Expert and Novice Iranian EFL Teachers' Professional Knowledge at Iranian Language Institutes and Universities

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Abstract
This study sought to compare Iranian EFL novice and expert teachers regarding their professional knowledge at Iranian language institutes and universities. To achieve the aim of study, a questionnaire was developed based on the literature, the theoretical framework and the results of a qualitative study carried out by Yazdanpanah and Sahragard (2017). This questionnaire was administered to the whole sample of the study who was 200 Iranian EFL teachers from different genders and educational contexts. The participants were selected conveniently as going through random sampling was not possible. Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, six factors emerged under the main category of professional knowledge for Iranian EFL teachers. The findings of this study revealed that: (a) Iranian EFL expert teachers have higher levels of professional knowledge than Iranian EFL novice teachers (b) expert teachers have higher levels of knowledge about language and knowledge of language skills and components than novice teachers (c) expert and novice participants of this study are more or less similar in the modification they make in their teaching presentation, and d) there was not a significant difference between Iranian EFL expert teachers and Iranian EFL novice teachers due to knowledge of language teaching, knowledge of teaching methods and knowledge of language learning.

Keywords: EFL, Iran, expert teachers, novice teachers, teachers' professional knowledge

Introduction

Since the 1920s, the issue of teachers' qualifications, which can guarantee their effectiveness, has been of concern for not only the science of pedagogy, but also for those in charge of staffing schools with qualified professionals. As regards this issue, modern studies have revealed that the way in which a teacher carries out his work is determined by the union of his personality traits and acquired professional knowledge (Liakopoulou, 2011).

Professional knowledge directed towards present and prospective teachers in the field of L2 learning and teaching covers theories and practices of language, language learning, and language teaching. This includes a body of accumulated and shared knowledge of the profession even though it may lack universal acceptance (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Professionalization is closely linked to the image of a profession's practitioners as experts, which has become prominent since the end of the twentieth century in professions that include the teaching profession (Tsui, 2003). According to him, teaching in general and expertise in teaching are complex multidimensional issues.

Expertise in teaching involves much more than the simple accumulation of technical skills, tips and tricks about how teaching is done. Although technical competence is an important base from which expertise in teaching grows, it is important to recognize that teaching is an

educative process and it cannot simply be measured against a list of competencies. Recognizing expert teachers' matters, highlighting that expertise is crucial and rewarding, it is central to better understanding and valuing the profession. Saphier (2007) proposed a general definition for teaching expertise: "Teaching expertise means having a repertoire of ways at one's disposal for handling the task of teaching, and then knowing how to choose and apply what is appropriate from one's repertoire. The tasks could be classified into six categories: (1) Management, (2) Motivation, (3) Instruction, (4) Planning, (5) Applying craft knowledge and (6) Understanding the connections between concepts in the content and how students learn them".

Tsui (2005) claims that expertise has received insufficient focus in the field of second and foreign language acquisition. "Relatively little work has been done on expertise in ESL teaching and still less on the development of expertise in ESL teaching" (Tsui, 2003, p. 3). Farrell (2013) also notes that research conducted on expertise in English language teaching has been limited and that further studies on the process of achieving expertise through reflection would be valuable. Thus, there is a need for more studies examining ESL and EFL teacher expertise.

Although one can gather insight from novice and expert teachers' thinking and behavior independently, Gatbonton (2008) asserts some advantages for comparing both together in the same study. She asserts that

Examining both sets of teachers together in the same study allows one to compare them on very specific points and identify more clearly how they differ or how they are similar to each other. In addition, by identifying what components of pedagogical knowledge are missing in the novice teachers' repertoire, but present in their experienced counterparts, one can form hypotheses about gaps in the novice teachers' pedagogical knowledge and see how these may be filled through teacher training. (p.163)

However a review of literature indicates that most studies conducted to understand L2 teachers' pedagogical knowledge have focused separately on either expert or novice teachers but seldom both together in the same study (i.e. Motha (2013); Kumaravadivelu, (2012); Ford (2011); de Graaff and Housen (2009); Ellis (2005)). The paucity of research can also be understood from both Gatbonton's assertion in her article in 1999 and her latest work in 2008. In the latter, for instance, she asserts that "although comparative studies on novice and experienced teachers abound in the general teacher education field, such studies are still rare in the L2 teacher education field" (p. 162). Hence, the present study intends to focus on investigating and comparing novice and expert EFL teachers' professional knowledge and compare them with each other in this respect.

