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Relationship between teacher self-disclosure and teaching style: Perception of EFL teachers

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Abstract
The purpose of the current study was to investigate the level of EFL teachers' self-disclosure and to see if there was any relationship between the instructors' level of self-disclosure and their teaching styles. To this end, ninety-five Iranian EFL teachers participated in the current study by completing the teacher self-disclosure scale (TSDS) and the Grasha-Riechmann teaching style survey (GRTSS). According to the results, Facilitator was the dominant teaching style among participants, and Delegator was the second dominant one. Moreover, the results indicated that among the three aspects of teacher self-disclosure Relevance was significantly correlated with Personal Model and Expert styles. The results recommend complementing teacher's awareness about teaching styles with dimensions of self-disclosure, specifically Relevance and Positiveness. Moreover, EFL teacher trainers are recommended hold more teacher training courses for less experienced EFL teachers where EFL teachers can be introduced to techniques and strategies that help them adopt the teaching styles.

Keywords: Self-Disclosure, Teaching Style, EFL Learners, EFL Teachers, Teacher-student relationship, Correlation

1. Background
Teacher-student relationship is perhaps one of the most important relationships a person will encounter; it is considered a vital relationship in which a person’s founding principles exist (Lowman, 1995). Teacher-student interaction inherently involves some amount of self-disclosure by both parties. Teacher self-disclosure is defined as “teacher statements in the classroom about self that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn from other sources” (Sorensen, 1989, p. 260). Teacher self-disclosure has been recognized as an effective instructional tool in classroom teaching which can be considered as a pedagogical tool. According to Jourard (1971), self-disclosure can consist of intimate and non-intimate topics. Intimate topics, for example, might be family concerns, financial status, and preferences; non-intimate self-disclosure might include political preference and personal hobbies and interests.

Because of the significance of self-disclosures, a number of studies (e.g., Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Wambach & Brothen, 1997; Cayanus, & Martin, 2003; 2004a; 2004b) were conducted to come up with major dimensions of self-disclosure. Previous literature identified
three dimensions, namely Amount, Relevance, and Positiveness, which are of significance for the use of self-disclosure in academic settings. Amount as one of the dimensions of self-disclosure is the extent to which revealing information is incorporated in the interaction context by one of the parties engaged. Relevance is referred to as a student’s perception of whether or not the teacher’s self-disclosure content can meet his/her personal needs, personal goals, or career goals (Cayanus & Martin, 2004a). And, Positiveness of self-disclosure refers to the extent to which the content of self-disclosure is characterized by or displaying certainty, acceptance, or affirmation.

Teacher self-disclosure has been studied since the end of the 1970s. Nussbaum and Scott (1979) pioneered the study of teacher self-disclosure based on interpersonal communication theory. Afterward, other researchers including Sorensen (1989), Goldstein and Benassi (1994), Walker (1999), and Minger (2004) studied teacher self-disclosure based on the same theoretical framework. Studies based on the communication theory contributed to the findings that teacher self-disclosure helps establish positive teacher-student relationships, creates a constructive environment, or helps students understand their teachers better and participate more enthusiastically in classroom activity. As for dimensions of self-disclosure, Cayanus and Martin (2004b) found that higher amounts of teacher self-disclosure were positively related to student participation, out-of-class communication, student interest, and student motives to communicate. Additionally, Cayanus and Martin (2004b) found a relationship between amount of teacher self-disclosure and perceptions of a teacher’s assertiveness and responsiveness. Relevance has been related to classroom variables such as verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996), student motivation (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier et al., 1996; Keller, 1987), and affect for the course and instructor (Frymier et al., 1996). Cayanus, Martin and Goodboy (2004) could show that when teachers use a high amount of positive, relevant disclosures in the classroom, students are motivated to communicate for relational and participatory reasons. Additionally, when teachers use positive and relevant disclosures, students rated their teachers as more credible.

Classroom teaching, however, is different from dyadic interpersonal communication. Minger (2004) states that “the incorporation of social penetration theory was not as appropriate in the instructional setting as it has been in interpersonal dyadic research” (p. 165), and she suggested that, “It is now time for future research to go beyond adapting and borrowing theories for instructional use to developing our own theories specific to the instructional context” (p. 165). Moreover, in teaching practice, teachers often use teacher self-disclosure as an instructional tool (Cayanus, 2004) to clarify the teaching content, to supplement the teacher’s teaching materials and to stimulate students’ interests so that teacher self-disclosure is used both as an informal and living curriculum for learning and as an instructional tool for communication. However, previous studies within the framework of communication theory did not pay sufficient attention to the unique features of teacher self-disclosure.

Even though a substantial amount of empirical research focuses on self-disclosure as a communication construct within interpersonal relationships, little research examines self-disclosure within various instructional contexts including Asian instructional context (Sorensen, 1989). One reason for neglecting self-disclosure within the instructional environment is because self-disclosure is often conceived as a way to move a relationship from initial acquaintanceship to greater levels of intimacy. While teachers may not find it particularly desirable to move the teacher-student relationship to greater levels of intimacy, they may want to move the relationship beyond the level of stranger
or acquaintance because some moderate level of relationship development may be essential for teachers and students to relate affectively and effectively. Consequently, self-disclosure may be an important factor in building an effective (and affective) teacher-student relationship.

In addition to teacher self-disclosure, another issue which is related to the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom is their teaching style. Based on the theory proposed by Grasha (2002) teachers need to be well versed in various teaching styles in order to connect with students. In an attempt to remedy his dissatisfaction with the then current conception of teaching and learning models, Grasha’s (1996, 2002) put forward his teaching style model. Grasha (1994a, 1994b, 2000) conducted a thematic analysis that resulted in five clusters formatting his teaching style inventory: Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, and Delegator. As Grasha (1996) believes teachers who have an Expert style for teaching show the knowledge and expertise that students are interested in and require; this sort of teachers struggle to be known as experts among students by providing detailed knowledge with students and by improving students’ competence through instructional challenges. The teachers do their best to transmit the required information and make sure students are quite prepared. Students are challenged to enhance their understanding and to be prepared for course activities.

Within the Formal Authority cluster, teachers are viewed as controlling the learning process by providing course objectives, expectations, rules of conduct, and feedback. Extreme use of this particular teaching style may lead to a rigid learning environment. Learners will feel confined to a standardized learning process developed by their teachers (Grasha, 1996, 2002).

In the Personal Model cluster, teachers are viewed as prototypes. Learners are encouraged to observe the behaviors of their teachers and then emulate their hands-on approach to thinking and behaving. Extreme use of this particular teaching style may leave learners feeling inadequate because of the stress and inability to reach teachers’ expectations or standards (Grasha, 1996, 2002).

The Facilitator cluster viewed teachers as guides leading their students through the learning process. As consultants on learning activities, teachers encourage the independent development of students. Teacher-student interactions consist of the learners asking their teachers questions, teachers and students exploring solutions, teachers providing additional alternatives and encouragement, and students creating criteria and courses of action. Extreme use of this particular teaching style may be a time-consuming endeavor. Teachers of this instructional style may consider using easier direct teaching approaches. Teachers should strive to provide a learning environment that is both positive and affirming for learners (Grasha, 1996, 2002).

Within the Delegator cluster, teachers are viewed as a resource during the learning process. This particular cluster focuses upon developing autonomous learners, who are given independent assignments to complete individually or in teams. Extreme use of this particular teaching style may cause teachers to misread learners’ readiness to complete independent activities. When given independent assignments, learners may become anxious (Grasha, 1994a, 1994b, 2000).

According to Marzano (1992) since all people learn in different ways, it is, therefore, essential that teachers try to incorporate as many different teaching styles as possible into the delivery of what they are teaching. Teaching style may serve as one crucial contextual factor
as teachers may disclose themselves in classroom teaching in a positive or negative way. Without giving adequate consideration to teaching styles, teachers may disclose themselves without any control over amount, topics, purposes, and other dimensions of teacher self-disclosure. This would contribute to teacher’s efficacy that has the greatest impact on student achievement as a general educational goal (Hattie, 2012).

From a cultural point of view, teachers’ cultural beliefs and biases are closely related to their communication with students. For instance, a misconception shared by some teachers is that students from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly Blacks, are less capable academically (Bloom & Peters, 2012; Howard, 2010; Nieto, 2004). According to Hall (2002), because students are not alike, differentiated instruction requires teachers to use different styles in their approach to teaching. If teachers can acknowledge the effects of their cultural beliefs and biases on their teaching style, they can become more effective and have a positive effect on EFL learners and overall view toward education and the educational system. Although, teachers, as senders of teacher self-disclosure, function as another important factor in terms of teacher self-disclosure, literature on teacher self-disclosure has not revealed the study of their teaching style. Accordingly, not only the study of self-disclosure as a crucial factor that may give rise to better learning outcome is a need that must be fulfilled, but also its relationship with other significant learning variables such as teaching style makes sense to be explored.

Furthermore, no other study has been done to investigate whether teacher self-disclosure dimensions have the power to significantly predict the teaching styles. However, some studies in the context of Iran have investigated other factors which might be able to predict the teaching styles. For example, teaching styles are found to be predictable from classroom management orientations (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012) and from emotional intelligence (Mousapour Negari & Khorram, 2015). On the contrary, some other Iranian studies found no factor to act as a significant predictor of teaching style. For instance, gender has been reported to have no predicting power in identifying teaching styles (Baleghizadeh & Shakouri, 2014) and personality type was not found to be a significant predictor of teaching style (Behnam & Bayazidi, 2013).

Accordingly, the problem that captured the attention of researchers of the current study was the exploration of the status of self-disclosure among EFL teachers and the likely association between teacher self-disclosure and teaching style in an Iranian EFL context. Researchers of the current study, as English language instructors hoped to shed more light on the nature of teacher self-disclosure practiced by Iranian EFL teachers and provide further information regarding the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and the teaching styles implemented by Iranian EFL teachers. The study also intended to check whether dimensions of self-disclosure have the power to predict teaching styles used in an EFL context. It was hoped that, the study, also brings the likely relationship between teacher self-disclosure and teaching style into spotlight for English language teacher trainers so that they reach a decisive conclusion whether or not and to what extent the issues investigated in the current study should be included in teacher training courses.

2. This study

Using the key factors mentioned above, the present study was initiated to identify the teaching style of teacher participants i.e., Iranian EFL teachers. This study also tried to examine whether teacher self-disclosure can significantly predict the teaching style among
Iranian EFL teachers. Considering the aforementioned issues, this study addressed the following research questions.

Q1. What is the dominant teaching style among Iranian EFL teachers?
Q2. Is there any relationship between teacher self-disclosure and teaching styles among Iranian EFL teachers?
Q3. Can teacher self-disclosure predict teaching style among Iranian EFL teachers?

3. Method

To find answers to the research questions, a correlational quantitative research study was used that incorporated a survey design.

3.1 Participants

The population from which the participants were selected included English language teachers from both public schools and private institutes in Isfahan city, Iran. Through an availability sampling technique, the researchers selected the participants based on their availability and after making sure they were willing to take part in this study. A consent form was signed by the participants. Among 120 English language teachers who were asked to take part in the study, a total of 95 completed the two questionnaires.

Teacher participants who took part in this study were both teachers and would-be teachers holding or studying for BA, MA, and PhD in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), English Language and Literature, English Linguistics, and English Translation. They ranged in age from 20 to 52. Moreover, they had a teaching experience in teaching English as a foreign language from less than two years to more than 20 years.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale (TSDS)

Teacher self-disclosure was assessed using Cayanus and Martin’s (2008) Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale (TSDS). It is a 14-item, Likert-type instrument that deals with the use of self-disclosure by teachers. The scale includes three modules that explore three dimensions of self-disclosure namely Amount, Positiveness, and Relevance. A seven-point scale ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7) is used by participants to indicate how every item of the questionnaire applies to them. Sample items include: “I often talk about what I do on weekends,” “I reveal undesirable things about myself,” and “I use personal examples to make the content relevant to students.”

Previous internal reliabilities (Cronbach’s Alpha) for all three dimensions of TSDS have ranged from .79 to .91 (Cayanus, Martin, & Goodboy, 2004; Cayanus, Martin, & Myers, 2004). In order to investigate the reliability of the TSDS, Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was calculated. The internal consistencies for the three dimensions were as follows: Amount (.75), Positiveness (.88), and Relevance (.83). This indicated that the reliability of TSDS was acceptable in the current study.

With respect to the validity of TSDS, Cayanus, Martin, and Weber (2003) have shown that
the TSDS has content validity through the relationship with teacher clarity. Furthermore, principal components analysis in Cayanus and Martin (2008) revealed that each item loaded in the appropriate dimension and showed evidence of content validity.

3.2.2 Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Style Survey (GRTSS)

Teaching styles are measured by administering and scoring Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Style Survey (GRTSS), designed and validated by Grasha (1996, 2002). The GRTSS measures five teaching styles: 1) Expert, 2) Formal Authority, 3) Personal Model, 4) Facilitator, and 5) Delegator. The GRTSS is a forty-item scale that measures attitudes and behaviors associated with each of these five teaching styles; it uses a 5-point Likert-type scale that rates the responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This survey has been a long-established, widely used, and valid (Cronbach's $\alpha = .808$, as cited in Pying & Rashid, 2013) instrument. The GRTSS is part of public domain and automatically scored at the following website http://www.longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html.

3.3 Procedures

In order to collect the data from the participants, they were primarily informed that all details of their information would be confidential. The data collection procedures were not the same for all of the participants. Some of them were met at the institutes or schools and were asked to complete the TSDS and GRTSS in paper format. The remaining teachers were contacted via email. They were asked to fill in and return the TSDS and GRTSS which were provided in fillable PDF files as attachments to the email. The researchers sent personalized follow-up emails to instructors after the two week period. If after four weeks survey packets were not received, the researchers made personal telephone calls to those who had not yet responded. Finally, out of 120 distributed questionnaires, 95 survey materials were collected from the teacher participants. Finally, the obtained data were compiled and put into analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

In order to conduct the required statistical procedures in the current study, the software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22.0 was employed. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics and the statistical procedure ANOVA were used in order to find out how the five teaching styles of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, and Delegator were distributed among Iranian EFL teachers and to see which one was significantly the dominant style. Additionally, in order to answer the second question, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were carried out between all dimensions of Amount, Positiveness, and Relevance of teacher self-disclosure and the five teaching styles as measured by GRTSS. Finally, to answer question three, multivariate multiple regression was used to assess the ability of the three aspects of Amount, Positiveness, and Relevance of teacher self-disclosure to predict the teaching styles among Iranian EFL instructors.

4. Results and Discussion

Since the current study set out to achieve three objectives, results and discussions provided below are organized according to every research question that dealt with one of the research
objectives.

4.1 The dominant teaching style among Iranian EFL teachers

The first research question tried to identify the dominant teaching style among Iranian EFL teachers. In order to find the dominant teaching style among the five styles, the descriptive data extracted from the collected GRTSSs were used. The descriptive data with regard to the distribution of the five teaching styles are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Style</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegator</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Model</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 1, the Facilitator style of teaching received the highest mean score. The next most frequently occurring teaching styles were Delegator, Expert, and Formal Authority. In addition, the lowest mean score belonged to the Personal Model. However, to make sure whether the differences among the five teaching style was significant or not inferential statistics was used.

The statistical procedure One-way between-groups Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare the mean scores of the five teaching styles as measured by GRTSS. To this end, a preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality and homogeneity of variance with no serious violations noted. The ANOVA test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference among the means of the five teaching style groups $F(4, 91) = 8.915, p = .001$. Tukey Post Hoc multiple comparisons test indicated that Facilitator style of teaching obtained significantly the highest mean ($M = 4.01, SD = .47$) compared to other teaching styles; also, Delegator had a higher significant mean ($M = 3.68, SD = .60$) compared to Expert, Formal Authority, and Personal Model teaching styles. However, There was no significant difference between Expert ($M = 3.52, SD = .51$) and Formal Authority ($M = 3.42, SD = .60$). Moreover, Tukey Post Hoc multiple comparisons revealed that compared to all teaching styles, Personal Model ($M = 2.50, SD = .60$) had significantly the lowest mean.

According to Grasha (1996) the Facilitator and Delegator are partners in students' education, because their teaching behaviors guide students by exploring options, encouraging critical thinking, and operating as a consultant or resource for students. For both the Facilitator and the Delegator teachers, a goal is to develop in students the capacity to become independent and to take responsibility for their actions after a thorough analysis of what actions are needed for a given situation.

One reason for the fact that Personal Model was the lowest style among the participants might be related to the cultural issues in Iran. Giroux (1994) defines teaching as a social experience and expresses history, politics, power, and culture as issues affecting education. In this respect, in eastern cultures, particularly in the context of this study, teachers
mostly prefer to keep the distance from their students in order not to lose the control of the crowded classrooms.

The findings of the present study is in congruence with other research findings such as Efılti and Çoklar’s (2013) and Hosseini Fatemi and Raoufi’s (2014) who reported similar distributions for the five teaching styles. Efılti and Çoklar’s (2013) study revealed that teacher candidates respectively adopt a teaching style as a Facilitator, Delegator, Personal Model, Expert and the very last Formal Authority. In other words, while a Facilitator style was the most adopted teaching style by teachers, the Formal Authority teaching style was the least adopted one. In an Iranian context, Hosseini Fatemi and Raoufi (2014) investigated 110 English language teachers from both private and public educational sectors in Mashhad participated in this study. They found that Facilitator was the dominant and Delegator was the least one. These congruent findings suggest conducting further research studies in an EFL context, for example, getting EFL teachers’ attitudes towards different teaching styles and collecting information regarding why some teaching styles, for instance Expert, is not the dominant one among teachers.

On the other hand, the results run counter to Faruji (2012), Amini, Samani and Lotfı (2012), Elkaseh et al. (2014), Shaari et al. (2014), and Sheikh and Mahmood (2014). Faruji (2012) found that teachers of English language institutes in Iran prefer to use Formal Authority Style. Amini et al. (2012) determined Grasha teaching method among the faculty Members in Shiraz Medical School in Iran. According to their results, the highest average score belonged to Expert method and the lowest to Personal. Elkaseh et al. (2014) found Expert and Personal Model styles as the dominant teaching styles, but Delegator was the lowest used one in their study. Additionally, according to Shaari et al. (2014), in a Malaysian university, the dimension of Personal Model has the highest mean. In Pakistan, Sheikh and Mahmood (2014) reported that the Formal Authority style of teaching was most frequently observed and was followed by the Expert style. The incongruent findings opens new research lines, for example, finding the impact of such contextual factors as university setting compared to institutional setting on the use of teaching style among EFL instructors.

As can be seen in the above discussion, the findings of the current study support some previous research and also run counters to some other research findings. These differences warrant additional research to be conducted in this area.

4.2 The relationship between teacher self-disclosure and teaching styles

The second research question addressed the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers’ self-disclosure and their teaching styles. In order to answer the second research question, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between teacher self-disclosure and teaching styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Style</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Positiveness</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>-.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>-.1384</td>
<td>-37.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>-.449</td>
<td>-.142</td>
<td>-.394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the correlation coefficient in Table 2 revealed that there was a positive and significant correlation between the Personal Model and the two self-disclosure dimensions of Positiveness ($r = .477$, $p = .000$) and Relevance ($r = .261$, $p = .010$). In addition, Expert style of teaching and the Relevance self-disclosure were shown to be positively correlated ($r = .251$, $p = .014$). As Table 3 displays, the correlation between Positiveness and Personal Model ($r < .5$) is a medium or a moderate relationship. Additionally, the relationships between Relevance and the two teaching style of Personal Model and Expert were small ($r < .29$). However, there were no significant correlations between the other teaching styles and self-disclosure aspects.

Based on the observed results, it could be inferred that among the three aspects of teacher self-disclosure, Relevance was slightly correlated with Personal Model and Expert styles. Similarly, Positiveness and Personal Model had a positive and moderate

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1 The strength of the relationship can be identified by the value of the correlation coefficient. The guidelines put forward by Cohen (1988) suggest that a large correlation between two variable can be assumed when $r = .50$ to 1.0; when $r = .30$ to .49 the correlation is considered as a medium one; and for when $r = .10$ to .29 a small correlation is assured.
relationship.

When the relationship between teacher’s self-disclosure and students’ learning is concerned, Relevance is believed to play a key role too (Hill, Ah Yun, & Lindsey, 2008; Cayanus & Martin, 2008). According to Cayanus (2004), teacher’s self-disclosure could be normally revealed through the content of the lesson. Since previous researchers have not investigated the relationship between teaching styles and teacher self-disclosure, our findings contribute important new information to the research literature. This study found a significant and positive relationship between Expert teaching style and Relevance. Based on what has been mentioned above, we can say that a teacher who includes relevant personal information (i.e., relevant self-disclosure) as the content of the lesson and possesses knowledge and expertise (i.e., Expert teaching style) can transmit these contents effectively and make sure that students are well prepared. Accordingly, it could be deduced that teacher’s disclosure through the content of the lesson is a part of the process of teaching which characterizes the dimension of Relevance (Cayanus, 2004; Cayanus & Martin, 2008).

Moreover, Lannutti and Strauman (2006) note that instances of disclosures should not be used in the classroom in case they are not relevant to the course content; they will not be accepted by students. As Hill et al. (2008) believe not all personal information regarding the teacher or regarding his/her family members or leisure time should not be disclosed in the classroom. This usually demotivates students to learn and is referred to as the negativity of teacher’s self-disclosure (Cayanus, 2004; Hill et al., 2008).

This study found no relationship between any of the teaching styles and the Amount aspect of teacher self-disclosure. This finding is somehow consistent with Hill et al. (2008) who believe that the third dimension of teacher self-disclosure (i.e., Amount) normally is not linked to the learning and teaching. However, it is possible to say that adequate amount of relevant disclosure through the content of the lesson will help students learn better (Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Nevertheless, the current study failed to find any correlation between this dimension of teacher self-disclosure and the five teaching styles. Therefore, further research is called for to investigate this issue.

As for the Positiveness dimension of self-disclosure, findings of the current indicate its positive correlation with the Personal Model teaching style, according to Table 3. That is, positive self-disclosure, which is tied directly to the subject matter, appears to be related to the Personal Model of teaching style. Actually, this can be true because as Frymier and Shulman (1995) report, students would be motivated and they would be intellectually stimulated when the content of teaching is agreement with their background knowledge and confirms what they believed (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011).

### 4.3 Teacher self-disclosure as a predictor of teaching styles

The third research question addressed the aspects of teacher self-disclosure that could act as predictors of Iranian EFL instructors’ teaching styles. Multivariate multiple regression was used to assess the ability of the Amount, Positiveness, and Relevance self-disclosures to predict any of the five teaching styles among the participant of the current study. This statistical analysis includes entering all variables at once into the model. Accordingly, the results would show to what extend the set of variables entered can predict the teaching style; moreover, it can indicate the extent of unique variance every one of the self-disclosure aspects explains in the teaching styles over and above the other dimensions of self-disclosure included in the set. Before conducting multivariate multiple regression
statistical analysis, all required assumptions including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were checked and no violation of assumptions was observed. Results of the multiple regression analysis are presented below.

**Table 3. Model Summary - Multiple Regressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.58824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegator</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.59644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.47102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Model</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>.52602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>.306</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.56916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relevance, Amount, Positiveness

Table 3 provided the R, R², adjusted R², and the standard error of the estimate, which could be used to determine how well a regression model fit the data. R values of .508 and .306 for Personal Model and Expert style respectively, indicated a good level of prediction. The value given under the heading R Square showed that more than 25 percent of the variance in the Personal Model and more than 9 percent of the variance in the Expert style was explained by the model (which included the 3 dimensions of Relevance, Amount, Positiveness).

**Table 4. ANOVA - Multiple Regressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Residual</td>
<td>31.488</td>
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<td>.346</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>33.393</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>.446</td>
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<td>.792</td>
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<td>Personal Model</td>
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<td>8.742</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.277</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td>3.129</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.324</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

The F-ratios in Table 4 tested whether the overall regression model was a good fit for each of the teaching styles. Table 4 showed that the self-disclosure aspects could significantly predict the Personal Model, $F(3, 94) = 10.532, p = .000$, and Expert style $F(3, 94) = 3.129, p = .030$. Therefore, it could be concluded that the regression model was a good fit for these two styles of teaching.

**Table 5. Coefficients - Multiple Regressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
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<td>.478</td>
<td>9.029</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.366 - 5.265</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Positiveness</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegator</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-0.018</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
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<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.013</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>-0.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>Amount</td>
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<td>0.014</td>
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<td>Positiveness</td>
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<td>0.249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>0.034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<td>0.400</td>
<td>0.034</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illustrates which of the three self-disclosure dimensions included in the model contributed to the prediction of the teaching styles. Table 5 revealed that the Positiveness aspect supplied a good prediction for the Personal Model ($p < .000$) and the Relevance dimension contributed to the prediction of Expert teaching style ($p = .033$). This meant that these aspects of self-disclosure made the strongest, significant unique contributions to explaining the Personal Model and Expert styles, when the variance explained by all other personality traits in the model was controlled for. As shown in Table 5, none of the other self-disclosure factors could significantly predict teaching styles. According to the results, it could be concluded that among the three self-disclosure dimensions the Positiveness can act as the best predictor of Personal Model, and Relevance can act as the best predictor of Expert teaching style.

The findings imply that the Personal Model that teachers select can be influenced by the Positiveness of their self-disclosure in the classroom. According to Grasha (1996, p. 25) “educators that employ this teaching style often use themselves as a personal example and a role model for how to think and behave. They oversee, guide, and direct by exhibiting for the student specifically how to accomplish the tasks”. This sort of educators “encourage students to observe and then to follow the example set” (Grasha, 1996, p. 25). Their primary emphasis is on direct observation and on following, not on leading. Therefore, whether or not the disclosure is positive or negative in nature plays an important role when the Personal Model is adopted.
In addition, Positiveness was found to be related to trust and solidarity, both of which are parts of interpersonal relationships (Wheeless, 1976; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). Fusani (1994) claimed that teacher self-disclosure is a “rich personal source of student-teacher communication” (p. 249). Positiveness of a teacher’s disclosure may allow for communication which is the aim of the Personal Model of teaching style. Therefore, this might explain why the findings of the current study suggest that the Personal Model can be influenced by the Positiveness of their self-disclosure in the classroom.

Speaking about Relevance of self-disclosure, Frymier and Shulman (1995) proposed that teachers can make the course content relevant by using examples, exercises, and class discussions which, of course, is manageable by an Expert teacher. This can be one possible explanation for our findings that Relevance of self-disclosure can act as the predictor of Expert teaching style. The theoretical viewpoint accentuating the role of teachers in the classroom as the manager of teaching/learning process, as reported by Brown (2007), is also supported by the findings of the current study.

Overall, the discussion with regard to the results of the third research question contributes to a better understanding of the nature of the prediction power of self-disclosure as related to teaching style; however, with regard to scarcity of research in this area, further research needs to be done to enrich this point.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results reported and the discussion conducted in the previous sections, it can be concluded that the Facilitator and Delegator styles of teaching were the most frequently occurring teaching styles among Iranian EFL teachers. These styles fall into learning-teaching clusters that are conducive to adult learning theory use and student-centered environments and learning activities (Grahsa, 1996). These clusters are also compatible with the learning-teaching dyads formed among students and instructors.

This study found that among the three aspects of teacher self-disclosure, Relevance was slightly correlated with Personal Model and Expert styles. However, Positiveness and Personal Model showed positive and moderate relationships. A conclusion can be drawn that a teacher who knows the content of the lesson (i.e., Relevance) and possesses knowledge and expertise can transmit these contents and make sure that students are well prepared (i.e., Expert). Furthermore, the current study failed to find any correlation between the Amount dimension of teacher self-disclosure and the five teaching styles. Therefore, deductions can be made that the Amount dimension of teacher self-disclosure is not linked to learning and teaching (Hill et al., 2008).

Results also revealed that the Positiveness aspect supplied a good prediction power for the Personal Model. Thus, it can be concluded that the teachers’ Personal Model can be influenced by the Positiveness of their self-disclosure in the classroom. In addition, it was found that the Relevance of self-disclosure can act as the predictor of Expert teaching style. The conclusion can then be generated based on Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) idea that Expert teachers can make the course content relevant by using examples, exercises, and class discussions.

5.1 Implications of the study

The results of the current study can be beneficial for EFL teaching in a number of ways. It is
taken for granted that providing theoretical foundation for teaching practices improves teaching efficiency. Accordingly, complementing teacher’s awareness about teaching styles with dimensions of self-disclosure will pave the way for teachers to approach the teaching efficacy that best suit their teaching purpose.

Moreover, EFL teacher trainers are suggested to hold more teacher training courses for less experienced EFL teachers where EFL teachers can be introduced to techniques and strategies that help them adopt the teaching styles that match their educational context best.

Next, since self-disclosure is an item in the field of psychology that is related to language learning/teaching, it is better to be introduced in courses dealing with EFL teacher education and philosophy of education. Teacher’s self-disclosure can be introduced in the books of second/foreign language teaching methods. Therefore, the authorities in the field of materials development for second/foreign language teaching should take this aspect into consideration.

Lastly, it was found that Positiveness aspect supplied a good prediction power for the Personal Model and that the Relevance of self-disclosure can act as the predictor of Expert teaching style. Accordingly, matching the lecture content to students’ needs and relating the lecture to students’ or teacher’s experiences are among recommended strategies for EFL teachers to have more relevant content. This is also supported by what Muddiman and Frymier (2009) found that students report Relevance in the classroom when “instructors tell students personal stories or examples from their lives and/or career” (p. 143). Moreover, making sure that the content of presentation for an EFL classroom is positive—in the sense that it is in agreement with student background knowledge—could be an advantage for EFL teachers to have more motivated students. EFL teachers are encouraged to engage in these behaviors to promote engagement in their classrooms. EFL Teachers should be mindful when they engage in self-disclosure, as those disclosures may lead students to feel more or less similar to them in terms of background and social identity. If teachers do engage in self-disclosure they should remain authentic to their own identities (Hosek & Thompson, 2009), but make sure that what they disclose is relevant to course content.

5.2 Limitations of the study

A number of limitations come to light in interpreting the results of the present study which warrant further research. One of these limitations is that the participants were all EFL teachers in Iran, and having the same results with other populations including western and non-western is not guaranteed. As such, a logical future research topic is to replicate this study in a different culture and compare the results to those in this study. Second, in terms of teacher self-disclosure and teaching styles, an in-depth look into the constructs seems particularly warranted. For example, case studies as of instructors who are rated low in self-disclosure as well as those who are rated high in self-disclosure might bring further insight into the issue and about how self-disclosure functions. Finally, the data in this study came entirely from a single method, i.e., Likert-scale based, self-report questionnaires. Future research into this area should consider triangulation to avoid method effect.

References


Public interest statement

The current study explores how teaching styles are perceived to be implemented by EFL teachers. It also sheds light on the extent to which dimensions of self-disclosure, namely Amount, Positiveness, and Relevance, are correlated with five clusters of teaching styles. Based on the data collected from among 95 EFL teachers in an Iranian context, the results revealed that Facilitator and Delegator are the most favorable practiced teaching styles among Iranian EFL teachers. The results also indicated significant relationship between the Relevance and Positiveness of self-disclosure and Personal Model and Expert teaching styles. However, the amount of self-disclosure did not show significant correlation with teaching styles. Accordingly, the use of self-disclosure as an instructional tool for EFL context could be considered by EFL teachers and training future EFL teachers to use relevant positive self-disclosure could be recommended as an educational policy for teacher education in particular.
Authors’ Bio-data:

Mohsen Shahrokhi is an assistant professor in Applied Linguistics at Shahreza Branch of Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, and issues concerning teaching and learning English as a foreign language. A number of his research papers have been published in international refereed journals including ‘The impact of visualization and verbalization techniques on vocabulary learning of Iranian high school EFL learners: A gender perspective’ published by *Ampersand* journal, Elsevier (Science Direct). He has also contributed to books and handbooks, including a chapter entitled ‘The Impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on Phrasal Verbs of Iranian Intermediate EFL Students’ in *Handbook of Research on Mobile Learning in Contemporary Classrooms* published by IGI Global, USA.

Noushin Safaie is an M.A graduate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Her research interest includes EFL teaching styles and teacher education.