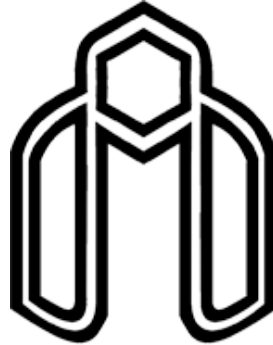# In The Name of God

Shahrood University of Technology

THE EFFECT OF DELIBERATE PRACTICE ON EFL LEARNERS` ORAL PROFICENCY

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Art in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

in the Shahrood University of Technology

BY

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January 2019

باسمه‌تعالی

مدیریت تحصیلات تکمیلی

فرم شماره (۳)   صورتجلسه نهایی دفاع از پایان نامه دوره کارشناسی ارشد

با نام و یاد خداوند متعال، ارزیابی جلسه دفاع از پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد خانم / آقای فرشته قاسمی با شماره دانشجویی۹۵۱۱۵۴۴ رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی گرایش آموزش زبان تحت عنوان The Effect of Deliberate practice On EFL Learners` Oral Proficiency در تاریخ ۹۷/۱۱/۸ با حضور هیأت محترم داوران در دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود برگزار گردید. به شرح ذیل اعلام می‌گردد:

قبول (با امتیاز ۱۷/۸۳ در جه عالی خوب) □		مردود □
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تاریخ و امضاء و مهر دانشکده:

تبصره: در صورتی که کسی مردود شود حداکثر یکبار دیگر (در مدت مجاز تحصیل) می تواند از پایان نامه خود دفاع نماید (دفاع مجدد نباید زودتر از ۴ ماه برگزار شود).

DEDICATION

I wish to be really grateful to the Almighty God to strengthen me in this path. This is my sincere gratefulness and warmest regard to dedicate this thesis to the soul of my father who inspired me to greater efforts and not to stop. I also lovingly wish to dedicate this thesis to my husband for his patience who let me to overcome all the difficulties and problems.

ACKNOLEDGMENT

I would like to express my great appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Seyyed Ali Ostover-Namaghi for providing and introducing the research topic which allowed me to undertake this research and also for presenting the design and procedures of the study. The research topic was the result of his endeavor. Undoubtedly this thesis was not possible without his guidance. Advice given by him has been a great help in completing and conducting this thesis. His useful and constructive recommendation during the project should be appreciated. I would also like to thank my research project advisor Dr. Mohammad Reza Rabiei for his help and technical support in doing statistical data analysis.

ABSTRACT

Although the effect of traditional modes of practice has been tested, the effect of deliberate practice has not been tested. To fill this gap, this study aims at testing the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency. The experimenter utilized a sample consisting of 120 Iranian EFL learners studying English at the intermediate level. Individual pre-test and post-test measures were conducted in consonance with the randomized Solomon four-group design. Groups of learners were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental and control groups. The experimental group was instructed through deliberate practice while control group received mechanical practice. Post-test scores were analyzed by 2×2 analysis of variance (ANOVA). It was found that deliberate practice significantly affects learners` oral proficiency, $F(1,116) = 74.51$, $p < 0/005$. It was also found that pre-test does not affect the results of the study, $F(1,116) = 1.83$, $p=0/17$ and $F(1,116) = 0/047$, $p=0/83$. The findings of the study have clear implication for both language learners and language teachers.

Keywords: oral proficiency, deliberate practice, mechanical practice.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Teaching speaking has received much attention in recent years due to its importance in communication. Recent studies have been devoted to the role of traditional modes of practice or mechanical drills on learners' oral proficiency. The importance of communication and its effects on the quality of life is not impenetrable. A variety of tools has been used from the beginning to communicate among which language is the only means which can be transmitted through nations. Nobody could overlook the importance of English language learning since it is regarded as an international language among different nations. English is regarded as the most widely used language in the world. Learning English has the paramount role in increasing and improving communicative skills. The importance of English language is increased by the expansion of communication among different societies. All people need to learn and master English in order to access international communication. Being able to speak in English provides a situation for individuals to interact with different people from different countries around the world. In this respect, learners' ultimate goal is to learn English as efficiently as possible.

Considering the importance of English language and the essential role of speaking, acquiring an acceptable level of proficiency requires more attention and endeavor. Speaking is regarded as one of the main language skills which should be mastered in order to be able to communicate as fluently and accurately as possible. Mastery of speaking allows individuals to use language for purposeful communication. Enough attention is needed in any educational program to enhance and reinforce learners' oral proficiency. Teachers should expose learners to speaking skill sufficiently in order to make them well-rounded communicators. If students are not exposed to systematic practices in the classroom, they will get de-motivated and lose their interest in learning. If teachers provide right practices in the right way, speaking can be more fun and the classroom atmosphere will be more dynamic. Learners can express their feeling, attitudes and viewpoints and achieve their certain goals through speaking ability.

It is undeniable that almost all of the learners have been involved enough in how to learn English effectively and efficiently for more than 4 or 5 years. They have examined various methods and techniques. They have attended different institutes with different methods.

It's safe to say that almost most of the learners have not gotten their desired results. Learners have not yet been able to attain acceptable levels of language skills by attending more than 4 or 5 years in different schools and institutes. Their main problem is lack of oral proficiency. Undoubtedly the setback is not learners' intelligence or abilities. The problem is inappropriate practices used by the teachers and learners, whereas teaching and learning English language requires effective learning practices. To overcome this problem, the present study aims at investigating a new horizon in teaching speaking and teaching English as a whole. The aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency which is students' ability to speak a language. Deliberate practice is an essential part of teaching that gives learners an opportunity to practice deliberately and consciously.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teaching speaking is one of the main concerns for most English teachers. Most students consider speaking English as the difficult task to achieve. There is an intriguing fact that children acquire their first language effortlessly. In contrast, L2 learners suffer from lack of proficiency or success in speaking. There are different reasons for this consideration. Needless to say, the kind of techniques used by the teachers in the classroom can accelerate or decelerate the process of learning. Some teachers use inaccurate techniques and practices in teaching speaking skill whereas teaching English requires effective techniques to encourage and promote learners to learn language skills. Teachers' skills in providing sufficient practices to help learners in order to overcome difficulties in the process of second language learning are very consequential. A successful educational system requires active participation of the teachers and students. The type of the techniques used in the classroom can provide a situation for teachers and learners in mutual communication. Instructional practices are considered as an integral part of each educational system. Learners' performance will be influenced by the type of practices utilized in the classroom. Teachers need to be careful about this issue. Learners should have an opportunity to practice speaking skill inside and outside the classroom.