More specifically, the purpose of this study was to compare the expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers' knowledge of the intellectual content of their discipline; their knowledge about language, language learning and language teaching. Based on the objectives of the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers compare in terms of professional knowledge?
2. Is there any significant difference between expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers due to Knowledge about Language, Language Teaching, and Language Learning?
3. How do expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers compare in terms of Knowledge of Language skills and components, modification in teaching presentation, and methods of teaching?

Literature Review

A teacher should possess the qualifications and professional knowledge required. The question, therefore, is "What qualifications are necessary for a teacher to be effective in his work?" A definitive and absolute definition of these qualifications is neither possible nor

desirable, given the transient nature of teaching and the complexity of a teacher's role. However, a provisional list of these qualifications is essential for both the planning of teachers' education programs and the establishment of the criteria for the recruitment, evaluation and self-evaluation of teachers. What is definitive in the recording and definition of these qualifications is the influence of multiple factors, which are referred to as "spheres of influence" (Corrigan & Haberman, 1990; Christensen, 1996; Imig & Switzer, 1996). The term that has been used over the past few years to render the matter of teachers' qualifications is "competence". In the framework of a broader perception of the term, a holistic approach is adopted (Ingvarson, 1998 a & b), according to which competence presupposes the individual qualities and attitudes of teachers, as well as their skills and knowledge that arise as a result of their work.

Traditionally, teacher characteristics and teaching methods were considered as the main factors to student learning. Teachers' knowledge and how they express their knowledge have only recently been accepted as central to student learning (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). Teachers were regarded as executors who were supposed to implement the innovations to show the required behavior based on the intentions of the innovators. However, after a period of change, the vast majority of the educational innovations failed after some time, because teachers abandoned the new behavior and returned to the old routine ways (Verloop, Driel, & Meijer, 2001). Therefore, the centrality of teachers in educational processes was recognized by researchers. Besides, the literature has been consistent in the findings about the positive association between teacher content knowledge and students' learning at all grade levels. If the educational reforms did not correspond to teachers' knowledge and beliefs, the failure was inevitable. Thus, professional development should seek to deepen teacher knowledge in order to promote teacher learning and changes in practice (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000).

Teachers acquire professional knowledge from a combination of sources: pre- and in-service training programs, books, journals, conferences, conversations, etc and in the context of L2 teacher education, professional knowledge relates to the fundamental concepts of language, language learning, and language teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). This finding is consistent with Liakopoulou's (2011) research results that showed the body of knowledge that can guarantee a teacher's expertise, is determined by existing conditions and contexts, as well as the personal experiences, beliefs and needs of each teacher, a fact that renders an a priori definition of this knowledge extremely difficult. Nevertheless, as Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard (2001, 1999) discovered there are knowledge fields that constitute a necessary prerequisite for every teacher, or at least for a large part of them, and which form the basic part of "professional knowledge". These include: Subject knowledge, Knowledge of learners, Teaching methodology, Curriculum knowledge, General pedagogical knowledge, Knowledge of contexts and Knowledge of self.

Many research findings showed pedagogical studies have a significant impact on the way teachers do their work (Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Valli & Agostinelli, 1993). Moreover, Mok (1994) and also Liakopoulu (2011) discovered in their research that pedagogical studies have a greater impact on the way teachers do their work than simple studies on the subject. As for pedagogical knowledge, they seemed to consider knowledge that contributed to the "better understanding of students" more important (Liakopoulu, 2011).

According to Smith's study (1996), the expert teachers' decisions reveal an eclectic use of theory and a skillful blend of theoretical ideas with practical needs in the ESL instructional context. Milner (2001) has outlined the planning, thinking and teaching of experienced English teachers and indicated that expert teachers make responsive planning after learning about students' interests and the practical nature of the environment and adapt lessons interactively.

Similarly, Johnson (1992) claims that novice teachers have not developed a schema for interpreting and coping with what goes on during instruction, nor do they possess a repertoire of instructional routines upon which they can confidently rely.

Hammond and Snowden (2005) found in their study that the mere knowledge of human development is not sufficient; a teacher needs the kind of knowledge that will enable him to observe his students, evaluate their behavior and performance so that he can choose those techniques and strategies that are most suitable. Their study results approved Shulman's (1986, 1987) research findings that emphasized the necessity of a pedagogical approach to the subject.

Goodwyn (2010) and Hattie (2003) who studied and compared expert and novice teachers in some respects, discovered that expert teachers have higher professional knowledge and their knowledge of the subcategories of this knowledge type also were higher than those of novice teachers.

