innovative opportunities for language teaching. It is clear that the type of artistic activity used depends on the proficiency level and age of the language learners. The simplest teacher's artistic tools for language teaching are a marker and a board to draw upon very simple drawings for teaching grammar and vocabulary. Besides art, it is notable to refer to the role of literature such as short stories, novels, picture stories in the traditional and modern platforms such as digital storytelling for the innovative teaching of different language skills and components.

7. Watch, read, learn and negotiate

Teaching is a lifelong learning process. Today, with the accessibility of different language learning and teaching websites, video clips, software, applications and programs, watching and reading about innovative language methodologies round the world has become much easier. It is not necessary to invent the wheel every time. It is possible to watch others' innovative ideas, evaluate and utilize them. However, this evaluation and utilization needs a portfolio with knowledge of methodologies, teaching, learning and assessing as well as having a reflective and critical view about the received input. As was mentioned, a transformative professional development is a self-oriented, bottom-up process which is not necessarily institutional and prescriptive. Innovation is also a process which, though dependent on personality and individual differences, is not a static and definite entity and can have a dynamic and incremental nature, for its actualization and development training and teaching play an important role. Setting attainable goals while paying attention to the social, cultural and institutional conditions can

help teachers in their innovative teaching of a foreign language using all available tools. In other words, a synergistic interaction between innovation and teachers' transformative decision causes more professional development which in turn leads to more creativity and innovation in the language classroom. However, all this depends on the key role of a teacher's decision to walk in a different route for his/her professional development and innovation.

References

Anderson, L. W. & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Beghetto, R.A. & Corazza, G.E. (2019). *Dynamic perspectives on creativity: New directions for theory, research and practice in education*. Switzerland: Springer.

Cator, K. (2010). How do you define 21st-century learning?"*Education Week Teacher Professional Development Sourcebook: Editorial Projects in*

Education. Available at: http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/10/12/01panel.h04. html.

Dehghan, F. (2020). Teachers' perceptions of professionalism: A top-down or a bottom-up process? Professional Development in education. doi: 10.1080/19415257.2020.1725597.

Drossel, K., & Eickelmann, B. (2017). Teachers' participation in professional development concerning the implementation of new technologies in class: A latent class analysis of teachers and the relationship with the use of computers, ICT self-efficacy and emphasis on teaching ICT skills. *Large-scale Assessments in Education, 5*(1), 19. doi: 10.1186/s40536-017-0053-7.

Evans, L (2014). Leadership for professional development and learning: Enhancing our understanding of how teachers develop. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 44* (2). 179-198. doi: 10.1080/0305764X.2013.860083.

Jansem, A. (2018). 'Professionalism' in second and foreign language teaching: A qualitative research synthesis. *International Education Studies, 11*(1), 141-147.

Leung, C. (2009). Second language teacher professionalism. In A. Burns & J.C. Richards (Eds.), The *Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education* (pp. 49-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Markee, N. (1997). *Managing curricular innovation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, J. (2016). *Language teacher education*. London: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781315824932.

Smith, J.K. & Smith, L.F. (2017). The 1.5 criterion model of creativity: Where less is more, more or less. *Journal of Creative Behavior, 51*, 281-284.

their knowledge-supported viewpoints and insights.

3. Language teaching by collaboration and group work

Nearly all modern methods of foreign language teaching emphasize the importance of collaboration and group work in language teaching. If collaboration and group work are to lead to creativity in the classroom, the principle that must be taken into account in designing tasks is problem solving. For this purpose, it is necessary not to restrict acceptable language forms needed for performing and completing the task; rather, different linguistic forms must be acceptable for collaboration among the members of a group. In addition, language learners can be encouraged to explore further linguistic patterns and structures and use them in carrying the task on. Through this method, collaboration can change from a boring task which merely includes the repetition of what has been presented before to an activity based on problem solving, learners' needs and authentic input.

4. Teaching a foreign language by considering language learners' needs in real world

The concept of language learners' authentic needs has long been regarded as one of the main principles of second/foreign language learning-teaching process. Accordingly, learning and teaching which are based on learners' needs in real world set the ground for more innovation on the part of the teacher. Some of these needs for high school students are using computers, using different applications, reading medicine and food brochures, reading signs and tables and interaction with tourists.

5. Digital literacy and electronic and blended learning processes

In the era of communication and information technologies, one of the most important needs of language learners is e-learning which can result in innovative techniques in teaching a second/foreign language and motivate learners. It is a fact that e-learning can become extremely boring if it lacks innovation, but extremely motivating if the teacher utilizes different innovative features. In contrast to the past when preparing teaching materials using different teaching software and applications was a difficult task and lacked needed motivations for teacher and students today, different software, applications and online and offline platforms such as Storyline Articulate, and Moodle. using different facilities such as images, sound, gifs, animations, dictionaries and videos have made it possible for teachers to produce innovative language learning materials in a much easier way and with a much better efficiency. Moreover, blended learning techniques can also provide an innovating and exciting environment for language teaching.

> **A transformative professional development is a self-oriented, bottom-up process which is not necessarily institutional and prescriptive**

6. Art and its valuable role in innovative language teaching

Art and its different types from painting and drawing up to music, movies, video clips, animations and handcrafts can provide language teachers with a lot of
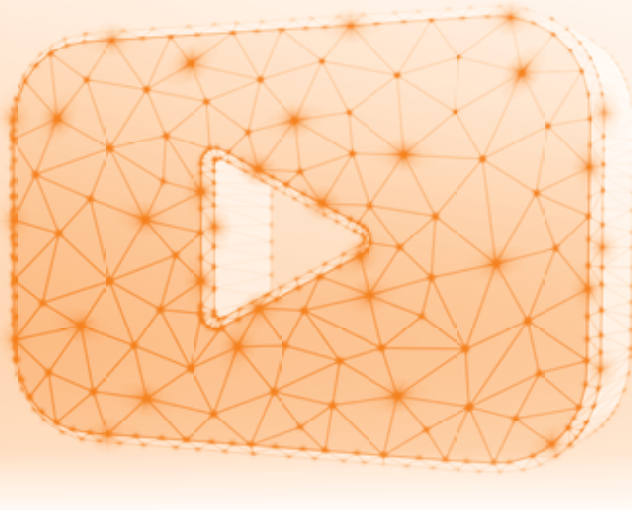
approaches toward professional development. One approach considers professional development as prescribed, institutional or top-down while the other approach considers it as personal, transformational and bottom-up (Dehghan, 2020; Leung, 2009; Evans, 2014). In the prescriptive approach, teachers wait for their institutions or organizations to enforce transformations in the language teaching system via changing textbooks, holding in-service courses and providing support from headmasters and supervisors. In the second approach, teachers are initiators of changes, though small, in their classes, which could lead to greater transformations in the educational system, which is based on teachers' beliefs, skills, knowledge and critical reflection about those practices and beliefs whether as a language learner in the past or as a language teacher in the present and determines their future goals, abilities and directions. In other words, the top-down approach is other-oriented whereas the bottom-up approach is self-oriented. That teachers may tend toward either of these extremes is a complicated issue which is interrelated with other teacher constructs such as beliefs, perceptions, self-determination, self-efficacy, creativity, etc. and is to a great extent under the effect of the environment which determines an individual's professional identity for action and reaction. Overall, what can be concluded from research

is that professional development which is transformational and self-oriented can trigger innovation in language teaching. In what follows, a number of practical suggestions about professional development and innovation in the context of Iranian schools are provided.

1. Small but permanent changes

It should be noted that radical and basic changes in the classroom on the part of the teacher, which do not pay attention to the contextual, social, cultural and institutional conditions, can not only be ineffective, but also may trigger negative feedbacks from other parties and dishearten teachers to the extent that they put aside any innovative change and return to the safety of the comfort zone of unchallenging routines. By setting small and attainable goals especially in acontext resistant to change, one can be hopeful to be part of the change process, even if the desired fundamental change does not happen during our professional career.

2. Having a critical and reflective approach toward institutional professional development

Teaching is defined as a life-long learning process. A teacher, even though professional, cannot deny the need for learning. Definitely, in-service and retraining courses are held during the professional life of a teacher. Only can a teacher take advantage of these courses and programs when they take a reflective and critical (not nagging and merely objective) approach toward them. Such an approach helps the teacher to analyze, compare and evaluate the presented materials, topics and methodologies based on thinking and reflection, and earn the most and the best achievements using

These high-order levels constitute critical thinking which is influential in encountering problems and solving them. In line with this categorization, some researchers have identified creativity and innovation with problem solving. This definition means that a creative person, when encountering a problem, first analyzes it through observation, reflection, and questioning. Then s/he evaluates the problem by trying to gather relevant data and exploring points of weaknesses and strengths and finally, finds the best solutions and chooses the most appropriate one. Such definition of innovation and creativity encompasses the abovementioned definitions too.

Learning and teaching which are based on learners' needs in real world set the ground for more innovation on the part of the teacher

In another line of research, while some scholars consider innovation and creativity as static and fixed concepts (talented or gifted people; (Smith & Smith, 2017), others regard them as dynamic, flexible and incremental concepts (Beghetto & Corazza, 2019). This idea can be compatible with the question of creativity being an inherited or learnt concept. If we accept that creativity is inherited or innate, then we consider it a static entity which is not influenced by training or teaching. In contrast, if we consider it as a learned or acquired concept, then we believe that environment and ecosystem are effective factors in training creative individuals. Both extremes are following a deterministic approach in the sense that according to the first view, if you are not a creative person by nature, you will not be able to be a creative teacher even in an appropriate environment, while the second extreme believes that everything depends on the environment and if you are not living in a creativity-supporting environment, you will never be able to become a creative or innovative teacher even if you have the needed mental and personal features. Away from these extremes, it should be noted that a third interactive approach could be considered according to which both individualistic and environmental features are important in training creative teachers who are able to take advantage of language teaching materials and methodologies in an innovative way.

Professional Development and Innovation: A Synergistic Interaction

Cator (2010) highlights four important features for curriculums in 21st century: collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking and innovation, and problem solving. The importance of innovation is to the extent that it is considered as one of the main goals of modern education, and the role of teachers as the initiator and provider of this creativity is emphasized. Now the questions to be asked are the role of professional development in training innovative teachers and whether professional development is limited to just innovative teachers and not all teachers. Education in general and language teaching in particular are among the areas wherein teachers' professional development is a must due to the dynamic nature of the profession. The idea of professional development or professionalism has recently attracted many researchers (Roberts, 2016; Jansem, 2018; Drossel & Eickelman, 2017). It is necessary to identify two

Introduction

Foreign/second language teaching has witnessed marvelous development in all levels. The introduction of modern methodologies in teaching and learning a foreign language on the one hand, and the access to a wide range of ubiquitous digital technologies on the other, have necessitated the need for change in second language teaching. Nearly all education scholars agree that the environment and facilities are necessary conditions for renovation in language teaching, the vital role of the teacher is not deniable. Since learning a foreign language is among the areas wherein the two above-mentioned factors (new methodologies and technologies) are very effective due to the interactive and practical nature of language, language teacher's innovation is a determining factor in the teaching-learning process of a second/foreign language. Now a question to be raised is whether innovation is an inherited, inborn capacity or proceeds training and professional development. In other words, are innovative teachers the reason behind changes in the educational system and enforce their innovative insights onto the whole system or in contrast, a radical change in this system and providing training courses for the professional development of teachers are needed to lead to the emergence of innovative teachers, who in their own turn, continue this change and promote the language teaching/learning system? The present paper aims to examine these questions and propose practical suggestions and hints for the promotion of innovation and creativity in foreign language teaching in Iranian high schools in order to promote language teachers' professional development.

Teachers' Innovation in Foreign Language Teaching

A wide range of definitions are proposed for innovation and creativity. Some believe that innovation is a broader concept than creativity (Markee, 1997) in the way that creativity is more personal or unique to personalities while innovation is a much broader concept which includes not only language teaching materials and methodologies but also the educational, cultural and social settings (the process which leads to the development of an innovative product or training of innovative individuals). Other definitions do not differentiate between these two terms, however consider different categories for the concept of innovation or creativity, wide range understanding and insight of high-order mental processes, individual and personality traits such as intelligence, ambiguity tolerance, resilience and adaptation, achievements adapted to particular environmental, cultural and social conditions, scientific achievements, cooperation among the members of an ecosystem, being new and surpass conventional traditions, and finally exploration.

> **A creative person, when encountering a problem, first analyzes it through observation, reflection, and questioning**

In the areas of education and learning, the most practical definition can be found in Anderson and Krathowl's (2001) reclassification of Bloom's categories of educational goals or learning levels, which provides a new definition for creation. According to Anderson and Krathowl's category, the highest levels of leaning are analysis, evaluation and creation.

The Interaction of Language Teachers' Innovation and Their Professional Development

Farzaneh Dehghan
Assistant Professor,
Amirkabir University of Technology
f_dehghan@aut.ac.ir

چکیده

یکی از مهم‌ترین عوامل ایجاد تحول در کلاس‌های آموزش زبان خارجی، نوآوری معلمان است. سوال این است که آیا این نوآوری می‌تواند باعث توسعهٔ حرفه‌ای فرد گردد یا خود در نتیجهٔ تعلیم و آموزش حرفه‌ای به وجود می‌آید. به‌منظور پاسخ دادن به این سؤالات، ضروری است که ابتدا مفاهیم و تعاریف این واژگان مشخص گردد. مقالهٔ حاضر تلاش دارد تا این دو خصیصهٔ مهم مربوط به معلمان زبان را بررسی و در انتها نیز پیشنهاداتی برای رشد و ارتقای آن‌ها ارائه نماید.

کلیدواژه‌ها: نوآوری، رشد حرفه‌ای، تعامل

Abstract

One of the most important factors in renovation in foreign language teaching classrooms is teacher's innovation. The question is whether this innovation can introduce professional development or happens as a result of training for professional development. To answer these questions, it is necessary to conceptualize and define the two terms. This paper intends to evaluate these two important features of language teachers and at the end, to propose suggestions for the development and promotion of these two interrelated concepts.

Keywords: innovation, professional development, interaction