   Teachers can utilize effective practices in the classroom to promote learners' speaking skill. By practice, it comes to mind an audio-lingual classroom where students learn

through repetition and transformation which are considered as the mechanical drills. Drills are known as one of the parts of foreign language learning process. In these drills, there's a control over learners' responses but learners' comprehension is not important. Activities of this kind are of limited value in developing communicative language use. By using these kinds of drills, learners are not able to use memorized structures out of the classroom and in the natural contexts. In spite of the exorbitant use of mechanical drills in the classroom, a majority of language learners consider speaking as a most difficult skill to master and their speaking ability is not at an acceptable level. Regardless of the learners' practice in order to boost their performance, there's no sign of improvement. Mechanical drills are known as the mindless and boring drills. Learners may become better and better at pattern practice, but when it comes to natural speech situations, they are not able to use the patterns accurately and proficiently. So teachers should go beyond the mechanical drills in the classroom. They should use purposeful and systematic practice in the classroom which is known as the deliberate practice.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The present study aims at exploring the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners` oral proficiency. Deliberate practice refers to the particular type of activities that individuals do to achieve a certain goal and to improve their performance. In this type of practice, learners break down the process of learning into its parts, identify their weaknesses and strengths and then they test new strategies for each section. Learners try to cover their weaknesses in deliberate practice. Improvement in language skills requires attention and effort which is possible through deliberate practice. Deliberate practice requires sustained effort and concentration. In order to maximize learners' potential in speaking, they need to be involved in consistent and purposeful practice. Deliberate practice is the most effective technique for rapidly improving abilities at any skills. It is a highly structured activity with a specific goal which is improving performance. To this aim, the present study provides a situation for learners to go through this kind of practice in order to improve their speaking ability. Learners are asked to set a specific goal which is improving speaking skill. They are asked to focus on their weaknesses and try to employ techniques and strategies to cover them. The teacher provides them with feedback regarding their improvements. Since

through deliberate practice, learners are required to break speaking skill into its components, our purpose is to test the effect of deliberate practice on speaking components; pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and in general oral proficiency.

Research questions:

Since we broke the speaking skill down into its sub-skills, our research questions are as follows;

RQ1: what is the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' pronunciation?

RQ2: what is the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' grammar?

RQ3: what is the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' vocabulary?

RQ4: what is the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' fluency?

RQ5: what is the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency?

Research hypothesis:
Our research hypotheses are as follows;

- Ha1: There is a significant difference in pronunciation scores between experimental group and control group.
- Ha2: There is a significant difference in grammar scores between experimental group and control group.
- Ha3: There is a significant difference in vocabulary scores between experimental group and control group.
- Ha4: There is a significant difference in fluency scores between experimental group and control group.
- Ha5: There is a significant difference in oral proficiency scores between experimental group and control group.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Considering the importance of knowing and applying deliberate practice in speaking, the present study provides a situation for educational systems in altering their kinds of practice. In fact, this study contributes to the re-thinking and re-designing of the type of practice used in educational course and encourages the use of this kind of practice in all language areas. Instead of putting a lot of time on meaningless practice, they can apply deliberate practice to maximize learners' potential. Despite repetition, most learners fail to

become experts at what they do. It doesn't matter how many years they spend, after a while, they stop getting better. It means learners' success in education depends on the type of practice. To reach our learning goals as quickly and efficiently as possible, certain types of language practice are required. Despite practicing a lot in the process of learning, learners make no improvement. By shifting from mechanical drills towards deliberate practice, they can make improvements in their performance. This study is useful for teachers, learners and individuals as a whole in all subjects. This is expected to make students aware of the essential role of deliberate practice in improving their speaking ability, and also to make the students interested in speaking skill. This study also expected teachers to be able to use deliberate practice for teaching English, especially for speaking skill and will be able to give suitable exercises that can improve students' ability in speaking. They can also apply this kind of practice in all domains of learning and teaching.

This study addressed the need for more research regarding deliberate practice in different domains and provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge of deliberate practice in various domains. Since number of studies in deliberate practice is very few, this study paves the way for other studies and underlines the need for more research in this domain. To sum up, the results of the present study are expected to give a contribution in encouraging individuals to understand the effectiveness of the deliberate practice as a whole. Everybody has a specific goal in his life. In order to achieve the goal, some steps should be taken. By involving in deliberate practice, they can take small, achievable, well-defined steps towards their meaningful purposes. So deliberate practice not only is useful in teaching and learning, but also it works in all conditions and domains.

1.5 Operational Definitions of Key terms
In this study oral proficiency refers to EFL learners' ability to use language fluently and accurately in communication. Deliberate practice includes breaking the speaking skill into its components (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency) and work on each component separately in order to develop EFL learners` speaking skill. On the other hand, mechanical practice refers to the repetition and memorization in which learners are

required to repeat whatever teacher provides them without thinking about them and then memorized the repeated material.

1.6Limitations of the Study

In order to collect data and based on Solomon four-group design, we required a high sample size (n≥ 120). Since accessible populations of some private language schools don't allow us to perform this design in one phase, we collected our data in two phases and since in educational setting, simple random sampling is not allowed, we followed cluster sampling procedure. Since the purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency, we faced with lack of prior research studies on the topic. Although the number of studies on the role of traditional modes of practice on oral proficiency is high, some studies were excluded because they were not worth to be included. More rich studies from authentic journals are needed in this study.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Since the aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency and the participants involved in the present study are merely chosen from private language schools, therefore the present study do not investigate the effect of deliberate practice on the learners who study English as a general course in public language schools. However, the findings of the study will provide clear implication for all learners and individuals in all courses. In addition, the focus of the present study is on the intermediate learners with the age ranged of 14-18; therefore, it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on all the learners with different levels of language and with different ages.

CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Theoretical Background

In this chapter, some noteworthy theoretical viewpoints and empirical findings regarding speaking and practices employed to improve speaking skill are reviewed.

2.1.1 Speaking

The importance of speaking skill and its learning is not hidden to everyone. In order to have a successful and satisfying communication, learners should boost their speaking skill. The ability to communicate in English requires effort and special training. As one of the main language skills, "speaking is a unique form of communication … the basis of all human relationships and the primary channel for the projection and development of individual identity" (Hughes, 2010, p. 208). Native speakers learn to speak in an effortless manner, while second language learners put a lot of effort into learning speaking and high desire on cognition as second language speech is needed (Hughes, 2010). Based on Thornbury (2012), knowledge and skills are involved in speaking. Knowledge refers to the learners' information regarding language and skills refer to the learners' skills to use this knowledge in real life setting. Teachers should strive to help learners to advance their base knowledge about language and also strengthen their skills in order to make them well-rounded communicators. Speaking is one of the main productive skills used for communication in daily life conversation. Learners can express themselves through the use of speech. The main challenge of the language teachers is to provide a situation for learners in order to enable them to master speaking ability. Teachers should put more time on this skill and provide opportunities for learners to speak as often as possible. Based on Ur (1996), successful speaking ability has some characteristics which incorporate too much speech by learners, high level of motivation, even participation and acceptable level of language. It means most of the classroom time should be devoted to the learners' talk and they should have enough opportunity to speak. To achieve this aim, teachers' talk should be minimized in the classroom and everybody should have the same chance to speak. Learners should be eager to speak and have a higher level of motivation in the classroom. Also, learners should use comprehensible and accurate utterances that are relevant to each other.