Kumaravadivelu (2012) discovered in his study that expert teachers are in higher levels in terms of the professional knowledge generally and also some especial aspects of this knowledge type comparing to novice teachers. He found that expert teachers in many areas of language teaching field such as utilizing form and meaning-focused language instruction are more knowledgeable than novice teachers, they have deeper knowledge about language itself and interactional modification in teaching presentation. Also, expert participants had high knowledge about the constructs in language learning process including input, intake, intake factors, intake processes and input that interact with each other; however, novice participants were less aware of these main constructs comparing to EFL expert teachers.

Method

Previous studies on the topic of teachers' knowledge have shown that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been employed through different instruments, such as questionnaires, narratives, and interviews (Bijaared, et al. 2000; Hattie, 2003; Loughran, 2010; Tsui, 2003). Although there has been a great tendency toward qualitative approach in data collection and analysis, they are limited in terms of data representativeness and actual procedures. Thus, surveying a large number of participants through a questionnaire in a quick and cost effective way may be a viable and reasonable solution.

The current study sought to compare Iranian EFL expert and novice teachers' professional knowledge through developing a reliable and valid questionnaire. To develop the questionnaire, previous studies and related theoretical frameworks on the topic of teachers' professional knowledge were reviewed. Then, several participants were interviewed in the qualitative phase of the study. Finally, based on the above mentioned steps, six sub-categories were re-conceptualized for Iranian EFL teachers' professional knowledge. Kumaravadivelu's three sub-categories were kept and also three other sub-categories were defined and added by the researchers for Iranian EFL teachers. Iranian EFL teachers' professional knowledge emerging subcategories were: Knowledge about Language, Knowledge of Language Teaching, Knowledge of Language Skills and Components, Modification in Teaching Presentation, Knowledge of Teaching Method and Knowledge of Language Learning. Table 1 presents a definition for each sub-category of Iranian EFL teachers' professional knowledge.

Table 1. *The Components and Definitions of Iranian EFL Teachers' Professional Knowledge Sub-Categories*

Component	**Definition**
Knowledge about language	Entails knowledge of language as system,

Knowledge of language teaching	language as discourse and language as ideology (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).
Knowledge of language skills and components	Includes knowledge of teaching and learning theories, knowledge of teaching techniques and teaching practicum that includes field experiences, role plays and video analyses, etc (Crookes, 2003 & Tsui, 2003).
Modification in teaching presentation	Pertains to knowledge about four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and components such as phonetics, grammar and vocabulary (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).
Knowledge of teaching method	Pertains to the notion of intervention aimed at promoting desired learning outcomes in the classroom. The intervention is made by modifying the content and style of language input, and by modifying the nature and scope of interactional opportunities.
Knowledge of language learning	Concerns primarily with knowledge about methods of language teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).
	Encompasses theoretical and empirical insights derived from fields such as second language acquisition (SLA), cognitive psychology, and information processing (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Participants

In order to accomplish diversity and generalizability of the results, ten percent (200) of the target population (approximately 2000 teachers teaching in the institutes and universities in the northern, southern, eastern and western parts of Iran) were conveniently selected to answer the questionnaire. The sample included both male and female teachers from nine cities and towns including Tehran, Karaj, Rasht, Mashhad, Shiraz, Kazeroon, Yazd, Kerman, Rafsanjan and Bandare-Abbas. The teachers were categorized into expert and novice groups based on the extent of their academic education and their teaching experience. Teaching experience includes two factors: the number of years teaching in institutes or universities, and the variety of places (institute, school and university) having worked in.

The criteria for the inclusion of the participants into the study were: The participants who had a B.A degree or a higher degree in one of the English language majors such as Teaching English or English Literature, had the experience of teaching English for 6 years or more and had the experience of teaching English in more than one educational organization (i.e., university and institute) were assigned as expert and were placed in the expert teachers group. The participants who either were undergraduate (did not have a B.A degree), or/and had only 1-5 year(s) experience of teaching English, or/and had taught English in only one type of educational organizations were classified into novice teachers group.

