, S. (2002). Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis: An experimental study on ESL relativization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 541-577. jstor.org/stable/44486641

Jabbarpoor, S., & Abdollahzadeh, E. (2013). Textual Enhancement across Linguistic Structures: EFL Learners' Acquisition of English Forms. *Journal of Language and Translation, 3*(1), 69-78. Retrieved from http://ttlt.azad.ac.ir/article_514742.html

Johnston, B., & Goettsch, K. (2000). In search of the knowledge base of language teaching: Explanations by experienced teachers. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 56*(3), 437-468.

Jones, R., & Lock, G. (2010). *Functional grammar in the ESL classroom: Noticing, exploring and practicing*: Springer.

Kyung, H. (2012). Effects of input enhancement techniques on word learning of Korean elementary learners. 초등영어교육, *18*, 381-398.

Lee, S.-K., & Huang, H.-T. (2008). Visual input enhancement and grammar learning: A meta-analytic review. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 307-331. jstor.org/stable/44488690

Mahvelati, E. H., & Mukundan, J. (2012). The effects of input flood and consciousness-raising approach on collocation knowledge development of language learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 1*(6), 182-192. Retrieved from http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJALEL/article/view/829

Nahrkhalaji, S. S. (2014). EFL Teachers' metacognitive awareness as a predictor of their professional success. *International Journal of Cognitive and Language Sciences, 8*(6), 1665-1669. doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1093008

Navidinia, H., Mobarak, M., & Malekzadeh, F. (2019). Investigating the Effect of Noticing on EFL Students' Speaking Accuracy. *International Journal of Instruction, 12*(1), 83-98. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1202216

Opdenakker, R. (2006). *Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research.* Paper presented at the Forum qualitative sozialforschung/forum: Qualitative social research. doi.org/10.17169/fqs-7.4.175

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332. doi.org/10.3102/00346543062003307

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A review of US research. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-12-2018-0032

Rezvani, E., & Ketabi, S. (2011). On the effectiveness of using web-and print-based materials in teaching grammar to Iranian EFL learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 15*, 376-381. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.105

Rice, J. K. (2010). The Impact of Teacher Experience: Examining the Evidence and Policy Implications. Brief No. 11. *National center for the analysis of longitudinal data in education research*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED511988

Richards, J. C. (2008). *Moving beyond the plateau*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2011). *Competence and performance in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Sarkhosh, M., Taghipour, B., & Sarkhosh, H. (2013). Differential effect of different textual enhancement formats on intake. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 70*, 544-559. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.092

Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R. C. (2004). Beliefs, practices, and interactions of teachers in a Japanese high school English department. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(8), 797-816. doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.09.004

Schmidt, R. W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning1. *Applied Linguistics, 11*(2), 129-158. doi.org/10.1093/applin/11.2.129

Seraphin, K. D., Philippoff, J., Kaupp, L., & Vallin, L. M. (2012). Metacognition as means to increase the effectiveness of inquiry-based science education. *Science Education International, 23*(4), 366-382. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1001630

Smith, M. S. (1993). Input enhancement in instructed SLA: Theoretical bases. *Studies in second language acquisition, 15*(2), 165-179. jstor.org/stable/44487616

Tei, E., & Stewart, O. (1985). *Effective studying from the text: Applying metacognitive strategies*. Paper presented at the Forum for reading.

Tsui, A. B. (2005). Expertise in teaching: Perspectives and issues *Expertise in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 167-189). Springer.

Ünlü, A. (2015). How alert should I be to learn a language? The noticing hypothesis and its implications for language teaching. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 199*, 261-267. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.515

Wilson, N. S., & Bai, H. (2010). The relationships and impact of teachers' metacognitive knowledge and pedagogical understandings of metacognition. *Metacognition and Learning, 5*(3), 269-288. doi.org/10.1007/s11409-010-9062-4

Zargaran, Z. (2020). Experienced and novice teachers' cognitive construction of noticing concepts in language teaching. *Journal of Language and Translation*. Manuscript in press.