

Teacher Cognition in Foreign Language Vocabulary Teaching: A Study of Iranian High School EFL Teachers

Mohammad Reza Gerami
University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia

Nooreen BT Noordin
University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia

Abstract—Notwithstanding the relevance of teacher cognition inquiries, which has already become a tradition in our field, and exploration made to the many covert aspects of second language (L2) teachers' pedagogical thought processes, previous research has not fully taken vocabulary as a curricular area into account from L2 teachers' frame of reference. This inquiry sought to investigate vocabulary teaching approaches and challenges in some Iranian high schools from L2 teachers' perspectives thorough a basic qualitative research design in which a multiple qualitative data collection methods has been employed. Participants were purposefully selected and data collected through this method has been the foundation for the ensuing and interpretation. Findings indicate that although participants possessed a good deal of knowledge about English language teaching in general and vocabulary instruction in particular, approaches they employed to teach vocabulary are not in congruence with their real beliefs and do not essentially include any metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. However, major problems L2 teachers face with in vocabulary teaching are identified to be either related to the educational system or to the contextual factors.

Index Terms—teachers' knowledge, teachers' beliefs, teachers' cognitions

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of cognitive psychology has strongly altered perspectives and directions in educational research in a way that the influence of thinking on behavior is highlighted. The incompetence of the process-product research paradigm to fully appreciate epistemological and other critical cognitive areas of teaching gradually became apparent (Jackson, 1968; Shavelson & Stern, 1981) and soon, educational researchers became aware of the crucial role of teachers' mental lives (Walberg, 1977) in their instructional choices and made a distinction between what teachers do and what they know and believe (Borg, 2009). Gradually, researchers began to perceive teaching in a wider and richer mental context than merely portraying it as proactive or interactive behaviors (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Elbaz, 1983; Lampert, 1985). In the early 1990s, research in language education also shifted to focus on the cognitive aspects of teaching and attention was seriously paid to the central role of teachers in helping to improve language teaching (Freeman, 1991a, 1991b; Johnson, 1992a, 1992b; Prabhu, 1990). Since then, the significance of teacher cognition inquiry has been augmented and the center of attention in L2 research education has immensely changed from studying teachers' observable behaviors towards teachers' knowledge and beliefs to prop up their instructional practices, pedagogical decisions, and reflections (Woods, 1996; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999). Today, there is an almost general consensus among scholars that findings of teachers' cognitions will help to bring about the expansion and improvement of a theoretical knowledge base of teacher education practices (Carlgren & Lindblad, 1991; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Bartels, 2005). In teacher cognition studies, the investigation of teachers' personal responses discloses rationales behind their decisions, and also reveals their hidden thoughts and pedagogy which can be interpreted, judged, reviewed and also applied as a universal approach (Borg, 2009).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Approaches and Research in L2 Curricular Areas

In the late 1980s, attention was given to the significance of the complex ways teachers reflect on their practices on the basis of their previous experiences as students (Lortie, 1975, 2002), teachers' personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), and their beliefs (Pajares, 1992). The notion of work context has also been identified as crucial in structuring teachers' conceptions of their vocation (Kleinsasser & Savignon, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989a, 1989b). Research focusing on curricular areas in L2 teaching (e.g. Berry, 1997; Andrews, 1999; Borg, 2005; Meijer, Verloop & Beijaard, 1999, 2001; Tsui, 1996) has greatly attained invaluable findings which have so far improved various aspects of

language teaching. A survey of literature related to L2 teacher cognition in recent years reveals that researchers have investigated this issue in three specific areas of the curriculum (i.e. grammar, reading, and writing). Research investigating L2 teacher knowledge in specific curricular areas is mainly restricted to the study of grammar (e.g. Andrews, 1999; Schulz, 1996; Berry, 1997; Borg, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2005; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000), reading (e.g. Graden, 1996; Tercanlioglu, 2001; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 2001), and writing (e.g. Burns, 1992; Tsui, 1996; Katz, 1996) and other areas such as vocabulary, speaking, listening, etc. are rarely studied. Although research on vocabulary as a curricular area in language teaching is scarce, Zhang's (2008) research has almost been more evident in the literature. To collect data, the researcher used three methods (i.e. interviews, observations in the classroom, and stimulated recall). Participants investigated were seven EFL university teachers whose knowledge of vocabulary teaching was investigated, from different perspectives. Findings revealed that these teachers were knowledgeable about EFL vocabulary content. They also showed firm self beliefs about how vocabulary should be taught and learned. Furthermore, it was concluded that their teaching of vocabulary was in the main, in line with their beliefs, with some inconsistencies. The study also found that the teachers' knowledge of vocabulary teaching was acquired from various sources.

B. Teacher Knowledge, Teacher Beliefs, and Teacher Cognition

Although there is not any clear cut distinction between abstract concepts of knowledge and beliefs due to their intertwined similarity of features and overlapping natures (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001), an attempt has been made to provide a unified shelter for both concepts under the term of teacher cognition. In this sense, teacher cognition is used interchangeably to refer to both concepts of knowledge and beliefs in this paper. Consequently, in this inquiry, teacher cognition is defined as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching-what teachers know, believe, and think" (Borg, 2003, p.81). This definition with respect to language teacher cognition, according to Borg (2006), comprises beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, assumptions, conceptions, principals, thinking, and decision-making, about teaching, teachers, learners, learning, subject matter, curricula, materials, activities, self, colleagues, assessments, and context. Such definition unavoidably conveys that "language teachers have cognitions about all aspects of their work and that this can be described using various psychological constructs which I collectively refer to as teacher cognition" (Borg, 2006, p.283).

C. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is essentially grounded on the basis of Shulman's (1987) theory of teacher knowledge which has already been well tested and accepted in our field. On the foundation of the concepts derived from Shulman's (1987) teacher knowledge based theoretical model together with the practicality of this model, as proven in previous research dealing with language teacher knowledge (e.g. Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Tsui, 2003; Zhang, 2008), the researchers in this study generated their own conceptual framework so as to depict a profound understanding to the research questions. Among the seven elements in Shulman's (1987) model, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was identified important to study teachers' cognitions. The established conceptual framework has been essentially based on the assumption that if we want to have an effective vocabulary teaching, teachers' cognitions with respect to this curricular area must be discerned and this would be best depicted through investigating teachers' PCK. In the model presented by Shulman (1987), PCK is not a simple combination capturing both pedagogy and content, but is a special amalgam of both which is essential for any effective teaching through transmitting the subject matter in an understandable manner for students (Shulman, 1987; Grossman, 1990). Consequently, in the proposed conceptual framework, PCK stands for the extent to which EFL teachers are acquainted with the subject matter and are able to make the content accessible/understandable for students. What makes PCK different from pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge, are respectively laid in its association with subject matter and its emphasis on the exchanges of information between teacher and student so as to enable the teacher to make the subject matter accessible/understandable. As a result, EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with relation to vocabulary instruction directs attention to the extent to which teachers can transmit their English vocabulary knowledge (e.g. syntactic roles of words, dissect analysis of the words, pragmatic aspect of the words, definition, learning words through meaningful chunks, exemplification, etc.) to their students effectively.

D. Approaches to L2 Vocabulary Acquisition

Reviewing the literature reveals the existence of contradictory approaches to L2 vocabulary acquisition. Giving a good deal of information about approaches and theories related to vocabulary acquisition, Meara (1997) argues that researchers and theorists in psychology and second language acquisition have not yet agreed upon an acceptable theory of vocabulary acquisition. For a time, vocabulary, like other components of language was taught discretely, with explicit instruction. Due to the shift of perspectives and the emergence of new approaches and methods, the idea of implication came to view. Coady (1997) states that through extensive readings, one can implicitly acquire a large amount of vocabulary. Krashen (1989) argues that vocabulary cannot be well acquired discretely through explicit and structured approaches mainly due to time constraints of instruction and inadequate input. He insists on natural authentic communication and implicit instruction. The inability of implicit vocabulary instruction reported by various research studies on the one hand, and the emergence of some cognitive based approaches on the other hand, created a climate for

shaping a new integrated approach. This new approach, which captured both implicit and explicit instructional approaches, encompassed a lot of meaningful activities as well as a wider range of bottom-up and direct vocabulary teaching (Sökmen, 1997). Putting these events altogether, one might deduce that there is no absolute extreme to vocabulary teaching. To support this claim, Sökmen (1997) says that “the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the grammar translation method) to incidental (the communicative approach) and now, laudably, back to the middle: implicit and explicit learning” (p. 239). Moreover, the existence of many programs, approaches and strategies (e.g. Buikema and Grave, 1993; Bielmiller, 2001, 2004; Nagy, 1988; Baumann et al., 2002; Blachowicz & Zabroske, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford and Scarcella, 1994) on the issue of effective language and vocabulary teaching have made it complicated for EFL teachers to make the best decision. In such a variant context of approaches to vocabulary acquisition teachers must decide how to balance their instructional thoughts with practices to be most effective. In other words, they must decide where and when, what to teach to whom and in what sequential order that be appropriately matched with each learner's very unique cognitive structuring and processing system. Thus, it is interesting to discover how teachers come to such decisions. Moreover, teachers might create some innovative and new strategies on their own to facilitate the process of vocabulary acquisition which might also be the need of language pedagogy. Consequently, research in curricular areas such as vocabulary (Borg, 2009) reveals facts which may contribute to the diagnosis of covered pedagogical problems and help to cause the expansion of teachers' knowledge-base and become a reason for establishing new policy in language teaching.

E. Research Context

In Iran, English is taught to students for seven years in general (three years in guidance schools, three years in high schools and one year in Pre-University schools). English teaching in all these levels does not follow communicative approaches and teachers are mainly dependent on traditional approaches and methods. Teachers in Iran, especially in high schools, put more emphasis on grammar, reading and vocabulary (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004). Grammar and translation are the most predominant characteristic of English teaching in high schools (Riazi & Mosallanejad, 2011). Since Iranian students are very dependent on books and reading based materials, they require more vocabulary learning strategies to facilitate the process of comprehension (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004). According to Jahangard (2007), who evaluated English foreign language (EFL) materials taught at Iranian public high schools, long term objectives or the ultimate goals of the curriculum are not vividly clarified by the authors of the books. Therefore, teachers do not exactly know what the learners should do to reflect the intended objectives. Jahangard (2007) argues that “The final goals of the EFL program as well as the behavioral objectives which are aimed at by the curriculum designers are obscure” (p.5). Regarding the main objectives of English textbooks taught in Iranian high schools and Pre-University levels, Riazi and Mosallanejad (2011), in their study which was essentially based on Bloom's taxonomy, concluded that learning objectives of these text books mainly follow lower-order cognitive skills and the progression from lower to higher orders is not well appreciated. It seems that comprehension is the number one objective in these books and students mainly tend to memorize vocabularies independently out of contexts. The consciousness-raising facet of vocabulary exercises in high school and Pre-University English textbooks is also grossly neglected. Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007), state that only 1% of all textbooks in high school and Pre-University level may be depicted as consciousness-raising. Their findings show that students do not know how words are used in combination with other words and they mostly memorize words and their meanings individually out of appropriate contexts. Contents of the textbooks are rarely analyzed, synthesized or evaluated by the students since it is far beyond the real objectives of textbook developers and the teachers. In a study evaluating Iranian high school textbooks, Yarmohammadi (2002), concluded that high school textbooks suffer acutely from a lack of authenticity and mainly do not capture oral skills.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Borg (2009) states that vocabulary as a curricular area in L2 teaching has been marginalized to date from a teacher cognitive perspective and little is known about this curricular area of language teaching. In Iran, vocabulary is one of the most challenging issues in language teaching and what teachers do in their classes and include in their lesson plans to teach vocabulary are not clearly documented or studied. Although the scarcity of reliable evidence poses a challenge in attempts to prove that vocabulary today is a major concern in the context of English language teaching (ELT) in Iran, the inability of Pre-University students, as the output products of secondary education, to understand simple sentences or to convey their intentions through simple words may be considered as a logical sign to infer that ELT, as the consequence of teacher education, in Iranian high schools is in a predicament and suffers from some significant problems. It seems that vocabulary teaching approaches are limited to only some routine practices with traditional flavors used prevalently in L2 teachers' community as an instructional and a nationwide cultural norm. According to Pajares (1992), “individuals develop a belief system which houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission” (p.325). It is also believed that no two teachers have exactly the same way of teaching due to their previously shaped constructs of knowledge and beliefs which consequently leads to the issue of idiosyncrasy and mannerism. Therefore, in such a context expecting to observe variant vocabulary teaching approaches, it might be interesting to understand what challenges might force EFL teachers to follow the same teaching approaches notwithstanding that their students' pedagogical demands are considerably assorted. With the same intention Johnson