Instruments

A questionnaire was developed which had two types of data: "factual and attitudinal questions" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 5). Factual questions covered the personal information or demographic characteristics of the respondents (e.g. gender, teaching experience, major of study, etc.) whereas attitudinal questions considered teachers' beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and knowledge. To construct a valid and reliable questionnaire, a few necessary steps were taken:

Firstly, the data gathered from the qualitative phase of the study conducted by Yazdanpanah and Sahragard (2017), insights from the theoretical framework and previous studies on the topic of teachers' identity construction both in ESL and EFL contexts constituted the item pool for the current study. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) pointed out that "designing a new questionnaire involves conducting a small-scale exploratory qualitative study first" (p. 110) along with the literature which provides "a valuable source of ideas for preparing the item pool for the purpose of questionnaire scale construction" (p. 110). To write the questionnaire's items, several rules were considered, including designing short and simple items, using natural language, avoiding negative constructions, ambiguous and loaded words. The questionnaire included 21 items and the designated time for completing the questionnaire was 10 minutes.

Secondly, the researchers put demographic information such as gender, work experience, major of study, degree, geographical districts and educational contexts at the end of the questionnaire. The reason is that putting personal background information at the beginning part of the questionnaires might impact on the responses of respondents as a sensitive topic and can function as a kind of off-putting entity (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

Thirdly, the decision about the type of the rating scale was made. Likert's five response options scale was adopted as a multi-item scales. The reason to use Likert scale is to avoid "the unpredictable impact of any idiosyncratic item wording and ensuring comprehensive content coverage—questionnaires should contain multi-item scales, rather than single items, to focus on any particular content domain" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 57). Hence, five options were assigned, i.e. 'strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree'. To calculate items' score, the researchers allocated 5 points for strongly agree, 4 points for agree, 3 points for undecided, 2 points for disagree and 1 point for strongly disagree.

Fourthly, to check the content validity of the questionnaire, three external experts and three faculty colleagues were consulted. At first, the experts advised that at least three items be designated for each sub-scale of teachers' professional knowledge. This is in line with Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) that emphasize to allocate 3-4 items for each sub-scale content. Thus, the questionnaire was designed with 23 items. But, due to these experts' views about the extent to which the questionnaire's items were representative of teachers' professional knowledge, 2 items were discarded and one item was reworded due to its long length. Finally, the questionnaire's items for piloting phase of the study were reduced to 21 items.

Fifthly, the study was piloted. To conduct the pilot phase of the study, the researchers observed several matters, such as providing a clear instruction for each part of the questionnaire, keeping the confidentiality of the respondents and considering the length of time. Then, the questionnaire was administered by hand to 40 Iranian EFL teachers who were working at two educational contexts (universities and English language institutes). The respondents to the questionnaire were a part of the target population that the questionnaire was designed.

Sixthly, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Results of the piloting phase of the study revealed that the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.60. Therefore, considering the number of participants in the pilot study which was 40, the questionnaire was reliable enough.

Seventhly, besides the content validity two other types of validity; that is, face validity and construct validity were taken into account in the current study. The researcher ensured face validity of the questionnaire via using a good and orderly lay out (bold, italic, and normal type-faces), employing appropriate font size, reducing the margins, and sequence marking (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Efforts were made that the questionnaire be eye-catching and look short for the respondents. It should be mentioned that both the content validity and the face validity of the questionnaire were made before piloting the questionnaire and estimating the reliability. To meet the construct validity of the questionnaire, the congruency of the questionnaire's items was checked through doing exploratory factor analysis. Pertaining to the suitability of the data, the construct validity should be assessed through the size of the sample and the factorability of the data. Although there is a little agreement among scholars and researchers regarding the size of the sample and they suggest the larger, the better (Pallant, 2013), a minimum of 100 (but preferably more) subjects" is proposed (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 63). Hence, as the number of participants in the pilot study was not enough to conduct the exploratory factor analysis for the questionnaire, it was done on the whole sample of the study which was 200 teachers from all around the country.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Running factor analysis involves three steps, including assessment of the suitability of the data, factor extraction, and factor rotation and interpretation (Pallant, 2013).

The suitability of the data must be assessed through the size of the sample and the factorability of the data. As mentioned earlier a minimum of 100 (but preferably more) subjects is proposed for running factor analysis (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 63). In order to meet the first step, factor analysis was done on the whole participants of the study (200 teachers). Regarding the factorability of the data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity must be considered. The KMO index which ranges from 0 to 1 should not be below 0.60 and the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity should be $p < 0.05$ (Pallant, 2013). In the current study, the KMO was 0.68 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at $p=0.00$ (see Table 2). Therefore, the data were appropriate and acceptable for factor analysis and it could be expected that there were some significant factors to be extracted in the next step.