2.1.2 Components of Speaking Skill

2.1.2.1 Grammar

There are many databases regarding the importance of grammar in English. Grammar is regarded as an inseparable part of speaking skill. "Grammatical competence is an umbrella concept that includes increasing expertise in grammar (morphology, syntax), vocabulary, and sounds of letters and syllables, pronunciation of words, intonation, and stress" (Scarcella& Oxford, 1992, p. 141). To comprehend meaning, EFL learners should have enough knowledge regarding words and sentences. It means they should know how sounds are put together to make words and how words are put together to make sentences. So grammatical competence provides a situation for learners to use and comprehend language grammatical structures accurately and immediately which facilitates fluency(Richards &Renandya, 2002). Based on Heaton (1978), learners' ability to use grammatical structures and to distinguish appropriate grammatical forms is important. That is, learners should have enough knowledge to produce and recognize correct sentences in conversations.

Acquaintance with the grammar of a language is needed for learners in order to arrange and put words correctly in a sentence both in written and oral form of language. Purpura (2004) defines grammar as a systematic way of predicting someone's knowledge of language. It means grammar refers to the knowledge of language. A set of rules or principles constitutes the grammar of a language which allows speakers to generate well-formed sentences. Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) state the combination of words into larger units based on a set of rules refer to the grammar of that language. Based on Harmer (2001) altering the forms of the words and their combination into sentences refer to the grammar of the language. Batko (2004) defines grammar as the most basic principle and structure of the language which includes accurate construction of the sentences.

2.1.2.2 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an essential part of second language learning which is known as the building blocks of language. Without knowledge of vocabulary, learners are not able to use the grammatical structure of the language. In fact, knowledge of vocabulary and grammar intervene in language learning. Richards and Schmidt (2002) define vocabulary as

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consisting of single words, compound words and idioms. Learning vocabulary means knowing specific meaning of the words in context, spelling, pronunciation, uses and different forms of the words. Learning vocabulary has a positive impact on learners' ability in all aspects of foreign language learning. Based on most linguists, knowing vocabulary is far more important than knowing grammar in mutual communication. Cook (2013) states appropriate and sufficient vocabulary results in real communication as compared with learning grammar rules only. Based on Schmitt (2008), vocabulary learning is extremely important and necessary as it is regarded as a crucial indication of language proficiency. Based on Macis and Schmitt (2017), lack of vocabulary knowledge leads to the undesirable results in the process of second language learning.

2.1.2.3 Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the clear production of speech while speaking. It means that pronunciation provides a situation for effective communication even though the number of vocabularies and grammar are limited. Pronunciation refers to the way in which words are uttered traditionally or customarily. It means the clear production of words and sentences is an indication of pronunciation (Kline, 2001). Mastery of a list of sounds or isolated words doesn't refer to pronunciation. According to Fraser (2001), pronunciation amounts to segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing. Cook (1996) defines pronunciation as the English sounds production and learning it through sound repetition and correcting while producing inaccurate sounds. Roohani (2013) states the importance of pronunciation in speaking. Our pronunciation will be evaluated by the way we speak and pronounce words. Pronunciation is regarded as one of the main features of language learning and teaching. Based on Fraser (2000), materials should assist teachers to improve their process of teaching pronunciation. Teachers should strive to teach pronunciation as correctly and efficiently as possible. Pronunciation is one of the main properties of speaking ability. Morley (1991) states comprehensible pronunciation is regarded as one of the major goals of teaching pronunciation.

2.1.2.4 Fluency

According to Schmidt (1992), fluency refers to the automatic speech production that includes the notion of "rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language" (Lennon, 2000, p. 20). Based on Lennon (1990), there is a difference between fluency in the broad and narrow sense. In the broad sense, fluency refers to the speaking proficiency. On the other hand, in the narrow sense, it refers to "impression on the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently" (Lennon, 1990, p. 391). Segalowitz (2010) differentiated between three aspects of fluency. Cognitive fluency refers to "the efficiency of operation of the underlying processes responsible for the production of utterances". Utterance fluency refers to "the features of utterances that reflect the speakers' cognitive fluency," which can be acoustically measured and perceived fluency refers to "the inferences listeners make about speakers' cognitive fluency based on their perceptions of their utterance fluency" (p. 165).

2.1.3 Drills

Drill is an integral part of teaching in most classes. It has been applied for teaching speaking especially in Audio-lingual classes. Larsen-Freeman (1986) states the main purpose of teachers who use drills is to help their learners in order to use language communicatively. Richards (1986) states that drill and dialogues are the main kind of practices in Audio-lingual classes. In addition, Brooks in Richards and Rodgers (1986) confirms this statement and states that the main feature of Audio-lingual classes is the use of drills and pattern practice. Drills are used to facilitate the process of learning, although they are mindless and meaningless. Teachers can use different drills in the process of teaching in their classroom.

One of the drills is repetition. In this drill, students are required to repeat what the teacher says. This drill is considered as the simplest practice among other drills. Based on Doff (1990), repetition drill is used to familiarize learners quickly with a specific structure. Language learning is considered as a process of habit formation. The more often learners repeat it, the greater language they achieve. Sharon and Weldon (1997) define drill as the

process of repeating a task in order to develop a skill or getting familiar with the procedure. Drills are used in teaching a specific skill or part of language. Dialogues and drills are the most important characteristics of the Audio-lingual classrooms. Allen and Campbell (1972, p.121) state a drill has two parts; there are what the students hear (stimulus) and what they have to say (response). A convenient pair of substitutes is input which refers to the information supplied to the learner, weather orally or visually and output which refers to what the learner has to produce himself.

2.1.4 Deliberate Practice

According to Ericsson (2002) deliberate practice refers to the activities designed to improve performance and gives feedback regarding performance to compare exact and desired performance and provides a situation for repetition in order to achieve the desired purpose. Mechanical repetition is the opposite of deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2002), in which there is no sustained effort toward improvement. According to Sauer "One hour of concentrated practice with the mind fresh and the body rested is better than four hours of dissipated practice with the mind stale and the body tired" (1913,p.238). The main focus of deliberate practice is to improve a specific skill and reach higher levels of performance. The more the individual involve in this kind of practice, the better he/she will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer, 1993). Deliberate practice takes sustained effort for a limited amount of time per day in order to regain individuals and avoids tiredness (Ericsson et al., 1993).

2.2 Empirical Findings

2.2.1 Studies Related to the Memorization and Oral Ability

Memorization is regarded as one of the representative techniques of audio-lingual method. "Memorizing is the process of establishing information in memory. The term 'memorizing' usually refers to the conscious process" (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 226). It means learners are aware of the process of memorization. According to Stevick's (1982, p. 67) definition of 'memorization' in language education, text memorization refers to 'working on a body of [textual] material until one is able to reproduce it word for word on demand'. A detailed description of the text memorization is provided in Hendrickson's statement

which differentiates between learning by heart and learning by rote. According to Hendrickson (1997), when learners learn by rote, they just recite the words without comprehending the meaning of the words, but when they learn by heart, they can understand the concept of the lesson and internalize it as their working knowledge.