(1996a) claims that teachers' practices do not always meet the defined objectives of textbooks and such failure does not arise in response to teachers' lack of knowledge about theory, but is mostly due to the constraints imposed on them within the contexts of their practices. Such constraints are highly context-specific and must be studied individually. The ELT context of Iran is no exception and the major objectives of this study are to explore teachers' cognitions in such a context as to better understand their rationales and pedagogical reasons since this may reveal facts which are instructive and could be interesting to scholars.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate Iranian high school English language teachers' perceptions, knowledge and insights of vocabulary teaching.
2. To investigate whether Iranian high school English language teachers' vocabulary instructions and their actions in the milieu of the classroom are in agreement with their beliefs system.
3. To explore the challenges experienced by Iranian high school English language teachers in teaching vocabulary.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are developed to achieve the objectives of the study and to lead the researchers in planning the research design, data collection, and the data analysis. The questions include three main questions and one subquestion as follows:

1. What are the attributes and knowledge of a qualified L2 teacher inclining to teach vocabulary from the Iranian high school EFL teachers' point of view?
2. What actual vocabulary teaching practices do Iranian high school EFL teachers implement in their classrooms?
 - To what extent do Iranian high school EFL teachers' classroom practices reflect their vocabulary instruction beliefs?
3. What challenges do Iranian high school EFL teachers face in teaching vocabulary?

VI. METHOD

In light of holding an interpretivist view and to attain in-depth understanding about such epistemological issue as teacher cognition, we adapted a basic qualitative research design to investigate teachers' cognitions with respect to vocabulary teaching as a curricular area in language instruction in a rarely studied context, i.e. Iranian state high schools. Although piloting is a quantitative term usually employed in studies dealing with non-qualitative entities, a pilot study was conducted on the focus group so that the issues to be addressed in the main study were closely tested and adequate insight into the issue under investigation in a similar context was gained. In this way, the researchers, prior to the entry to the field could examine the interview questions to inspect whether the information emerging from the participants' data is pertinent to the purpose of the study or not. On the foundation of the feedbacks received from the informants in the focus group together with the suggestions of two experts, the first draft of the interview protocols which was initially formed in accord with the questions of the study and inspirations gained from the literature was changed or modified and a predetermined criteria list was consequently established to help the researcher select the main participants. The employment of the established criteria list in combination with the snowball sampling approach made it possible, for us, to accomplish the process of purposeful sampling as intended (Patton, 2002). As such, four competent male language teachers (between 42 and 55 years old) as the participants of the study, were totally selected from among of all EFL teachers in district five of Tehran (the capital city of Iran). Each participant was given a pseudonym for the purpose of anonymity. They had at least 20 years teaching experience in state high schools and pre-University levels. To collect rich data in depiction of people, to guarantee data reliability, and to perceive detailed behaviors and rationales from participants' own frame of reference (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1998) a multiple qualitative data collection methods including semi-structured in-depth interviews, classroom observations field notes, and stimulated recall interviews was employed. Data collected through this method has been the foundation for the ensuing and interpretation. The study was absolutely humanistic in applying data collection approaches and the researchers took on the role of non-participant observers while observing participants' practices (Spada, 1990; Tsui, 2003; Alwright & Bailey, 1991). Each of the participants' classrooms for vocabulary instruction during a full semester was closely observed and a wealthy thick field notes were taken for analysis. All participants were also interviewed five times using three semi-structured interview schedules including a pre-observation interview, four post-observation, and four stimulated recall interviews.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

All responses were recorded, transcribed, coded and recoded for emerging themes while adequately employing Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparison method and taking advantage of two experts in all the above mentioned processes. Inferential and explanatory issues like leitmotifs, pattern codes, and casual links were also distinguished in participants' classroom practices. Salient themes in the data emerged from both field notes and

interview transcriptions were categorized, and defined for further interpretations. Based on the analytical knowledge, we integrated the categories into one core category which was responsive to the research questions. We also followed the proposed strategies suggested by Merriam (2009) to promote the trustworthiness of the present study. These strategies include: triangulation, member check for adequate engagement in data collection, researchers' position and reflexivity, peer review examination, audit trial, "rich, thick descriptions", and maximum variation (Merriam, 2009, p.229). The researchers of this study as interpretive researchers were cognizant of the possible biases notified by scholars and researchers (e.g. Adler & Adler, 1987; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988) before entry into the field. As far as the knowledge of the researchers of this study is concerned, no harm of any kind from the researchers came to the teachers participating in the study. Throughout the whole project, the researchers kept in mind the ethical issues arising from the research. The researchers have also followed the guidelines about ethics proposed by Christians (2000) in the course of the study.

VIII. FINDINGS

The purpose of the current study is to investigate some Iranian high school EFL teachers' cognitions in foreign language vocabulary teaching through addressing the following research questions and subquestions. In this article salient themes, emerged from the data, are mainly reported and participants' verbatim statements are only referred to in some necessary cases.