Table 2. *KMO and Bartlett's Test*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.677
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	653.362
df	199
Sig.	.000

The second step of the factor analysis was to decide about how many factors could be extracted from the data. To obtain this, two criteria were adopted: Kaiser's criterion and scree plot test. Maximum likelihood was run as the method to decide about the number of extracted factors. Those factors that have the eigenvalues of 1.0 or more should be retained based on Kaiser's criterion and the total variance should be over 60% (Pallant, 2013). In the current study, the eigenvalue of eight factors in the questionnaire was above 1.0 and the total variance was estimated to 61.01%. The eight factors accounted for 16.266%, 8.883%, 7.767%, 6.695%, 6.007%, 5.375%, 5.104% and 4.917% of the total variance (see the table in the Appendix).

However, because only one item loaded on each of the factors 5 and 8, these two factors and the items loading on them which were item 12 (Adopt a problem-solving stance to his/her work) and item 20 (The receptive skills (listening and reading) should be used before the productive ones (speaking and writing) in class) were excluded from the study. So, 6 factors retained for this part of the study. Besides, two items of the questionnaire which were item 1 (Language is a system of sounds, phonemes, morphemes, semantics, grammar and rules) and item 7 (The students' accuracy in speaking is less important than their fluency) didn't load on any of the study factors and thus must have been removed from the research and so weren't covered in the statistical analyses. As such, the number of the questionnaire's items reduced to 17. Variable communalities were also taken into account and they were greater than 0.30 (acceptable) for all these 17 items.

The second criterion in this step was scree plot which involves "plotting each of the eigenvalues of the factors and inspecting the plot to find a point at which the shape of the curve changes direction and become horizontal" (Pallant, 2013, p. 191). In the current study, the scree plot (Figure 1 below) indicated that 6 factors could be retained in this part of the research.

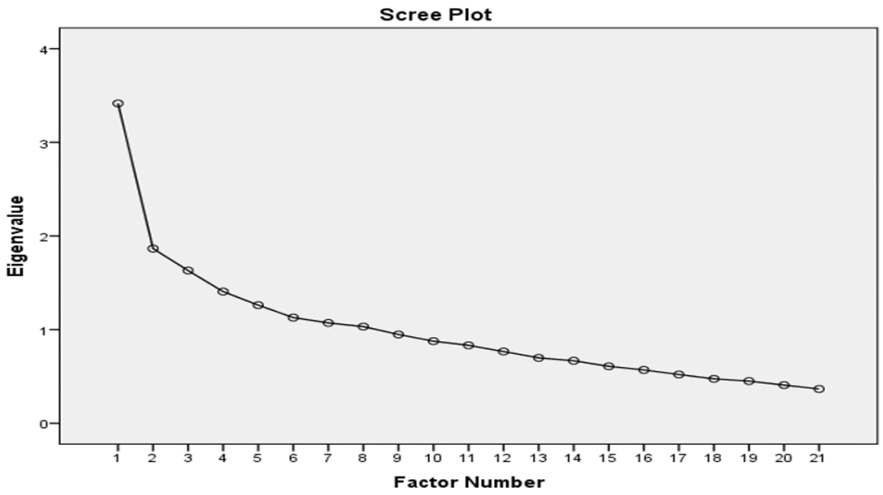

Figure 1. *Scree plot for the extracted factors*

The last step was factor rotation which was obtained through pattern matrix based on maximum likelihood method. Table 1 (Appendix) indicates how six factors were rotated. Item 10 rotated on both factor 1 and factor 4. This occurred because of large number of factors. When we considered the content of the item, we understood that it should be allocated for factor 4.

By conducting these rigorous steps on the questionnaire at the phase of exploratory factor analysis and ensuring about validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers recognized that the questionnaire has acceptable quality.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

By virtue of Table 3, the minimum, the maximum, the mean, the standard deviation, the skewness and the kurtosis for the main variable of the study and its latent variables are revealed clearly.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for the Main Variable of Professional Knowledge and Its Latent Variables*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Knowledge about Language	200	1.60	4.80	3.67	0.57	-0.44	0.96
Knowledge of Language Teaching	200	1.33	5	4.05	0.65	-1.15	1.77
Knowledge of Language Components and Skills	200	1.00	5	3.40	0.90	-0.39	-0.37
Modification in Teaching Presentation	200	1.50	5	3.96	0.74	-0.93	1.33
Knowledge of Teaching Method	200	1.67	5	3.61	0.69	-0.26	0.23
Knowledge of Language Learning	200	1	5	3.53	0.85	-0.75	0.72
Professional Knowledge	200	2.24	4.71	3.71	0.37	-0.62	1.32

The main variable in this study (procedural knowledge) includes seven sub-categories called Knowledge about Language, Knowledge of Language Teaching, Knowledge of Language Components and Skills, Modification in Teaching Presentation, Knowledge of Teaching Method and Knowledge of Language Learning. As Table 3 shows, among these sub-categories, knowledge of language teaching (M=4.05) has the highest mean and knowledge of language components and skills has the lowest mean (M=3.40) although the difference between the highest and the lowest mean is small. The mean and standard deviation for Professional knowledge are 3.71 and 0.37 respectively.

