



Comparing the Immediate and Delayed Impact of Reflective Task-Supported Teacher Training on Iranian Pre-service and In-service Teachers' Mediating Roles

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Abstract

Since 1990, a major concern in language teacher education was to enhance teaching skills and critical dispositions in the plethora of prospective and experienced teachers via training programs and to enable them to reflect on and critically analyze their own practice with the goal of promoting their mediating classroom roles and maximizing learning. Likewise, the current quasi-experimental study aimed to compare the short term and long term impact of a 60-hour reflective task-supported (RTS) teacher training course (TTC) on 37 pre-service and 40 in-service Iranian teachers' performance of their mediating roles as planner, manager, involver, facilitator, and controller. Individual participants were observed while teaching at the onset of the study, right after the RTS TTC, and with a 5-week Interval. Teachers' mediating roles were quantified based on an observation form by three supervisors and the data were analyzed via repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings indicated significant improvements in the performance of mediating roles from the first to the second observation immediately after the training in both groups and from the immediate to the delayed observation only in the pre-service group. The findings suggest pedagogical implications for teacher trainers and educators.

1. Introduction

Continuous development of societies, industrialization, modern economics, and lifelong learning movements led to rapid fundamental changes of educational settings in the 21st century leading to what has been referred to as redefinition of all educational variables including teachers' roles (Baskan & Hursen, 2010). Currently, according to Guo, Piasta, Justice, and Kadaravek (2009), there is a worldwide deal of attention focused on ensuring the quality of educational programs through promoting specific aspects of teacher performance and knowledge. Training and education of teachers have become one of the key issues in promoting inclusive education (e.g., Nash & Norwich, 2010) which is assumed to be one of the main goals in all developed countries. Based on Vries, Jansen, and Grift (2013), teacher training programs (TTPs) have been in high demand during the last two decades and the design and dissemination of new TTPs have inspired heated controversy among educators around the world. All European governments jointly took giant steps regarding teacher training to ensure improvements in education to achieve the intended purpose of the European Union's (EU) educational policy.

2. Research questions

This study aims at answering the following two research questions:

1. Does reflective task-supported teacher training enhance the adequacy of pre-service teachers' mediating roles in the short and long run?
2. Does reflective task-supported teacher training enhance the adequacy of in-service teachers' mediating roles in the short and long run?

3. Methodology

This study was conducted with two different groups of participants at an English institute in Tabriz. The first group consisted of teacher applicants who had passed TOEFL exam with the cut-off score 500 and were admitted to the pre-service teacher training program in this institute. This group was composed of 37 both male and female would-be teachers who attended the pre-service teacher training course with the hope of getting recruited for a teaching job in that institute.

The second group included teacher trainees who had teaching experience of between two to six years in this English institute. This group consisted of 40 (male and female) teacher trainees who had previously participated in different types of pre-service teacher training courses which were neither reflective nor task-supported, and were selected by R & D department for teaching in this institute.



However, these teachers after starting their teaching job for few terms in this institute, and due to their observed weaknesses were required to participate in an in-service teacher training programs to renew and update their knowledge and skills.

3.1. Instrumentation

To describe the participant teachers' skills in performing various mediating roles quantitatively, the researcher designed an observation form.

3.2. Procedure

Each participant was observed four times while teaching: prior to the course, during their final demonstrations (Demos) at the end of the course, during the first week of the term when they started their work as an English teacher in this English institute, which is normally five to ten days after their final Demos and during the last week of the first term (each term takes about five weeks).

Finally, all recorded TPs were separately watched by three trained supervisors including the researcher who have received formal training in supervision and are now working as teachers and supervisors in the same institute for at least 10 years. They all have passed several hours of supervisor training course in the same institute beforehand. Supervisors observed the video-recordings of the teaching performance of individual teacher applicant precisely and after each observation, they filled out the observation form and marked the performance with a score. The average of these three scores by three different supervisors was calculated as the total score of the teaching performance in that session.

For gaining insight about the impact of RTSTT on in-service teacher trainees' mediating roles and also comparing the immediate and delayed effect of such training course on various aspects of their mediating roles, the same procedure which was implemented for the pre-service group was repeated for in-service teachers.

Effects of RTSTT on various mediating roles of the pre-Service teachers

One-way repeated measures ANOVAs were run to compare the pre-service teachers' scores on five different mediating roles in three different times before the training through pretest and after the training in the immediate and the delayed posttest. As provided in Table1, the descriptive statistics for all the mediating roles indicated that the means of:

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Different Mediating Roles for the Pre-service Group

	Time	N	M	SD
Planner	Time 1	37	11.35	1.35
	Time 2	37	20.48	3.27
	Time 3	37	31.05	1.17
Manager	Time 1	37	11.29	2.20
	Time 2	37	21.29	1.02
	Time 3	37	30.45	1.90
Involver	Time 1	37	11.81	1.37
	Time 2	37	20.89	1.12
	Time 3	37	30.51	1.62
Facilitator	Time 1	37	11.54	1.48
	Time 2	37	21.45	2.63
	Time 3	37	30.89	2.15
Controller	Time 1	37	1.71	1.54
	Time 2	37	3.07	.95
	Time 3	37	4.49	4.86

The time effect yielded by the Wilks' Lambda, provided in Table 2, were statistically significant, $F(2, 35) = 1786$ for planner, $F = 774$ for manager, $F = 1473$ for involver, $F = 985$ for facilitator, and finally $F = 599$ for controller. And for all the mediating roles $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .9$. The result indicated that there were statistically significant differences among the performance of the five specified mediating roles by pre-service teachers over time (i.e., the pretest, the immediate, and the delayed post-test).



Table 2

Multivariate Tests of Five Different Mediating Roles for the Pre-Service Group

Effect			Value	F	H. df	Error df	Sig
Partial Eta							
	M. Roles						
Square							
Time	Planner	Wilks' Lambda	.010	1786	2	35	.000
.990							
	Manager	Wilks' Lambda	.022	774	2	35	.000
.978							
	Involver					Wilks' Lambda	
.012	1473	2	35	.000		.988	
	Facilitator	Wilks' Lambda	.017	985	2	35	.000
	Controller	Wilks' Lambda	.028	599	2	35	.000
							.972

H. df = Hypothesis df

M.Roles = Mediating Roles

To pinpoint the exact location of the difference Bonferroni correction was used for the analyses to investigate pre-service teachers' performance regarding mediating roles, their scores in the pretest, which was before receiving the treatment and the scores in the immediate post-test were compared.

2.1. Effects of RTSTT on various mediating roles of the in-service teachers

The same analyses were conducted for the results gained from in-service group.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

Results of the analyses indicated that both pre-service and in-service groups in the immediate and delayed posttest outperformed their pretest performance of mediating roles. Pre-service teachers also indicated great improvement in their delayed posttest compared to their immediate posttest. However, the in-service group's performance was almost without change from the immediate to delayed post-test.

Analyzing the mean differences between the pre-service teachers' immediate and delayed performance of mediating roles demonstrated that teachers of this group indicated great improvement from the immediate to delayed posttest. This result is the proof for the positive role of practice that leads to teacher awareness of the method and class. The more feedback received from the students by the teacher, the more skilful they become in conducting their classes. It can be concluded that as newly-employed teachers' familiarity of teaching procedure and students increase, their authority gets established so they find enough confidence to put into practice what they have learned in training sessions.

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