Question One: *What are the attributes and knowledge of a qualified L2 teacher inclining to teach vocabulary from the Iranian high school EFL teachers' point of view?*

Mehdi, Sam, Nader, and Kamran (all pseudonyms) were the four participants in this study whose cognitions were mainly probed prior to any observations via a semi-structured in-depth interview as the source of emerging data to answer the first question of the study. Established upon the concepts derived from Shulman's (1987) teacher knowledge-based theoretical model and data procured in the first interview with all teacher participants, salient themes with respect to the quality and knowledge of a qualified EFL teacher predisposing to teach vocabulary, from the participants' point of reference, fall into four main categories and several subcategories as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
COMPONENTS OF A QUALIFIED EFL TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION
(FROM THE PARTICIPANTS' POINT OF REFERENCES)

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES
Content Knowledge	a) knowledge of skills : (listening, speaking , reading , and writing) b) knowledge of L1 and L2: (translation, identifying the source of errors, conveying the meaning through L1 as the last resort) c) knowledge of language as system: (phonology, morphology, and syntax) d) knowledge of language as discourse: (semantics and pragmatics) e) supplementary content knowledge: (western literature and culture , sociology, history, philosophy, social behaviors, religion, science, and general knowledge).
Pedagogical Knowledge	a) knowledge of teaching approaches, methods, and strategies b) knowledge of methods and assessment c) knowledge of axioms and different theories about learning d) knowledge of learning management e) knowledge of classroom management f) knowledge of instructional resources management
Knowledge of the learners	a) knowledge of students' characteristics b) knowledge of students' educational needs c) knowledge of students' background
Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)	a) knowledge of content b) knowledge of pedagogy c) knowledge of transforming subject matter (interpreting subject matter , finding a way to represent the subject matter, making the subject matter accessible to the learners)

Question Two and its subquestion: *What actual vocabulary teaching practices do Iranian high school EFL teachers implement in their classrooms? To what extent do Iranian high school EFL teachers' classroom practices reflect their vocabulary instructional beliefs?*

The data for question Two and its subquestion was obtained through a pre-observation interview and four classroom observations which were also followed up through four stimulated recall interviews (post-interviews) to attain the data relevant to the questions. Findings showed that approximately all participants believed that adequate knowledge with respect to how vocabulary is learned must be provided for students prior to any instruction. For instance Kamran said "Students need to know about vocabulary, not vocabulary itself. For example they must know how vocabularies are learned, taught, and so on" (Kamran, Interview 1, October 3, 2011). In the same regard, all participants offered some suggestions. For instance Nader said that "I suggest students to learn how to manage their learning, that is, a kind of awareness about learning vocabulary. This cannot be achieved if students do not have some learning strategies, like...contextualization, familiarity with formations of words, learning in chunks, and so on" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). Nader pointed to the importance of visual exposure and memory consolidation through repetition. He

said that “Repetition and constant practice can also help students’ memory to consolidate already taught materials” (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). Creation of imaginary situations to practice new words was suggested by Sam as a useful technique. He asserted that students can use words in familiar structures while imagining a situation. Sam said that “In this way more pictorial traces and clues would be created in mind which can substantially consolidate memories...through stronger associations” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). Findings revealed that participants possessed a great tendency towards psychological considerations in vocabulary teaching. Themes emerged from the data such as: “assimilation”, “repetition”, “chunking”, “memory consolidation”, “association”, and “clue” all are psychological terms dealing with memory. Recurrent themes, found in the data, indicate that all participants harmoniously emphasized on the importance of context in teaching vocabulary. For instance Mehdi said “...if there would be appropriate context, there would be more clues for teachers to teach vocabularies and for learner to learn them based on those traces” (Mehdi, Interview 1, September 24, 2011). Themes emerged from the data also indicate that teacher participants possessed similar beliefs in most areas of content and pedagogy relevant to vocabulary teaching. Teaching various learning strategies and skills were also emphasized by the participants. All participants stated that the familiarity of students with appropriate dictionary would create a good foundation for their activities which consequently enhances their learning. In the same respect Kamran said that “One inclining to learn vocabulary must constantly work with a dictionary since there would be many opportunities for the learners to practice” (Kamran, Interview 1, October 3, 2011). Another interesting issue Sam pointed to was the extent of attention needed to be paid on the taught materials as a criterion to determine appropriate practice. He stated that “... objectives whether the taught materials is just for comprehension or for production gives direction to the extent attentions students pay on teaching materials” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). Regarding the types of vocabulary, participant teachers gave similar assertions. For example Sam said that “In different context, decisions are also different... . In high school I only teach words which have already been mentioned in the book - even I do not try to teach one extra word” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). Sam's reasons for doing so was mostly identified to be as the result of various contextual factors such as “... time limitation, the nature of final examinations, students expectations, the poverty of the textbook in terms of context and the amount of attention given to vocabulary practicing, unclarity of books' objectives” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). He also mentioned to other evaluative and social norms as determining factors of his instructional behaviors. Sam mentioned the main reasons of deviation from his real beliefs of instructional practices and said “more importantly because of normative conformity and informational conformity. I do not want to be rejected by students as they have adopted with this system of teaching in several years” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). All participants asserted that although they know approaches they apply in teaching vocabulary are in conflict with what they really believe, they have to employ approaches which satisfy their students. For instance, Sam said that “... in state high school since time is limited and students do not generally have a good vocabulary and language background, I only try to translate approximately every single items. Students also understand and memorize...” (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). Although participants declared a variety of activities, approaches, techniques, and suggestions to teach vocabulary effectively, no serious and important difference do exist among all participants' beliefs to practice vocabulary in state high schools and the most predominant approaches they usually employ, as they said, are translation and memorization. It must be notified here that, due to the limitation of space, all participants' verbatim statements could not be brought in this article. However, Table 2 illustrates types of material, and activities recommended by participants as their real beliefs.

TABLE 2
TYPES OF MATERIAL, AND ACTIVITIES RECOMMENDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Participant(s)	Types of Material	Types of approaches, skills, activities, methods, etc.
Shared among all	○ Comprehensible story books	○ Assimilate sentences
	○ Dictionary	
Mehdi	○ Movies/Basic grammar book	○ Attendance in private institutes and language schools
	○ Basic vocabulary book	
Kamran	○ Short passages with different topics	
Nader		○ Self-management /Contextualization /Word Formations/ learning in chunks/ Repetition /Constant practice/ Visual exposure/Flash cards / Implicit and explicit
Sam		○ Listening to tapes which are accessible/ Imagery practice