The two groups of participants (expert and novice teachers) are compared based on these defined variables in the present study to discover if there are any differences between them.

Comparison of Expert and Novice Iranian EFL Teachers

The primary purpose of this study was to compare expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers' professional knowledge. To do this comparison and also compare them in terms of subcategories of professional knowledge, independent samples T-tests were done by the

researchers. The results of comparison of these various variables are presented clearly in Table 4 below.

Table 4. *Independent Samples T-tests for Expert and Novice Teachers' Variables*

	Group	n	Mean	SD	P-Value of Levene	T-Test	df	P-Value of T-Test
Professional Knowledge	**Expert**	75	3.82	0.31	0.02	3.54	182.81	0.001
	Novice	125	3.65	0.39				
Knowledge about Language	**Expert**	75	3.84	0.63	0.16	3.42	198	0.001
	Novice	125	3.57	0.50				
Knowledge of Language Teaching	**Expert**	75	4.06	0.55	0.2	1.91	198	0.06
	Novice	125	3.82	0.70				
Knowledge of Language Components and Skills	**Expert**	75	3.62	0.90	0.7	2.70	198	0.008
	Novice	125	3.27	0.87				
Modification in Teaching Presentation	**Expert**	75	4.01	0.70	0.13	0.69	198	0.5
	Novice	125	3.93	0.76				
Knowledge of Teaching Method	**Expert**	75	3.68	0.54	0.002	1.23	192.73	0.22
	Novice	125	3.57	0.76				
Knowledge of Language Learning	**Expert**	75	3.50	0.89	0.8	-0.42	198	0.7
	Novice	125	3.55	0.83				

Regarding the significance level of T-test for teachers' professional knowledge (P-Value of T =0.001< α=0.01) in Table 4, there was a significant difference in this main variable between expert participants and novice participants of this study. The mean values of professional knowledge among expert and novice participants of the study reveal expert teachers had higher levels of professional knowledge than novice teachers (t (182.81) = 3.54, p<0.01; M1=3.82, SD1=0.31> M2= 3.65, SD2=0.39).

This main finding of the present study supports a body of accumulated and shared knowledge of the teaching profession even though it may lack universal acceptance. To mention some of these studies, this is in line with Hattie (2003), Goodwyn (2010) and Kumaravadivelu (2012), who discovered and strongly contended that EFL and ESL expert teachers have higher levels of professional knowledge comparing to their novice colleagues in these fields.

The findings in Table 4 indicate that there was a significant difference between Iranian EFL expert and novice teachers in knowledge about language in this research with regard to the

significance level of T-test (P-Value of T =0.001< α=0.01). The mean values of the subcategory of expert and novice teachers' knowledge about language also indicate that expert teachers had higher levels of this type of knowledge (t (198) = 3.42, p<0.01; M1=3.84, SD1=0.63> M2= 3.57, SD2=0.50).

This finding of the current study which proposes significant difference between expert and novice teachers in terms of knowledge about language is in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2012) and Goodwyn's (2016) studies as they also found a grass difference in this respect between novice and expert groups of their study.

Knowledge of language teaching, the other sub-category of professional knowledge, was not significantly different between expert and novice participants of this research as could be inferred from the significance level of T-test (P-Value of T ==0.06> α=0.05) in Table 4. Also, considering the mean values of this sub-category (t (198) = 1.91, p>0.05), the novice and expert groups are understood as similar in their knowledge of language teaching.

Some studies have been conducted on expert and novice language teachers in which their knowledge of language teaching has been compared. DeKeyser (2003) and Ellis (2005) as cited in de Graaff & Housen (2009), Kumaravadivelu (2012), Lightbown & Spada (1990) and Motha (2013) realized through their longitudinal studies that expert teachers in many areas of language teaching are more knowledgeable than novice teachers. Thus, the studies mentioned don't support the present study's finding that suggests expert and novice teachers are similar in terms of language teaching knowledge.