Some studies have been done on teachers' and learners' perspectives regarding memorization (Yu, 2013; Duong & Nguyen, 2006). Yu (2013) conducted a study to investigate teachers' and learners' perspectives on textual memorization. They offered that learning by heart through memorization is beneficial by centering around two vantage points. The first one refers to the cultivation of language sense, facilitation of conscious learning, encouragement of self-confidence and a sense of achievement. The second vantage point refers to the language development. Three aspects were revealed: (1) text memorization helps learners to improve their linguistic aspects of language. They can improve their phrases, sentence structures and grammars; (2) learners' language skills such as writing and speaking will be improved; and (3) it helps learners' vocabulary learning by improving their understanding of new words. Although the majority of the learners held positive attitude towards memorization, there were a few divergent voices. Some learners considered memorization as the rote learning which is not beneficial to their learning. In the same vein, Duong and Nguyen (2006) investigated Vietnamese learners' and teachers' perspectives towards memorization as a learning strategy in learning English. It was found that memorization is classified into good and poor. Good memorization refers to the learning by heart and a deep comprehension of the content. In this type of strategy, learners can use the memorized content effectively in appropriate contexts. On the other hand, poor memorization refers to the rote learning in which learners would get stuck and forget the entire speech when they forgot only one key word. The results of the study indicated that both teachers and learners realized the utility of the good memorization. Both teachers and learners commented on the positive effects of memorization on learning English. Integrative skills improvements, native-like accents and accuracy, fluency and natural communication, confidence are among positive effects of memorization. Good language learners' studies indicated that attending to form is related to successful learning. Ding's study (2006) showed that memorization and imitation are regarded as the most effective methods of language learning. By this kind of practice, learners gain mastery of many

collocations and sequences, function words, inflectors which help them in the process of speaking and writing production. On the other hand, imitation enables learners to improve their pronunciation.

2.2.2 Studies Related to the Repetition

The importance of "practice" in language learning has been emphasized by researchers as it was supposed to boost a specific skill. Repetition and learning by heart are connected. Repetition is the commencement of learning by heart. According to Cook (1994), repetition and learning by heart are among valuable and effective language learning activities. Little attention is paid to repetition in second language learning nowadays. Some researchers have shown that task repetition is beneficial for L2 learners (Bei, 2013;Gass, Mackey, Ivares- Torres and Femandaz_Garcia, 1999; Fukuta ,2015; Littell, 1974).Bei (2013) investigated the effects of immediate repetition in L2 speaking. He found that task repetition significantly improved fluency and accuracy. On the other hand, repeating a task had little influence on complexity. In the same vein, Gass et al. (1999) investigated the effects of task repetition through story telling. It was found that task repetition resulted in improvements in overall proficiency, morphosyntax and lexical sophistication. The improvement was as a result of learners' familiarization with the content and their shift of attention from planning to linguistic forms. Task repetition facilitates learners' performance temporarily due to learners' familiarity with the content of the task. The first performance of the learners is regarded as their preparation for the consequent performance.

Fukuta (2015) examined the effects of task repetition on the learners' attention orientation by comparing the effects of the performance of the same task and a new task of the same type. The results of the study indicated that task repetition didn't affect fluency and syntactic complexity. In contrast accuracy and lexical variety were significantly affected. Littell (1974) conducted a study on the role of repetition through successive approximation in the acquisition of the basic skills. The purpose of the study was to test language acquisition within four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing by both non-distorted retardation and repetition of speech. It was found when the speed of phonic

presentation on the tapes is too fast and beyond learners' listening comprehension, it's impossible for learners to identify sounds and words in meaningful sequences and listening comprehension will be reduced. On the other hand, if the speed of presentation is reduced based on learners' level of comprehension, the rate of listening comprehension will be increased.

On the other hand some studies have been done regarding the inadequacy of repetition as a learning practice (Quisenberry, 1982; Javis & Hatfied, 1971). Quisenberry (1982) focused on the importance of practice as a necessary component in second language learning and stated some characteristics of effective practice in second language acquisition. Achieving effective practice and time limitation were considered as the main problems of teachers. Repetition was not regarded as an effective learning technique. The more meaningful and comprehensible the material to be learned, the better learners will learn and retain it. Jarvis and Hatfied study (1971) supported this. By using pattern drills, students just produce language while in practice they have a goal which is actual communication. Drills do not have relevance to real life, while the main purpose of language learning is to use it for real life communication.

2.2.3 Studies Related to Vocabulary and Oral Proficiency

As second language learning becomes more proficiency-oriented, the role of vocabulary has been favored by the majority of theorists. Vocabulary acquisition is vital in the process of language learning. Some studies were done on the role of vocabulary in speaking skill and techniques to improve vocabulary (Boyle, 1993; Hilton, 2008). Boyle (1993) studied effective classroom techniques to help learners develop vocabulary–acquisition strategy. The most important aim of the study was to provide practical techniques for effective vocabulary introduction and rejected memorization as a learning strategy which makes learners ignore the context in which words occur naturally. It was found that contextualizing vocabulary, making vocabulary meaningful to learners with pleasurable practice, and communicative activities are fundamental to the success of vocabulary teaching. Hilton's study (2008) revealed the correlation between vocabulary knowledge

and spoken fluency. It emphasized the importance of vocabulary in speaking. The more words learners know, the more fluently they are able to speak.

2.2.4 Studies Related tothe Inadequacy of Mechanical Drills

Some studies were done to indicate the inadequacy of mechanical drills (Wong & Vanpatten, 2003; Aski, 2005; Margolis 1982). Wong & Vanpatten (2003) evaluated the form-only activities commonly called "mechanical drills", and "pattern practice". Two important insights were yielded in this study. First internal mechanisms are brought by learners which cannot be manipulated by explicit instruction. Second, learners require meaningful input. Drills ask learners to produce correctly and not to comprehend the taught material. In fact, correct production is regarded as acquisition. Drills do not encourage learners to understand the context in which rules apply. Drills are not necessary and in some cases they can impede acquisition. In this research, Wong and Patten indicated that there is no evidence from theoretical and empirical points of view that mechanical drills are necessary because they do not force learners to manipulate forms and meaning. Learners are not required to understand the semantic or structure being learned in order to complete the task. They suggested that processing instruction can replace mechanical drills in teaching. In the same vein, Aski (2005) provided alternatives to mechanical drills for the early stages of language practice. Referential structured input activities are considered as the effective language-practice activities. Learners are not required to produce the form. They have to notice the form and process the connection between form and the meaning it adds to the utterance. Form-form activities are another type of effective activities (Smith, 1993). These activities provide an opportunity for learners to develop and restructure their declarative knowledge. They do not ask learners to produce the form. Learners are required to notice the feature and the phonetic or grammatical content in which it alternates. Both referential and structured input and form-form activities are effective language practice activities and are different from mechanical drills. They are regarded as recognition activities and ideal for the early stages of language learning.