With respect to how participants execute their beliefs in practice, all asserted that they have never been able to fully implement their real beliefs in practice. Although there had been instances of practices which were not reported by participants, the general trend of their instructional practices was towards what they stated as their modified beliefs. To teach the vocabulary of Pre-University Book One, participants employed variety of approaches, but with unequal degree of application and emphasis. With respect to translation as an approach for teaching vocabulary, findings in the field notes show that it is the most predominant approach, among other approaches, employed by participants almost in every area of their instructional activities. All participants read over the new words and translated them in absence of any contextual clues. Then they read over the text and translated sentence by sentence in to Farsi. Sam, for example, stated the reason for word by word translation and said “Since students' vocabulary background and structural knowledge is

not sufficient enough to understand the meaning of the sentences, and I have also limited time, translation is ideal” (Sam, Post-Observation Interview 3, November 29, 2011). It can be said that translation is the only approach whose traces can be found permanently in every part of participants' instructional practices. Another issue recurrently seen in the data is the issue of memorization. Participants recurrently used words such as: “memorize these words”, “repeat as far as you can”, “keep these vocabularies in mind”, “remember this list of words”, etc. As an instance when Mehdi was teaching the new words of Lesson One, he frequently told the students that: “These words are the most important words of this lesson and you must try to memorize them for next session” (Mehdi, field notes 1, October 8, 2011). Findings also show that, in general, instances of other vocabulary teaching approaches (e.g. application of approaches like: definition, dictation, pronunciation, collocation, mnemonics, word lists and repetition, guessing from context, focusing on form like: word-formation, and constant use of dictionary in the classroom) have rarely occurred in participants' instructional practices. As a matter of fact, the application of definition as a technique has been limited to the instances provided in the margin of the texts which were taught through translation.

According to the findings, directions of evaluation or assessment of the students are not towards finding students' educational and vocabulary learning needs or removing their learning difficulties. Findings revealed that what is so called assessment or evaluation is only a part of rituals. As Kamran said “Unfortunately, students are not analyzed or assessed in a way to find their real needs, what I and my other colleagues do is a part of rituals to report a grade for each student. Students' real needs are not followed up” (Kamran, Stimulated Recall 4, November 28, 2011). Findings in follow up data revealed that it is not exactly clear that in what area or areas the students need help. Kamran asserted that “I have only a total grade of each student since my intention has not been that to follow up everyone's particular problems” (Kamran, Stimulated Recall 4, November 28, 2011). As the same occasion became true about all other participants, this would also become apparent that participants' vocabulary assessment approaches are the same or at least the general trend of their assessments is towards the same direction. To confirm such findings Nader asserted that “Feedbacks of midterm and final examinations never reach to students” (Nader, Stimulated Recall 4, December 11, 2011). Such assertions and others indicate the ignorance of students' pedagogical needs and this is a strong evidence for “violating democratic education” (Mehdi, Post-Observation Interview 4, December 3, 2011). Mehdi also asserted that “The existence of contextual factors like: limitation of time, final examination biases, expectations of outsiders, etc., not only affect my teaching, but also make a hedge or blocker which does not let any feedbacks reshape my practices” (Mehdi, Post-Observation Interview 4, December 3, 2011). Nader considered contextual factors as a source which not only affects teachers' instructional behaviors, but also “causes a big blocker to stops positive signals” (Nader, Post-Observation Interview 4, December 11, 2011). Generally teachers' actual practices, according to the data emerged from field notes, can be categorized under two head categories of frequent approaches and non-frequent approaches. Table 3 illustrates the taxonomy of EFL teacher participants' approaches in vocabulary teaching.

TABLE 3
TAXONOMY OF EFL TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' APPROACHES IN VOCABULARY TEACHING

Application	Participants' Pseudonyms	Approaches Applied
Frequent approaches applied in common	Mehdi, Kamran, Nader, and Sam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translation- English into Farsi (widely used for every curricular activities and practicing) ○ Memorization- Bare word memorization(widely emphasized), Sentential level memorization (limitedly suggested and practiced) ○ Synonym (rarely used and mostly limited to the synonyms provided in students' book) ○ Note taking (limited to monitoring and suggestions) ○ Reading words aloud in classroom (widely used) ○ Definition (Limited to definitions in students' book)
Non-frequent approaches applied individually	Mehdi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-Mnemonic Elaboration Technique like exemplification (Limited to students' Questioning) ○ Dictionary (Limited to general introduction) ○ Word formation (Limited to general introduction)
Non-frequent approaches applied individually	Kamran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dictionary (Limited to general introduction) ○ Pronunciation (Limited to difficult words)
Non-frequent approaches applied individually	Nader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-Mnemonic Elaboration Technique like exemplification (Limited to students' Questioning) ○ Word formation(Limited to students' Questioning and general introduction)
Non-frequent approaches applied individually	Sam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List of the words (limited to a selection of important words in each lesson)

To sum up, findings indicate that teacher participants hold an admissible vocabulary teaching knowledge and possessed two types of beliefs, i.e. real beliefs and modified beliefs. As a matter of fact teachers' instructional practices were greatly congruent with their modified beliefs, but not with their real beliefs.

Question Three: *What challenges do Iranian high school EFL teachers face in teaching vocabulary?*

Although in any language teaching activities it is approximately impossible to expect instructions free from faults and barriers, it still seems instructive to identify challenges as this might assist and accelerate learning and teaching process to go more effectively along with other instructional components. The data for this question was obtained through a pre-observation interview, four field note observations, four post- observation interviews, and four stimulated recall interviews. Findings show that EFL teacher participants treat all students in the same way in terms of applying one approach for all. In the same respect according to the data the feedbacks of students' performances are not welcomed by teachers and cause no alternation in teachers' instructional activities in favor of the students. In this regard Nader said "Since time is limited, I do not usually follow up any student's problems individually. Although I know this is against my commitments to students, I present the course in the same way for all since I have no other choice" (Nader, Stimulated Re- call 3, November 27, 2011). Nader also said "Rarely approaches and methods other than translation and memorization are applied by me and my other EFL colleague teachers in state high schools" (Nader, Stimulated Recall 3, November 27, 2011). Findings show that due to the existence of some extrinsic factors, e.g. Final Examination and University Entrance Exam (UEE), students in state high schools do not show enthusiasm for materials other than those relevant to such exams. Although there are some students whose personal objectives might be different from that of the majority group, the general trend of motivation is not towards additional strategies of vocabulary teaching or additional materials. As an instance Nader pointed to different problems and said that "Students do not like extra materials Other factors like objectives of the book, its contents, the impact of final exam and possibly the impact of University Entrance Exam cause students to behave like this and be satisfied only with the book materials and not more than that" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). According to the findings, students' background knowledge is one of the significant problems EFL teachers face with. As Kamran asserted "Their background knowledge is not usually sufficient to understand more materials. This restricts teachers to provide other extra texts with valuable vocabularies. Instead teachers must think about supplementary materials which assist them to compensate their weak points" (Kamran, Interview 1, October 3, 2011). Mehdi pointed the same problem in different words. He said that "... students who are not homogeneous are in the same classroom and in most cases they are not cognitively matured for the syllabus"