Knowledge of language components and skills was significantly different between expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers with regard to Table 4 which reveals the significance level of T-test (P-Value of T =0.008< α=0.01). This difference was such that expert teachers showed evidences of more knowledge of language components and skills than novice teachers as the mean value in expert group was higher than the mean value in novice group (t (198)= 2.70, p<0.01; M1=3.62, SD1=0.90> M2= 3.27, SD2=0.87).

This result of the present study which proves higher knowledge of skills and components for EFL expert teachers may support what Berliner (1994) explained as the reason for expert teachers' higher levels of cognitive processes in his study on similarities of expert teachers. His explanation was that expert teachers have much more sophisticated knowledge schemata and knowledge base; that is, he meant expert teachers are more knowledgeable in language skills and components.

Considering Table 4, it is obvious that expert and novice groups were similar in terms of modifying the presentation of what they teach to students (P-Value of T =0.5> α=0.05); that is, as this can also be inferred from comparing the mean values of this variable in the two groups (t(198)= 0.69, p>0.05), there were not significant differences between expert and novice participants of this study in probably the ways and the amount of modifying teaching presentation. This finding of the current study indicates that probably expert and novice teachers' opinions about transforming and mediating the textbook materials and/other teaching materials while presenting them to their students were not much different; that is, they had similar opinions about the EFL teacher as being either the transformer of knowledge to the learners or the transmitter of knowledge to the learners.

Krashen's input hypothesis (1982, 1985) that suggests and emphasizes that not just any input leads to language acquisition, but rather, input at a slightly more advanced level than what the students can currently understand, or comprehensible input (Briggs, 2014) clarifies the intention of this question of the current study. The results of Briggs longitudinal study (2014) are almost in contrary with the present research's result in this case. As it could be concluded from

the report of his study results, he found that a novice teacher teaches the materials usually as they are and without any modification and so his/her students do not reach their full potential because he does not give them enough opportunities to use the language in a meaningful way (Briggs, 2014). But, an expert teacher, as Briggs (2014) reported, do what Vygotsky (1978) suggested; that is, he/she leads his/her students toward a communicative goal by giving them the tools (Vygotsky, 1978), (e.g., a certain grammar principle or a cultural norm for apologizing in the target culture). In other words, an expert teacher tries to assume the role of an architect (Lee & VanPatten, 2003 as cited in Briggs, 2014) in his/her teaching. Just as an architect leads a group of builders to construct a building to complete, meaningful and real-life activities, this process allows students to learn and grow in their language proficiency as they use the tools to communicate (rather than recite) in the target language (Briggs, 2014). Briggs (2014) believes the way in which a teacher can provide his/her students with tools is through input, which can come in many forms, including writing, video, pictures, verbal communication, and so on. As Lee and VanPatten (2003) explain, input, like petroleum, can come in various forms and levels of quality. Often, the higher the quality of the refined petroleum (such as high-octane gasoline), the better a vehicle will run. To give an example of modification in material presentation, rather than teaching grammar explicitly through drills and memorization—'in a vacuum,' so to speak—the CLT approach uses TBA as when students are taught only the grammar necessary to successfully complete a real-world, meaningful task.

The result of this part of the current study which indicates that expert and novice teachers are similar in modification of teaching presentation is not also in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2012) findings which suggest expert teachers use form- and meaning-based modifications much more than novice teachers. He (2012) elaborately and clearly explains his findings relating to modification and intervention:

> We intervene by modifying the content and style of language input, and by modifying the nature and scope of interactional opportunities. Input modifications may be (a) form-based; (b) meaning-based; or (c) form- and meaning-based (interactional modification). The idea in form-based modifications is to draw the learner's attention to the structural properties in order to increase the degree of explicitness required for promoting L2 development. Meaning-based modifications, on the other hand, draw the learner's attention to meaning through communicative tasks such as games or information gap activities. They make sure that necessary grammar is embedded in meaningful contexts. Form- and meaning-based input modifications believe that focusing on both of them is more beneficial than focusing on either one of them. Together, they draw the learner's attention to the interactive nature of form, meaning, and discourse. (p.28)

Noticing the significance level of the T-test done for teachers' knowledge of teaching method (P-Value of T =0.22> α=0.05) in Table 4, it may be said with more than 95 percent assurance that there did not exist significant differences between expert and novice teachers' knowledge of teaching method ($t(192.73) = 1.23$, $p>0.05$).