Although audio-lingual method is used in many classes today, it doesn't provide a situation for learners to spontaneous speech. Margolis (1982) provided evidence why

audio-lingual method doesn't encourage spontaneous speech. Most of the audio-lingual classes rely heavily on pattern drills which are boring. Pattern drills ask learners to manipulate grammatical structure without thinking about the language. Learners are regarded as a parrot which should repeat whatever teacher provides them with the ignorance of the learners' creativity. In this situation, learners just memorized sentences that teacher ask them and are not able to express themselves freely outside the classroom and produce novel sentences. One of the main concerns of English teachers is to provide a situation for learners to use English in spontaneous speech. Norman (1996) provided a set of classroom activities for intermediate learners that teachers can apply in order to help learners in free oral interactions. The first step is to ask learners to find their own favorite topic in order to talk about it in the classroom. Students are required to keep a diary to record their topics. Then they are asked to present their own topics in the classroom and talk about them freely. Newspapers articles, short articles, poems, short scenes are regarded as invaluable sources of topics based on learners' interests. Learners are responsible to select a particular slant that captures their interest and they should present it orally in the classroom. Through these activities language takes its proper place in communication. Collaborating in group works, listening and speaking to each other regarding presented topics in the classroom and discussing about them, students gain more competence, fluency and confidence in spoken language.

CHAPTER THREE:
METHOD

3. Introduction

This chapter provides the procedures followed through the study. This true-experimental study with 120 numbers of participants is an attempt to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency at the intermediate level. A complete description of the methodology is provided in this chapter. It includes participants of the study, instrumentation of the study, procedure, research design, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were Iranian EFL learners studying Top Notch book at the intermediate level. They were both male and female EFL learners with the age ranged of 14-18. The subjects under the study consisted of 60 males and 60 females. They have been learning English in different private language schools of Gonbad and Azadshahar, two major cities of Golestan Province, Iran. Almost all of the participants have studied English for three years in different private language schools. Based on the results of the pre-test, they enjoyed the same level of English proficiency.

3.2 Instrumentation

All participants attended 20 sessions during the research. This took 3 hours during the weeks for both control and experimental group. Oral interviews were administered and scored in line with the standard procedure followed in the speaking module of IELTS. To ensure consistency in measurement, learners' oral proficiency in both pre-test and post-test was measured by two independent and experienced examiners. To insure the reliability of oral proficiency measures, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated. Table 3.1 and 3.2 provides the result of the correlation between two raters in pre- and post-tests. There is a positive correlation between two raters' pre- test scores, r= 0.891, n= 60, p<0.001. Also the correlation between post-test scores of raters was found to be statistically significant, r= 0.920, n=120, p< 0.001.The pre- and post- tests were administered by the same examiners. Two raters scored their performance individually by using ILETS criteria. The raters were two professional IELTS trainers. Being a direct mode of testing, oral interviews are valid in an off themselves because they measure nothing but learners' oral proficiency and as such they produce no construct-irrelevant variance. The

pre- and post-tests were administered by the same examiners. Raters scored their performance individually by using ILETS criteria.

Table 3.1 *Pearson correlation of pre-test scores*

Correlations		pre-test 1	pre-test 2
pre-test 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.891**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
pre-test 2	Pearson Correlation	.891**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

Table 3.2 *Pearson correlation of post-test scores*

Correlations		pre-test 1	pre-test 2
pre-test 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.891**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
pre-test 2	Pearson Correlation	.891**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

3.3 Procedure

The procedure of the study is as follows;

1) Four classes were randomly selected from the total population of the students learning English at private language schools of Gonbad and Azadshahr, two major cities in Golestan Province.

2) Learners were then randomly assigned to experimental and control groups

3) Prior to intervention, to exclude the students who were not intermediate, we administered a teacher-made test of oral proficiency to account for pre-existing differences. (Appendix A). Then a standard IELTS test of oral proficiency was administered (Appendix B).

4) Students were exposed to two types of treatment. The control groups were instructed through the traditional presentation, practice and production (PPP) approach. Conversely, the experimental group was instructed through deliberate practice in which learners were askedto;

   A) Set speaking skill improvement as their goal.

   B) Break speaking skill into its components; pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency.

   C) Identify their weaknesses and strength and what is keeping them away from speaking as proficiently and correctly as possible.

   D) Purposefully and deliberately use different strategies to work on improving speaking skill.

   E) Seek feedback from teacher to observe their improvement.

5) Then a post-test was administered and the results were analyzed.

As an illustration, in one session, the teacher in experimental group was supposed to teach about earthquake. Since learners didn`t have background knowledge regarding earthquake, they were not able to speak about it. The teacher provides some background information regarding topic and then provided learners with the new vocabularies. The teacher used different strategies to teach vocabularies and made sure that learners were armed with the vocabularies. In this class, learners were supposed to know words, their spelling, pronunciation, and their usage. Regarding vocabularies, the teacher provides learners with feedback and made learners aware of their weaknesses and strength. Then after words, the teacher provides learners with the related grammar and asked learners to utilize words in the learned structures. Then learners were supposed to make sentences regarding earthquake and to develop them into paragraph. In general in experimental groups the teacher made learners able step by step to speak and in each step, she provided

learners with feedback. On the other hand, in the control group, learners had to listen to the audio and then they were asked to repeat chorally. Then to help learners organize their ideas about natural disasters, the teacher asked some questions. Learners were asked to answer the questions with information about disasters that they knew or experienced. They were supposed to repeat the sentences and memorize them, then talk about it.

3.4 Design of the Study

This study used the Solomon four-group design. This design is used to measure the effect of the deliberate practice versus traditional approach or repetition, while controlling the effects of the pre-test. Richard Solomon developed this design in 1949. This is an experimental design method that is used to avoid some of the difficulties of the pre-test because the post-test results may be affected not only by the treatment, but also by the pre-test. Four test groups are involved in this design which are divided into two experimental groups and two control groups. In order to segregate the effects of the pre-test and intervention, one experimental group and one control group are administered a pre-test and the other groups are not. An intriguing feature of the Solomon four-group design is that groups of participants are randomly assigned to either receive or not to receive a pre-test and then randomly assigned to either treatment or control group. A Schema of the design is provided in table 3.3. Using Solomon four-group design, the participants of the present study were randomly assigned to one of the four different groups. Two of the groups received the treatment (deliberate practice) and two did not. One experimental group and one control group were administered a pre-test. Then the experimental group and another control group (with no pre-test) were instructed via deliberate practice. At the end, a post-test was administered to all four groups. Based on Walton Braver and Braver (1988), compared to the simple pretest-posttest design, Solomon four-group design enjoys a higher degree of external and internal validity since it controls the effects of the pre-test on learning.

Table 3.3 Solomon four-group design

group	Pre- test	Treatment	Post-test
1	Q1	X	Q2
2	Q3		Q4
3		X	Q5
4			Q6

Figure 3.1 provides comparisons of four groups. In comparing post-test scores of groups A and C (C7), the effect of pre-test and stimulus is assessed. If this comparison is meaningless, it can be concluded that pre-test didn't affect the result of the post-test. On the other hand, if this comparison is meaningful, it shows the effect of the pre-test on the post-test measures. If the difference between post-test measures of group A and B (C1) and post-test measures of groups C and D (C5) is the same, the influence of pre-test is rejected. On the other hand, if C5 and C1 comparsion is different, it indicates the influence of pre-test in combination with the stimulus. C8 indicates the comparison between groups B and D post-test scores. If this comparison is meaningless, the neutrality of the pre-test effect is proven. But if this comparison is meaningful, it indicates the effect of pre-test.
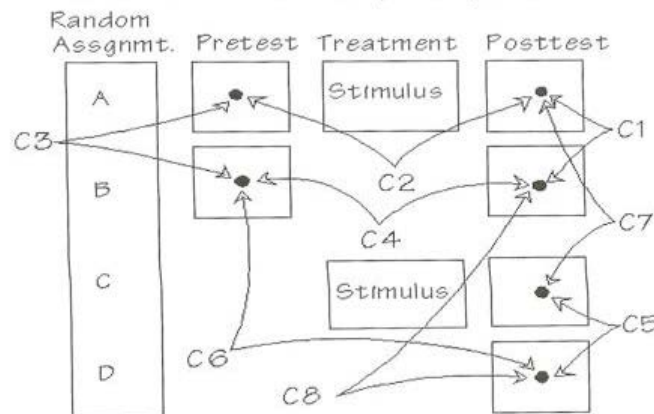
Figure 3.1. Solomon-four group comparisons

3.5 Data Analysis

In the present study, data were analyzed by SPSS software (version 16) and 2×2 analysis of variance was used. Statistical methods including descriptive and inferential analysis were used. Descriptive statistics were calculated and conducted to investigate if there is a

significant difference between control and experimental groups in their oral proficiency. Pearson correlation was used to compute inter-rater reliability scores of two raters in the process of research.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of deliberate practice on EFL learners' oral proficiency. This chapter provides data analysis and findings from pre- and post-test scores of 120 learners. The results of the study are provided with detailed statistical description.

4.2. Results

4.2.1 Pronunciation

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive information of post-test scores in both control and intervention groups. The lowest score in control group is 3.0 and the highest score is 5.0. According to table 4.1, the mean and standard deviation are 4.0 and 0.44 respectively. With 95% confidence interval mean, the scores of the control group are in range (3.84, 4.17). Also the lowest score in the experimental group is 3.50 and the highest score is 5.50. The mean and the standard deviation of the experimental group is provided (M= 4.75, SD= 0.50). With 95% confidence interval for mean, the scores of experimental group are in range (4.58, 4.95). Based on skewness and kurtosis indexes, a little deviation of normality is observed between data. Based on the central limited theorem, there is no problem to compare groups in high sample size (n≥30).

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of pronunciation

|	Groups			Statistics	Std. Error
post-test of pronunciation	Control	Mean		4.0000	.07860
		95% confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound		3.8392	
			Upper Bound	4.1608	
		Std. Deviation		.43052	
		Minimum		3.00	
		Maximum		5.00	
		Skewness		-.087	.427
		Kurtosis		.319	.833
	Experimental	Mean		4.7583	.09009
		95% confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound		4.5741	
			Upper Bound	4.9426	
		Std. Deviation		.49342	
		Minimum		3.50	
		Maximum		5.50	
		Skewness		-.453	.427
		Kurtosis		.031	.833
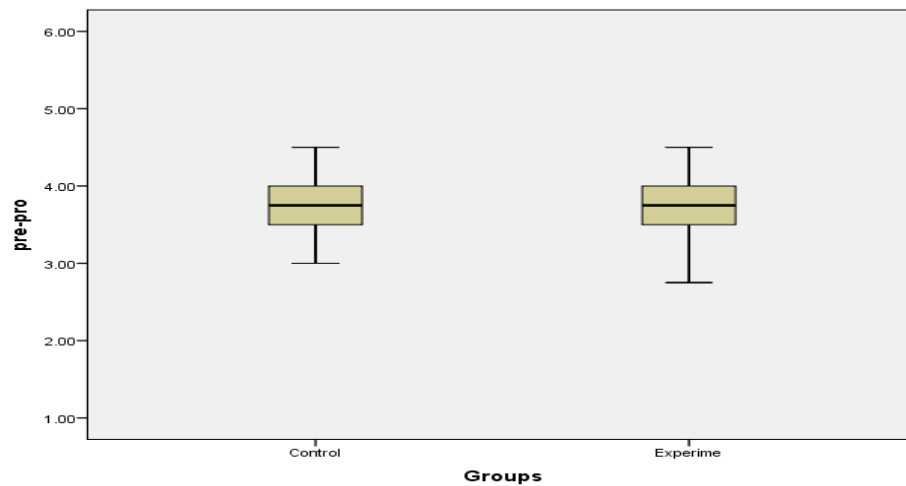
Figure 4.1 *Box Plot for control and experimental group in pre-test of pronunciation*

Figure 4.2 provides post-test measures in both control and experimental group. In general, this descriptive information indicates an increase in the scores of experimental group compared with control group (Figure 4.2). it means that experimental group outp
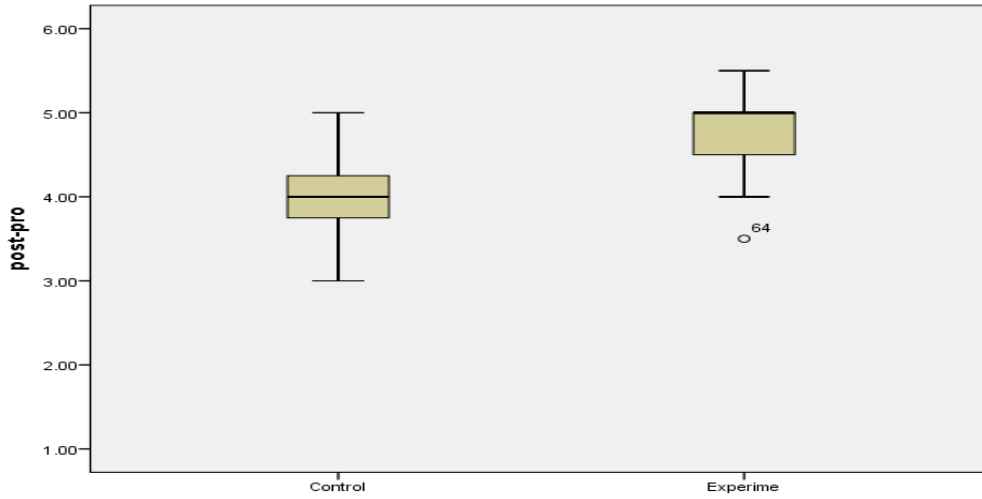
Figure4.2 *Box plot for control and experimental groups in post-test of pronunciation*

Table 4.2 indicates the main effect of the group is statistically significant, $F (1,116) = 84.959$, p <0.05. It means learners' improvement was as a result of intervention not any other factors. On the other hand, the main effect of status, $F (1,116) = 3.082$, p= .082, and the interaction of groups and status are not significant, $F (1,116) =0 /590$ p=0 /444. It indicates that pre-test didn't affect the result of the study. Pre-test didn't affect learners' pronunciation.

Table 4.2 Test of between-subjects effects of pronunciation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	15.335[a]	3	5.112	29.544	.000
Intercept	2231.719	1	2231.719	12898.287	.000
Groups	14.700	1	14.700	84.959	.000
Status	.533	1	.533	3.082	.082
Groups * Status	.102	1	.102	.590	.444
Error	20.071	116	.173		
Total	2267.125	120			
Corrected Total	35.406	119			

a. R Squared = .433 (Adjusted R Squared = .418)

In figure 4.3, C7 and C8 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in two control and experimental groups. In this figure, the post-test scores of pronunciation in control group based on status (C8 test) and the post-test scores of pronunciation in experimental group in accordance with status (C7 test) is compared and insignificance effect of pre-test is shown.
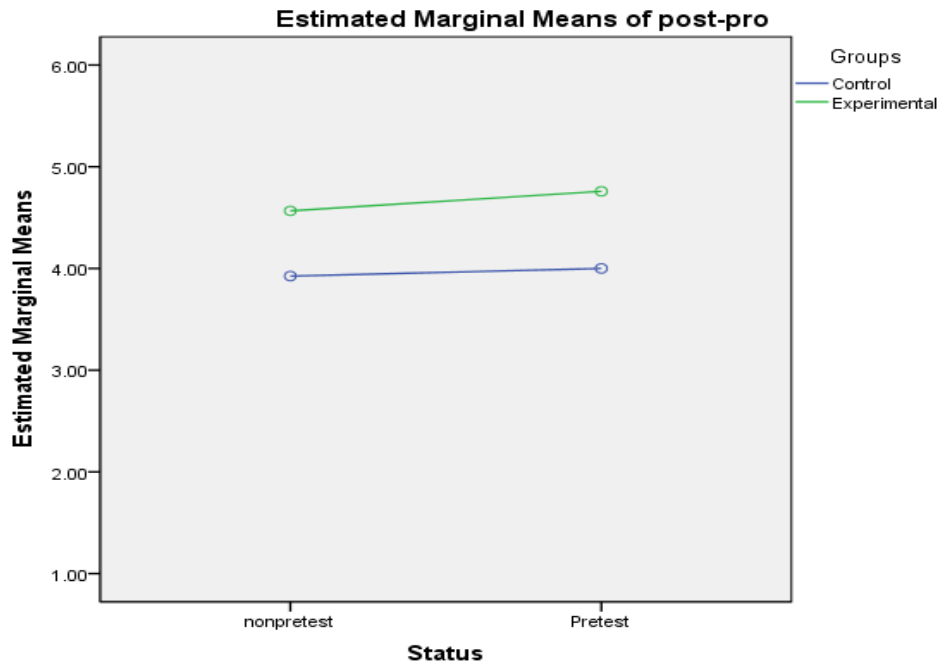
Figure 4.3 Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of pronunciation

In figure 4.4, C1 and C5 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in both control and experimental groups based on the status. In this figure, the post test scores of groups which had pre-test in both control and experimental group (C1 test) and the post-test scores of groups which did not have pre-test in both control and

Figure 4.4 *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of pronunciation*

4.2.2 Grammar

Table 4.3 presents the descriptive information of grammar post-test scores in both control and intervention groups. The lowest score in control group is 3.0 and the highest score is 4.50. According to table 4.3 the mean and standard deviation are 3.97 and 0.48 respectively. W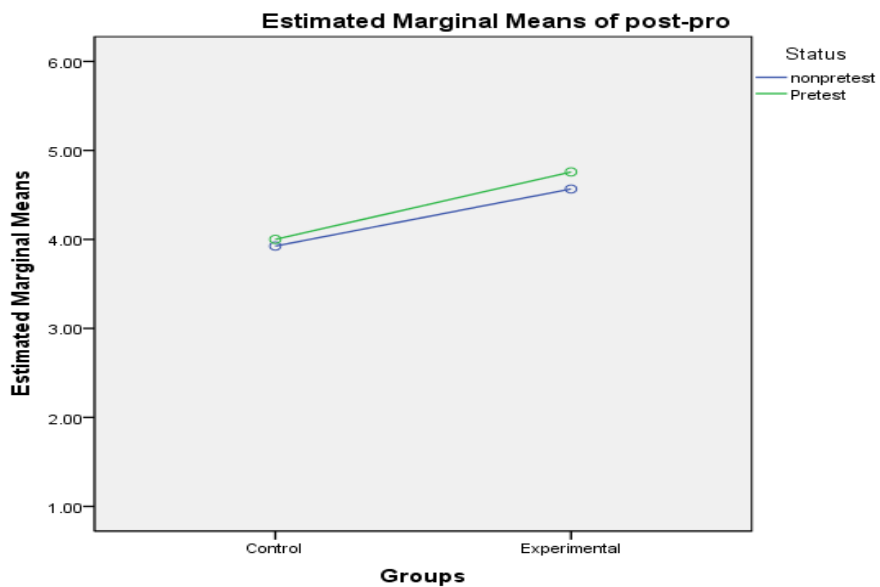ith 95% confidence interval mean, the scores of the control group are in range (3.80, 4.14). Also the lowest score in the experimental group is 3.25 and the highest score is 5.50. The mean and the standard deviation of the experimental group is provided (M= 4.66, SD= 0.55). With 95% confidence interval for mean, the scores of experimental group are in range (4.45, 4.85). In general, this descriptive information indicates an increase in the scores of experimental group compared with control group. Learners involved in deliberate practice outperformed learners involved in traditional modes of practice based on their grammar.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of grammar

Groups					Statistics	Std. Error
post-test of grammar	Control	Mean			3.9667	.08621
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		3.7903	
			Upper Bound		4.1430	
		Std. Deviation			.47222	
		Minimum			3.00	
		Maximum			4.50	
		Skewness			-.781	.427
		Kurtosis			-.242	.833
	Experimental	Mean			4.6500	.10000
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		4.4455	
			Upper Bound		4.8545	
		Std. Deviation			.54772	
		Minimum			3.25	
		Maximum			5.50	
		Skewness			-.418	.427
		Kurtosis			.174	.833

Figure 4.5 provides information regarding pre-test measures of learners in both control and experimental group. There`s a slight difference between control and experimental group based on their knowledge of grammar, but this difference is not statistically significant.

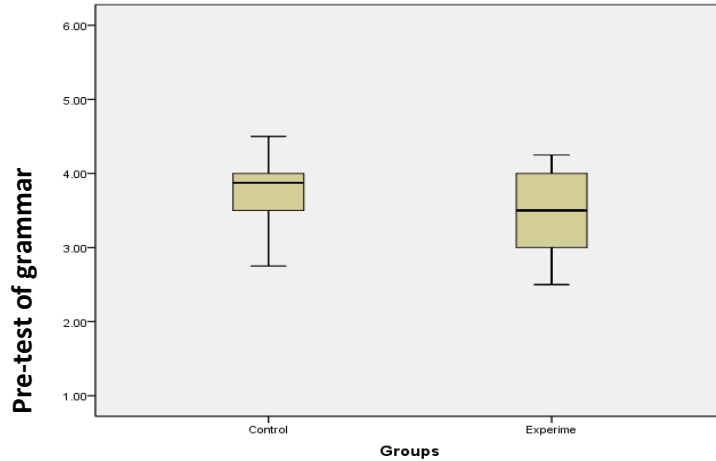*Figure 4.5* Box Plot for control and experimental group in pre-test of grammar