(Mehdi, Interview 1, September 24, 2011). Another issue is low practicing and activity of the students on vocabulary. The data show instances of complain about students' practicing as participants generally believe that learning of vocabulary is closely connected to the issue of practicing. Kamran added that "I think when topics are not interesting, and the passages are boring, vocabularies will not receive more attention as well. Students need short passages with wider range of words" (Kamran, Interview 1, October 3, 2011). Findings also show that teachers believe that students in state high schools do not possess sufficient learning strategies. They believe, This and their low background knowledge as well as lack of motivations have created a kind of learning problem with respect to vocabulary as well as other areas of language learning. As Nader said "... the absence of learning strategies, motivation, inappropriate background knowledge are the main components of my students' learning problems. This is like a chain. The existence of one problem gives life to the other" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). Another issue found in the data is the expectation of the students. As participants asserted the expectation of the students seriously affects their instructional behaviors. For example, Nader said that "Students expect EFL teachers to teach in such a way that they can pass the Final Examination and University Entrance Examination. And since the nature of such exams are mostly based on multiple choice and other similar questions, my teaching strategies are also affected" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). Other participants asserted similar statements which generally show that expectations of the students affect teachers' instructional behaviors. Generally all participants conveyed that the material of the textbook is not sufficient enough for an effective vocabulary instruction. Additionally, they asserted that since most of these materials are not interesting for students, they do not motivate students to practice effectively. Mehdi said "Inappropriate textbook, and its obscure objectives can be pointed as the number one difficulty. For example, after more than 20 years of teaching, I still do not know what objectives the authors of these books want to implicitly or explicitly attain" (Mehdi, Interview1, September 24, 2011). Mehdi also stated that adequate contexts are not provided in the book and "... students also become confused when they see several meaning of a word in absence of sufficient contexts to provide them better realization and concept" (Mehdi, Interview 1, September 24, 2011). Mehdi said that a part of vocabulary learning would happen in listening and speaking skills while these sections are missed in high school courses. As he said "Textbook also seems to be like an ESP course. Since speaking and listening sections are not provided" (Mehdi, Interview 1, September 24, 2011). According to participants, their instructional activities have not so far been audited by the educational system and no feedback has so far been received from this source. They collectively asserted that there are many mismatches in the system the most important of which are the mismatch of objectives of the educational system with the content of the books. Participants also pointed to the unqualified on-the-job training courses and other mismatches like the mismatch of teacher education and the Ministry of Education in terms of the goals and objectives. Evidence to such claims is embedded in participants' suggestions as a whole. For example, all participants asserted that no especial training with respect to how to teach or learn vocabulary was given to them while they were at universities. Regarding the courses pertinent to teaching, all participants collectively agreed that what they were taught at teacher education centers were merely theoretical and the practicality of such courses was never met in their teaching practices. As an example, Nader asserted that "At university, I do not remember any useful or practical knowledge anyone has given me" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). It seems that university program in terms of teaching practical knowledge, which is an essential element for anyone who inclines to become an EFL teacher, has been unable to achieve its authentic purposes. Another interesting issue was teacher training education. Irrespective to the university education received by participants, each of them had experienced special training courses, mostly in form of on-the-job training courses which as participants stated had no serious effect on their knowledge of instruction. All four participants stated that such trainings, with exception of some rare cases, brought nothing for them but wasting their times. With the same respect Mehdi stated that "I have received many training hours most of which were not pertinent to my field of study. Even related training classes were not also qualified because none of which was handled with competent and knowledgeable lecturers" (Mehdi, Interview 1, September 24, 2011). Findings show that salient themes about challenges in vocabulary teaching from participants' point of view generally fall into four categories and several subcategories as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
CATEGORIES OF CHALLENGES IN VOCABULARY TEACHING FROM PARTICIPANTS' POINT OF VIEW

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES
Challenges related to EFL teachers	a) Methods and approaches , b) Competencies and skills
Challenges related to students	a) Motivation , b) Background knowledge, c) Learning strategies, d) Learning problems, e) Expectations , f) Skills, and g) Practice and activity
Challenges related to educational system	a) Educational materials, b) Educational equipments, c) Educational resource and support, d) Time, e) Evaluation, f) Audit and monitoring system, g) System mismatches, h) Policy, I) On-the-job training system, and J) Teacher education centers
Challenges related to contextual factors	a) Politics, b) Parents / society expectations, c) University Entrance Exam (UEE)

IX. DISCUSSION

According to the findings, all teacher participants possess a good deal of understanding and knowledge about language teaching and learning. Participants' real beliefs are to a great extent in agreement with the components of Shulman's (1987) theory of teacher knowledge. For example, Nader asserted that "A good English teacher must have enough knowledge, both theoretical and practical, about different components of language and he must be familiar with contents as well as the subject matter. With such knowledge a teacher can make the material accessible and understandable for students" (Nader, Interview 1, October 2, 2011). Such a belief is absolutely in congruence with Shulman's (1987) PCK. According to Shulman (1987), PCK is an essential component of teachers' knowledge. PCK is a combination of content and pedagogy in addition to the ability of transforming the content through the advantage of different conceptions to make it understandable for students. In this sense, PCK for an EFL teacher who aims to teach vocabulary comprises teacher's knowledge of vocabulary (i.e. content or subject matter), teacher's knowledge of vocabulary teaching and learning approaches (i.e. pedagogy or understanding of structures within a discipline), and a variety of teacher's conceptions of learning and teaching issues to make the subject matter comprehensible for students. With respect to the same issue, other participants also stated similar stances. For instance, Kamran said "Teachers willing to teach in the area of vocabulary need to know both languages to understand deviation and error sources" (Kamran, Interview 1, October 3, 2011). Kamran's point of view implicitly deals with teachers' knowledge of the learners since through such knowledge teachers are able to find out how their students must be helped. To Kamran, translation is a means to make content understandable for students. PCK also includes students' involvement in the classroom. Consequently, EFL teachers must create an active environment for students to do meaningful tasks. Such attributes are also in line with participants' knowledge of the task and practices. As Sam asserted "... a qualified language teacher must be a good manager in the class to establish a good and trusty atmosphere while creating adequate opportunity for all to participate in activities" (Sam, Interview 1, September 27, 2011). Generally, there are adequate evidence indicating that participants' knowledge has precisely been categorized under four categories including a) Content Knowledge, b) Pedagogical Knowledge, c) Knowledge of the learners, and d) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Findings also give an account of different knowledge types which are subcategorized under the above mentioned categories.

Although participants have exhibited beliefs proving that they are competent and in their repertoire hold sufficient knowledge with respect to all approaches, skills, and strategies of vocabulary learning and teaching, none of the participants' real practices was in congruence with their real beliefs. Findings also revealed that participants consciously departed from their real beliefs in how effectively vocabulary can be taught. In other words, participants explicitly asserted that they have never been able to execute their real beliefs in practice, and there are some factors making them practice against their real beliefs. It seems as if participants hold two belief systems, one to be implemented in an ideal or suitable context (i.e. their real beliefs), and the other one appropriate enough to be practiced in the existing condition (i.e. their modified beliefs). According to findings, the most frequent approaches used by participants can also be degreed in terms of extensiveness or length of application. For example, translation, memorization, and read words aloud in the classroom are more extensively employed by the participants than synonym, definition and note-taking. Other non-frequently used approaches like Non-Mnemonic Elaboration Technique (NMET), list of words, dictionary, pronunciation, and word formation seem to be more compatible with participants real beliefs although due to the impact of contextual factors have not been brought into use extensively. Comparing all these issues with participants' recommendations (i.e. real beliefs) for an effective vocabulary learning and teaching, it might become more apparent that participants have not exhibited an acceptable teaching behavior. Based on the findings, it is also revealed that there are some serious challenges on the way of participants which do not let their real beliefs whether fully or partially come to surface. According to findings these challenges are of four types as follows: 1) challenges related to EFL teachers, 2) challenges related to students, 3) challenges related to educational system, and 4) challenges related to contextual factors. These factors, according to participants, are mainly responsible for their existing instructional behaviors. Such findings are also in alignment with what Borg (1997) has referred to as contextual factors. What Borg (1997) has stated is too general and captures all factors which may facilitate or hinder teachers' instructional decisions to perform their practices. Improvement or deterioration of the stated challenging factors, according to the participants, will ameliorate or decline the effectiveness of their practices and make their real beliefs to be implemented, or replaced by modified beliefs. It has already been proven that teachers' cognitions and their instructional behavior are mutually informing (Beach, 1994). Therefore, teachers' cognitions together with contextual factors would influence the extent to which they make their beliefs harmonious with their teaching behaviors (Beach 1994). It also seems that, findings of this research study in terms of challenging factors, as discussed in above, can give a complete picture of the barriers whose removal would possibly cause vocabulary instructions to be effective in Iranian pre-University and perhaps high school context.

X. CONCLUSION

Teacher participants in this inquiry hold an admissible vocabulary teaching knowledge although they may require more assistance in practice and develop wider mental representation with respect to the practicality of their declarative and theoretical knowledge of vocabulary teaching. It appears that Iranian EFL teachers possess two types of beliefs. One type is their real beliefs which represent their actual understanding and true knowledge of vocabulary teaching and the other type is their modified beliefs which are shaped under the influence of some challenges. The most instructional

practices EFL teachers brought in the milieu of the classroom were confined to few cognitive-behavioral strategies (e.g. translation, memorization, note taking, etc.) and absolutely no metacognitive or socio-affective teaching approaches were employed by them. This indicates that high and other significant levels of educational objectives are not well acknowledged by the participant teachers in practice although they had proved to be competent and possessed a good deal of knowledge with respect to teaching vocabulary. As a matter of fact teachers' instructional practices are greatly congruent with their modified beliefs, but not with their real beliefs. It also seems that the major problems EFL teachers face with are either related to the educational system or are related to the contextual factors and students. Challenges related to the educational system appear to be greater in amount and significance as they are supposed to be considered in any effective instruction. These include: policy, materials, time, resources and supports, evaluation, on-the-job training quality, teacher education quality, audit and monitoring system, and equipments. The inappropriacy of the mentioned elements together with other system mismatches (e.g. mismatches between educational objectives and evaluation system, mismatches between teacher education centers and EFL teachers' qualifications required by the ministry of education, etc.) are also identified as the serious challenges affecting participants' instructional behavior. Another important issue concluded in this study is the existence of contextual factors (e.g. politics, parents/society expectations, University Entrance Exam) which force teachers to deviate from their real beliefs and to perform instructional practices other than those they really believe. Based on the findings in the present inquiry, it was also found that teacher education does not receive sufficient feedbacks from its teacher candidates after their graduations. Therefore, teachers' practical teaching behaviors and their inabilities due to the lack of effective instructions in teacher education centers are not vividly apparent for teacher educators to make revision in their programs. In this sense, there is a gap (i.e. gap of feedback between teacher education and high schools). Results of such studies are instructive (Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Borg, 2009) for EFL teacher educators to promote their works and programs. This inquiry sheds light on L2 teachers' cognition in one less investigated context (i.e. EFL vocabulary instruction in Iran).

XI. IMPLICATIONS

Iranian EFL teacher education and teaching programs are two main targets deserving to receive these implications to improve their programs. The first implication goes to the issue of teacher education curriculum in which no serious attention has been given to vocabulary learning and teaching as a curricular area. Such programs, according to the participants, must include specialized syllabus for improving this aspect through integration of vocabulary teaching in the frame of Iranian EFL teacher education. Approximately all participants believe that Iranian EFL teacher education programs require some changes in order to improve curriculum in this curricular area. Another important issue of concern deals with the practicality of the courses teacher education programs offer in this respect. It is suggested, as it is also reported by the participants, that if teacher education includes practical suggestions, in terms of how to learn and teach vocabulary through introducing appropriate approaches and methodologies, it would certainly be more effective in practice. The second implication goes to the EFL teacher educators who should help teacher candidates in terms of improving their teaching proficiency with special respect to pragmatic and semantic aspect of vocabulary instruction as it was found to be one of the greatest weaknesses of participants' knowledge. This failure might be removed through expanding teacher candidates' intuitions and knowledge of the semantic prosodic information and mainly through corpus studies (Partington, 1998) if adequately included in EFL teacher education. The next implication deals with the low practicality of vocabulary instruction in Iranian EFL teacher education. On the foundation of the findings in this inquiry, participants expressed displeasure about instructions they received, in EFL teacher education programs, with respect to some courses related to methodology of language teaching and linguistics. They complained that practically they learned nothing considerable to assist them in their instructional practices as they became teachers. It is also empirically proven that prospective teachers need more practical teaching skills than issues related to theories (Hedgcock, 2002; Johnson, 1996a, 1996b). Consequently, based on the participants' suggestions and on the bases of the general conclusions made in this inquiry, EFL teacher education programs in Iran may demand improvements, in the mentioned areas, with the purpose to redirect the objectives of the courses towards more practical understandings. Therefore, it would be effective for teacher education to acknowledge inquiries with respect to understanding teachers' cognitions about vocabulary teaching to depict more practical solutions for inclusion in its own programs. In this sense, teacher education would receive sufficient practical feedbacks from the milieu of classrooms and from the EFL teachers' frame of reference based on which teacher education programs can be revised. Based on the findings of this inquiry some of the problems both in teacher education and in the Ministry of Education are whether cultural or socio-political. It seems that even EFL teaching programs in teacher education are not appropriately designed to capture all dimensions for a dynamic educational system. In this respect, Freeman and Johnson (1998) propose the reconceptualization of the knowledge base in which socio-political and cultural context together with other educational components needed for any educational system are brought to an especial focus. Based on the data emerged from observation field notes, it was also found that, least attention was paid to the learners' needs and interests, issues which are greatly acknowledged by scholars (e.g. Shulman, 1987; Freeman and Johnson, 1998). As a matter of fact, teacher education should make teacher candidates aware of such issues and perhaps this might be achieved through modeling with practical implications for teacher candidates since in theory participants have shown a good deal of knowledge with the same respect. Respecting the Iranian EFL teaching programs and according to the findings,

although participants have theoretically revealed a good deal of knowledge with respect to content and pedagogy, their content knowledge seems to be far from practicality and dynamicity. Therefore, EFL teaching programs should manage such mismatches and provide opportunities for compensation. One example might be the development of more qualified on-the-job trainings programs different from the existing ones. As participants reported, the present EFL programs in form of on-the-job training courses are not instructive and effective. The reasons as the participants reported are mainly due to the total or partial irrelevancy of these courses to the practical aspects of their works. It is also reported that in most cases these courses are presented by inexperienced lecturers. Therefore, the EFL teaching programs must consider this fact that such programs can be motivating if skillful lecturers are invited. Based on the findings in this study, EFL teachers do not usually have any collaboration with other colleagues in the same field and therefore this has greatly decreased their peer learning behavior. Iranian teaching programs, in the preliminary steps, should motivate EFL teachers to uphold collaborative learning and attend in professional development programs. Through collaborative or peer learning, EFL teachers would be able to become critical thinkers (Crandall, 1998; Nunan, 1992). Consequently, EFL teacher programs can motivate EFL teachers to manage peer observations and might take advantages of formative observations to help EFL teachers develop new teaching approaches (Crandall, 1998), including vocabulary teaching as a curricular area in language instruction. Another implication of this study addresses educational textbook designers for Iranian EFL teaching programs. Based on the findings of this study, Pre-University textbook taught to senior level at high schools does not have adequate contexts for teaching vocabulary. Additionally, no sufficient sections are provided for students to practice vocabulary. Moreover, this textbook is basically grammar-oriented and therefore does not capture objectives with respect to teaching vocabulary and mainly the text book does not increase learners' awareness. This finding is in congruence with the findings of Jahangard (2007), Riazi and Mosallanejad (2011), and Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007) who suggest an immediate reformation with respect to the text books at high school level. Therefore, it is suitable and essentially needed for Iranian EFL teaching programs to give a request to textbook designers to make required modifications or changes based on empirical research to remove this problem. Of course, teachers' cognitions and personal implications would definitely be constructive, if their theories are gathered through a comprehensive survey and contributed to the modifications. Iranian EFL teaching programs also need to allocate more time to English course in high school (especially with respect to Pre- University level) as this is proven to be one of the major concerns of the participants. Based on the findings in this study, Iranian EFL teaching programs additionally need to make a pleasing balance between the textbook objectives and the nature of final examinations they expect to be taken. This is especially true about the University Entrance Exam (UEE) which has been reported to be responsible for changing students' expectations of EFL teachers in terms of the methods and approaches employed in the classroom.

XII. SUGGESTIONS

Concerning the questions of the study, additional in-depth inquiries with respect to EFL teachers' cognitions about vocabulary teaching will be demanded to investigate the same questions. This study has focused on a textbook taught at senior high school (Pre-University level) with very limited reading texts and vocabulary, in an Iranian context. Other studies might be conducted in different contexts, at different levels, with different textbooks while focus of studies is also put on the vocabulary as a curricular area. Other studies also might be done with inexperienced or pre-served EFL teachers to depict their understandings about vocabulary teaching. Further studies are also required to be conducted to examine EFL students' understanding of teacher cognition about vocabulary teaching with the intention to triangulation. At last, this qualitative inquiry did not aim at generalizing its findings and conclusions to a wide EFL context, such findings might be used as the foundation for additional quantitative research with the intention to generalization.

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Mohammad Reza Gerami (PhD.) has been an official English language teacher with the Ministry of Education of Iran since 1994. He has more than 10 years teaching experience with undergraduate and postgraduate students in different universities. He has also presented several articles in international seminars out of Iran and has published several books and journals. His field of interest is vocabulary as a curricular area, teacher cognition, teacher action research, teaching language to visually impaired children, general psychology, psychology and methodology of English language teaching, philosophy of language, discourse analysis, and L2 teaching and learning approaches.

Nooreen BT Noordin (PhD.) is a senior lecturer at the University Putra Malaysia (UPM). She is also the coordinator of the English language department (TESL - Department of Language Education and Humanities). She has researched on variety of topics and has published several journals and books.