Many researches on expert and novice teachers have compared these two groups' knowledge of teaching method. Some of these studies' findings are against what the current research found in this part on these special participants. In the Smith's study (1996), the experienced teachers' decisions revealed an eclectic use of theory and a skillful blend of theoretical ideas with practical needs in the ESL instructional context while novice teachers most of the time stick to one special teaching method. McMahon (1995) discovered that the key factor leading to the teaching effectiveness of expert teachers comparing to novice participants in his study were the fact that they had the knowledge of frequently utilizing pattern matches to adjust their teaching during their interactive instruction. Milner (2001) who has outlined and then has

compared the planning, thinking and teaching of experienced English teachers with those of novice teachers, contended that experienced teachers made responsive planning after learning about students' interests and the practical nature of the environment and adapted lessons interactively but novice teachers seemed not to have the knowledge of doing any of these effective actions. Similarly, Johnson (1992) reported that comparing to expert teachers, novice teachers have not developed a schema for interpreting and coping with what goes on during instruction, nor do they possess a repertoire of instructional routines upon which they can confidently rely.

As Table 4 reveals, it can be said with more than 95 percent assurance that there was not much difference between expert group and novice group's knowledge of language learning (P-Value of T =0.7>α=0.05). In other words, there were not significant differences between expert and novice teachers in terms of knowledge of language learning ($t(198) = -0.42$, $p>0.05$).

The result of this part of the present study is not in line with most of these studies reviewed in the literature since in the mentioned studies expert and novice participants were different in terms of knowledge of language learning. To mention some of them, in the study conducted by Meyer (2004), novice teachers held insufficient conceptions of prior knowledge and its role in instruction to effectively implement constructivist teaching practices. While expert teachers held a complex conception of prior knowledge and made use of their students' prior knowledge in significant ways during instruction. Ford (2011) realized that as opposed to novice teachers, expert teachers knew that "one-size-fits-all" instruction is rarely successful. They knew there are many different learning profiles in any given classroom, and students learn best when instruction matches their needs and learning styles. Kumaravadivelu (2012) also contended that there are some constructs in language learning process including input, intake, intake factors, intake processes, and input that interact with each other, resulting eventually in successful L2 development, however EFL novice teachers are less aware of these main constructs comparing to EFL expert teachers.

To sum up, in the present study, the professional knowledge was compared between expert and novice Iranian EFL teachers. Also, different components and various factors of this knowledge type were investigated and six factors including knowledge about language, knowledge of language teaching, knowledge of language components and skills, modification in teaching presentation, knowledge of teaching method and knowledge of language learning were obtained. Regarding the results of the study, Iranian EFL expert teachers were at higher levels of professional knowledge than Iranian EFL novice teachers. They were at higher levels of knowledge about language and knowledge of language components and skills than novice participants of this study. However, knowledge of language teaching, modification in teaching presentation, knowledge of teaching method and knowledge of language learning were at similar levels in these two groups of expert and novice teachers.

Conclusion

Some of the presuppositions of the researcher about expert and novice teachers before doing this study were different. One of these presuppositions was there may not be much distance for an EFL novice teacher in his/her way to become expert in terms of professional knowledge and its various sub-categories. But, this was proved right by the results that a complicated and complex route is in front of a typical novice teacher to become expert as the experience alone could by no means lead to expertise level. The other presupposition of the researcher about these two groups of participants was that with regard to all aspects of teachers' professional knowledge they have placed in two completely contrary points, but it became clear that they may be very

similar in some aspects of professional knowledge. Besides, although it is expected that the pass of time results in professional knowledge forgetting of high-experienced teachers, it was unexpected that the expert teachers with less experience of teaching were in some sub-categories of the three professional knowledge more knowledgeable than expert teachers with more experience of teaching.

We tried to clarify the main components and factors that Iranian EFL teachers need to promote in themselves using novice and expert teachers' knowledge, experiences, problems and solutions for these problems. Although the study was conducted on the EFL teachers of around the country, there were some limitations in the sampling procedure of this research. However, regarding great research findings agreement to previous similar studies, the results may be generalized to the Iranian EFL university and institute teachers conservatively. We hope that the findings could have the potential to provide a drive for further investigation in the area of language teacher education and diminishing the problems that EFL novice teachers are confronted with.

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Appendix

Pattern Matrix Based on Maximum Likelihood

	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15	.647							
8	.552							
14	.467							
17	.390							
2	.363							
18		.718						

21		.518						
10		.390		.378				
5		.322						
6			.855					
4			.374					
1								
9				.857				
12					.956			
11						.551		
19						.381		
13						.341		
7								
16							.799	
3							.307	
20								.865

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization