THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERMEDIATE EFL STUDENTS' LECTURING AND THEIR LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

Oral production plays a significant part in any academic field, especially in TEFL (Heyde, 1979). This study aimed to illuminate and investigate the interactional effect of self-esteem (SE) and lexical knowledge (LK) on intermediate EFL learners' lecturing.

In so doing, after homogenizing the students as Intermediate ones via a placement test, a validated questionnaire of SE (Sorenson, 2006) was administered to 36 intermediate students. They were also asked to sit for a lexical exam. Accordingly, the subjects were divided into four groups: 1) High LK, High SE, 2) High LK, Low SE, 3) Low LK, High SE, and 4) Low LK, Low SE. Having administered the questionnaire as well as the lexical test to the learners, the researcher asked the subjects to deliver a lecture on a specific topic and all the lectures were video –recorded. The data collected from the questionnaires as well as the scores given to their lectures were analyzed through SPSS (16.00). Results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups of High LK, High SE and Low LK, Low SE. The former group outperformed the latter one. The outcomes of this study can have benefits for both foreign language teachers and learners. They both can attain better results by focusing more on the psychological factor of SE and attaching more importance to the lexical knowledge of the learners in order to enhance students' lecturing.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, self-esteem has attracted the attention of many scholars in psychology and education and many studies have been conducted to show the contribution of this characteristic to the learning of different subject matters including the learning of English (Kamarzarrin, 1994).

Self-esteem is an important variable in second language acquisition (Brown, 1994). It is a very significant factor because no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of it. Students perform well when they have high global self-esteem, or they may have a high global self-esteem because they perform well. Heyde (1977) explored the relationships between the three levels of self-esteem and students' oral performance in second language. Her findings showed that oral language performance has a strong bearing upon global self-esteem.

Lexical knowledge is the knowledge which covers all information about words, meanings and relevant relation among sounds, phoneme and morpheme. In learning English language,

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vocabulary and lexical knowledge is acknowledged as a significant contributor to ESL or EFL improvement (Coxhead, 2006; Horst, Cobb, &Nicolae, 2005; Lee & Munice, 2006). That is, "L2 learners' lexical knowledge may determine the quality of their listening, speaking, reading, and writing performances" (Mokhtar, 2010, p. 72). The main and central point of second language acquisition(SLA) is lexical knowledge, the vocabulary of which is its fundamental structure. It is often regarded as the major need and source of defects by language learners (Segler,2001).Gass (1988) emphasizes and confirms the significance of lexical knowledge in such a way that grammatical errors lead to understandable meaning, but the errors in vocabulary and lexical knowledge disrupt the meaning of context and stop communication.

Academic speech is defined as speech that occurs in academic settings and includes both rehearsed and spontaneous speech (e.g., Lindemann & Mauranen, 2001). Disfluencies and stops with stumbling and stammering are inevitable parts of speech and lecturing during oral productions, which are based on hypothesis that such problems are the indications of keeping time to search for the next relevant word, phrase, idea and sentence (Rochester,1973).

The aim of this research was to figure out the interactional effect of both self-esteem and lexical knowledge on intermediate EFL learners' lecturing. In other words, an attempt was made to find out if the two independent variables of self-esteem and lexical knowledge combine, will it enhance lecturing?

RESEARCH QUESTION

RQ: Is there any significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' lecturing and the interactional effect of their self-esteem and lexical knowledge?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is not any significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' lecturing and the interactional effect of their self-esteem and lexical knowledge.

PARTICIPANTS, DESIGN, PROCEDURE

The participants were 54 EFL students (male and female) in Azad Islamic University of Zanjan and were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. Having been homogenized via a proficiency test (Cambridge Placement Test, 2010), 36 students were selected as Intermediate ones. Their age ranged between 20 and 45. The current study was ex-post – facto design, since there are two independent variables (self-esteem & lexical knowledge) and one dependent one (lecturing). In order to achieve this purpose, a group of English language learners' lecturing was video-recorded and rated based on reliable criteria introduced by Farhady, Jafarpoor, and Birjandi (1999). In order to do so, the validated questionnaire of self-esteem (Sorensen, 2006) was employed. In order to measure the learners' lexical knowledge, the Cambridge lexical

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knowledge standard test (Vocabulary Extra) was administrated to all thirty-six intermediate level students. Accordingly, four groups were formed:

1.high lexical knowledge – high self-esteem group
2. high lexical knowledge- low self-esteem group
3. low lexical knowledge – low self-esteem group
4. low lexical knowledge – high self-esteem group

DATA ANALYSIS

Having collected the results, the researcher recorded the scores in computer files for statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

A one-way ANOVA is run to compare the means of the groups on the proficiency test in order to prove that they enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the main study. Based on the results displayed in Table 1 ($F_{(3, 31)} = .40$, $P > .05$; $\omega^2 = .053$ it represents a weak effect size) it can be concluded that there were not any significant differences between means of the four groups on the proficiency test. Thus it can be claimed that they enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the main study.
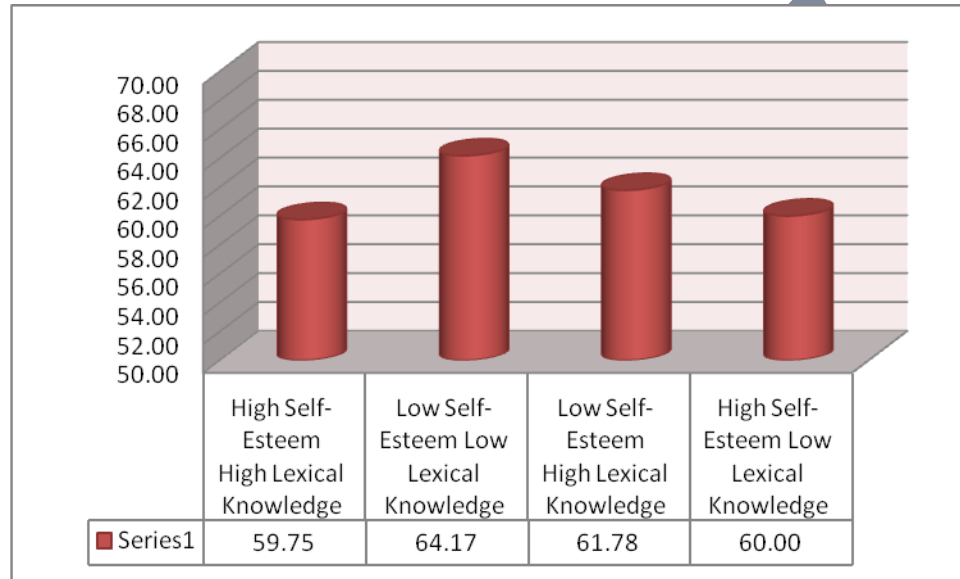
Table 1: *One-Way ANOVA Proficiency by Groups*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	123.500	3	41.167	.400	.754
Within Groups	3290.722	32	102.835		
Total	3414.222	35			

Table 2 : *Descriptive Statistics Proficiency by Groups*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Proficiency	**High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge**	8	64.17	11.386	4.026
	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	12	59.75	10.382	2.997
	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	9	61.78	9.615	3.205
	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	7	60.00	8.737	3.302
	Total	36	61.78	9.877	1.646

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According to Table 2, the first group (High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge) has a mean of 64.17 with standard deviation of 11.386, the second group (Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge) enjoyed the mean of 59.75 with standard deviation of 10.382, the third group (Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge) has a mean of 61.78 with standard deviation of 9.615, and the last group ((High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge) has a mean of 60.00 with standard deviation. Accordingly, they enjoyed the same degree of proficiency.

	High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge
Series1	59.75	64.17	61.78	60.00

Graph 1 Proficiency by Groups

RESTATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there any significant relation with interaction of self-esteem and lexical knowledge (both) on lecturing?

Table 3 displays how the subjects were divided into four groups based on the mean scores on the self-esteem and lexical knowledge tests.

Table 3 : *Descriptive Statistics; Self-Esteem, Lexical Knowledge and Lecturing*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Self-Esteem	**High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge**	8	4.50	.926	.327
	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	12	34.00	8.944	2.582

	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	9	19.67	2.345	.782
	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	7	6.00	2.160	.816
	Total	36	18.42	13.643	2.274
Lexical-Knowledge	**High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge**	8	89.25	3.370	1.191
	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	12	34.17	12.014	3.468
	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	9	85.22	7.328	2.443
	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	7	46.14	10.319	3.900
	Total	36	61.50	26.499	4.417
Lecturing	**High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge**	8	4.88	.641	.227
	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	12	2.75	.622	.179
	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	9	4.67	.500	.167
	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	7	2.57	.535	.202
	Total	36	3.67	1.195	.199

Bases on Farhady's and et al scoring scales for lecturing the mean of four groups in table 3 are as following:

High lexical knowledge-high self-esteem group mean is (4.88)
Low lexical knowledge –low self-esteem group mean is (2.75)
High lexical knowledge-low self-esteem group mean is (4.67)
Low lexical knowledge-high self-esteem group mean is (2.57)

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the four groups' means on the lecturing test. As displayed in Table 3, the high Self-Esteem high Lexical Knowledge (Mean = 4.88) showed the highest mean on lecturing. This was followed by Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge (Mean = 4.67), Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge (Mean = 2.75) and High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge (Mean = 2.57). It seems that the students' mean scores on the lecturing was more dependent on the lexical knowledge than= self-esteem. So it can be claimed that the

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group with high lexical knowledge had a significant and best performance than those groups with low lexical knowledge or even with high self-esteem in last group.

The results of one-way ANOVA (F $(3, 32)$ = 38.53, P < .05, ω^2 = .75 it represented a large effect size) indicated significant differences between the means of the four groups on the lecturing test. Thus the null-hypothesis **was rejected**.

Table 4: *One-Way ANOVA; Lecturing by Groups*

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lecturing	**Between Groups**	39.161	3	13.054	38.537	.000
	Within Groups	10.839	32	.339		
	Total	50.000	35			

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's test indicated that there were significant differences between;

1: High self-esteem high lexical knowledge (Mean = 4.88) and low self-esteem low lexical knowledge (Mean = 2.75) (Mean Difference = 2.12, P < .05). That is to say that the high self-esteem high lexical knowledge group outperformed the low-self-esteem low lexical knowledge group.

2: High self-esteem high lexical knowledge (Mean = 4.88) and high self-esteem low lexical knowledge (Mean = 2.57) (Mean Difference = 2.30, P < .05). That is to say that the high self-esteem high lexical knowledge group outperformed the high self-esteem low lexical knowledge group.
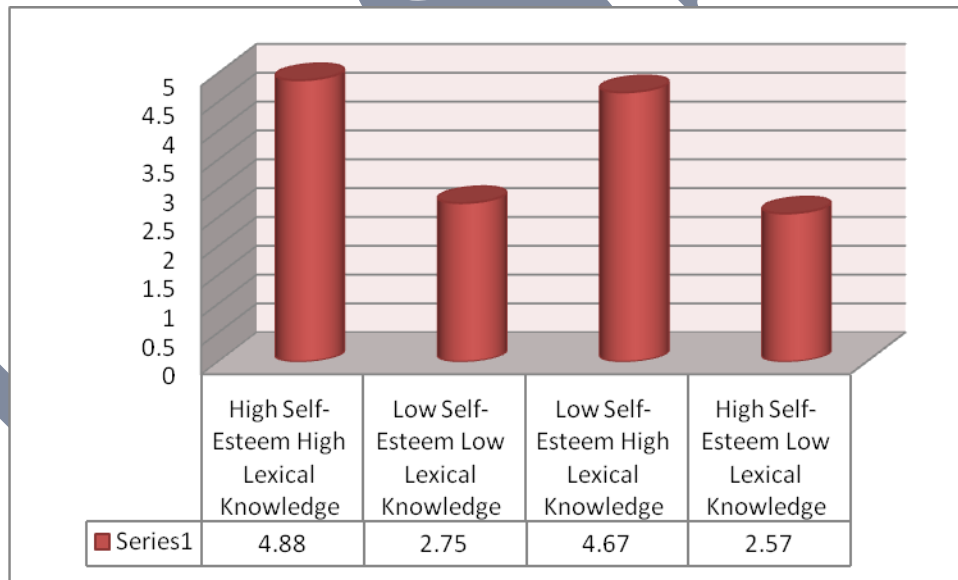
3: Low self-esteem high lexical knowledge (Mean = 4.67) and low self-esteem low lexical knowledge (Mean = 2.75) (Mean Difference = 1.91, P < .05). That is to say that the Low self-esteem high lexical knowledge group outperformed the low-self-esteem low lexical knowledge group.

4: Low self-esteem high lexical knowledge (Mean = 4.67) and high self-esteem low lexical knowledge (Mean = 2.57) (Mean Difference = 2.09, P < .05). In other words, Low self-esteem high lexical knowledge outperformed high self-esteem low lexical knowledge.

Table 5: *Post-Hoc Scheffe's Test; Lecturing by Groups*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	LSELLKBL	2.125[*]	.266	.000	1.34	2.91
HSEHLKGL	LSEHLKGL	.208	.283	.909	-.63	1.04
	HSELLKBL	2.304[*]	.301	.000	1.41	3.19
LSELLKBL	HSELLKBL	.179	.277	.936	-.64	1.00
	LSELLKBL	1.917[*]	.257	.000	1.16	2.67
LSEHLKGL	HSELLKBL	2.095[*]	.293	.000	1.23	2.96

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

	High Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	Low Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge	Low Self-Esteem High Lexical Knowledge	High Self-Esteem Low Lexical Knowledge
■ Series1	4.88	2.75	4.67	2.57

Graph 2 Lecturing by Groups

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above descriptions, the mean of high lexical knowledge groups in lecturing was (4.88 and 4.67) whereas the mean of low lexical knowledge groups in lecturing was (2.75 and 2.57) respectively, revealing that lexical knowledge in its general sense was found to be more effective for students while performing their lectures.

The analysis has demonstrated that students with high lexical knowledge outperformed the students with low lexical knowledge. Even though, students in group 1 were the best among all the groups, it wasn't due to high self-esteem rather the high lexical knowledge. In opposition to the wrong beliefs that self-esteem is the first and main factor in lecturing and speaking performance, according to Bachman and Palmer (1996) in language abilities such as oral performances, language knowledge such as lexical knowledge plays the leading role. In this study, high self-esteemed students pioneered in their performances thanks to their high global and general self –esteem. As a result, students who had relied only on their high self-esteem, not on their vocabulary knowledge, gained lower scores in their lecture presentation. The high self-esteemed students with low lexical knowledge faced pausing, hemming, panicking and mumbling due to the shortage of lexis and vocabulary. The absence of language knowledge such as terms and words debar students to continue speech and discourse

Clearly, by considering group 1(high self-esteemed students with high lexical knowledge),we can claim that having a high self-esteem in addition to high lexical knowledge could guarantee the high quality of oral performances in terms of fluency and accuracy. With regards to the achieved data, it can be realized that students with high lexical knowledge did better than those who had only high self-esteem. In sum, it must be emphasized that the interaction of both variables of high self-esteem and high lexical knowledge with lecturing had positive effects on lecturing performance of students.

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