Figure 4.6 compares the post-test scores of control and experimental group. It indicates experimental group performed better than control group and intervention (deliberate practice) affected learners' score of grammar based on the result of the post-test measures.
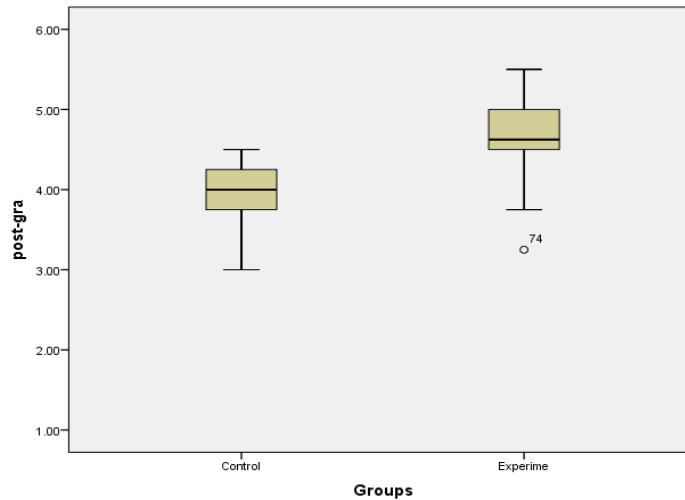

Figure4.6 Box Plot for control and experimental group in post-test of grammar

Table 4.4 shows the main effect of the group is statistically significant, $F_{(1,116)}$ = 86.600, $p < 0.05$. Intervention affected learners' performance. On the other hand, the main effect of status, $F_{(1,116)}$ = 1.845, $p = 0.177$, and the interaction of groups and status are not significant, $F_{(1,116)}$ = 1.116, $p = 0.293$. It indicates that pre-test didn't affect the result of the study. So Pre-test didn't affect learners' pronunciation and it was affected only by the intervention.

Table 4.4 Test of between-subjects effects of grammar

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	18.435[a]	3	6.145	29.854	.000
Intercept	2169.626	1	2169.626	10540.507	.000
Groups	17.826	1	17.826	86.600	.000
Status	.380	1	.380	1.845	.177
Groups * Status	.230	1	.230	1.116	.293
Error	23.877	116	.206		
Total	2211.938	120			
Corrected Total	42.312	119			

In figure 4.7, C7 and C8 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in two control and experimental groups. In this figure, the post- test scores of grammar in control group based on status (C8 test) and the post-test scores of grammar in

experimental group in accordance with status (C7 test) is compared and insignificant effect of pre-test is shown.
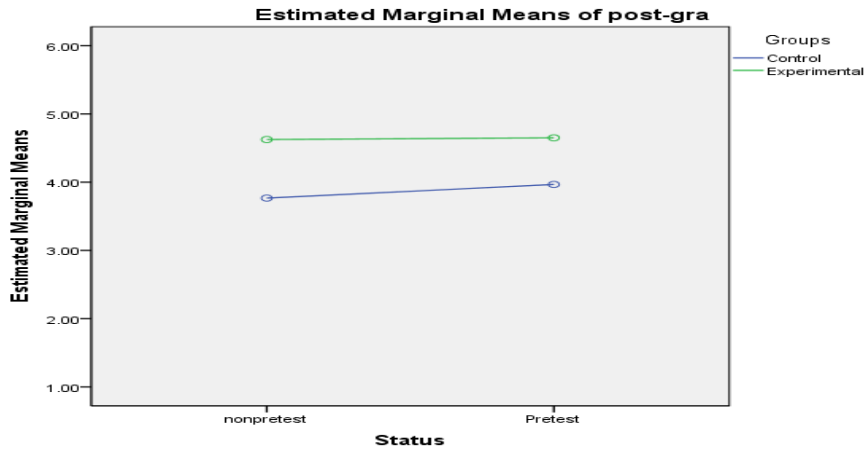
Figure 4.7 *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of grammar*

In figure 4.8, C1 and C5 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in both control and experimental groups based on the status. In this figure, the post test scores of groups which had pre-test in both control and experimental group (C1 test) and the post-test scores of groups which did not have pre-test in both control and experimental group (C5 test) are compared and the meaningless effect of pre-test is indicated.

Figure4.8. *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of grammar*

4.2.3 Vocabulary

Table 4.5 presents the descriptive information of post-test scores in both control and intervention groups. The lowest score in control group is 3.0 and the highest score is 4.50. According to table 4.5, the mean and standard deviation are 3.97 and 0.43 respect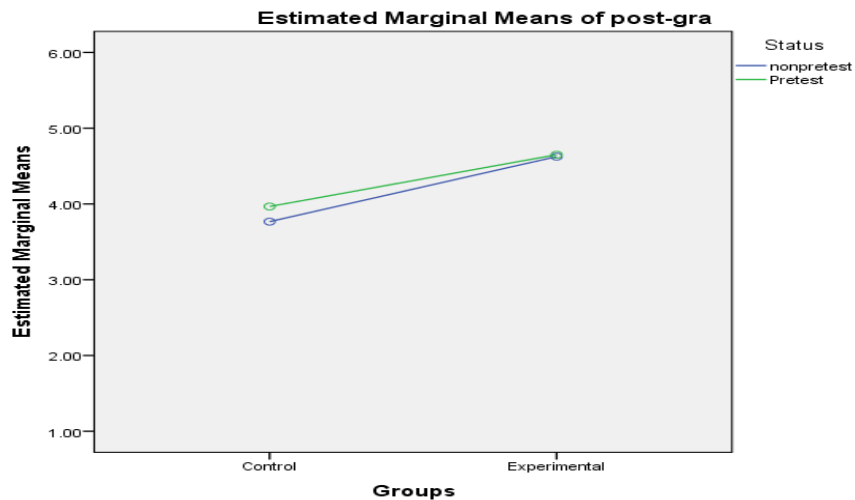ively. With 95% confidence interval mean, the scores of control group are in range (3.81, 4.13). Also the lowest score in the experimental group is 3.50 and the highest score is 5.50. The mean and the standard deviation of the experimental group is provided (M= 4.56, SD= 0.46). With 95% confidence interval for mean, the scores of experimental group are in range (4.39, 4.73). Comparing the mean scores of control and experimental group indicates improvement in learners' level of vocabulary knowledge which were involved in deliberate practice.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of vocabulary

	Groups			Statistics	Std. Error
post-test of vocabulary	Control	Mean		3.9667	.07743
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.8083	
			Upper Bound	4.1250	
		Std. Deviation		.42413	
		Minimum		3.00	
		Maximum		4.50	
		Skewness		-.640	.427
		Kurtosis		.196	.833
	Experimental	Mean		4.5583	.08363
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.3873	
			Upper Bound	4.7294	
		Std. Deviation		.45809	
		Minimum		3.50	
		Maximum		5.50	
		Skewness		.171	.427
		Kurtosis		.202	.833

Figure 4.9 provides learners' level of vocabulary knowledge in the pre-test. There is a slight difference between groups which is not statistically significant.
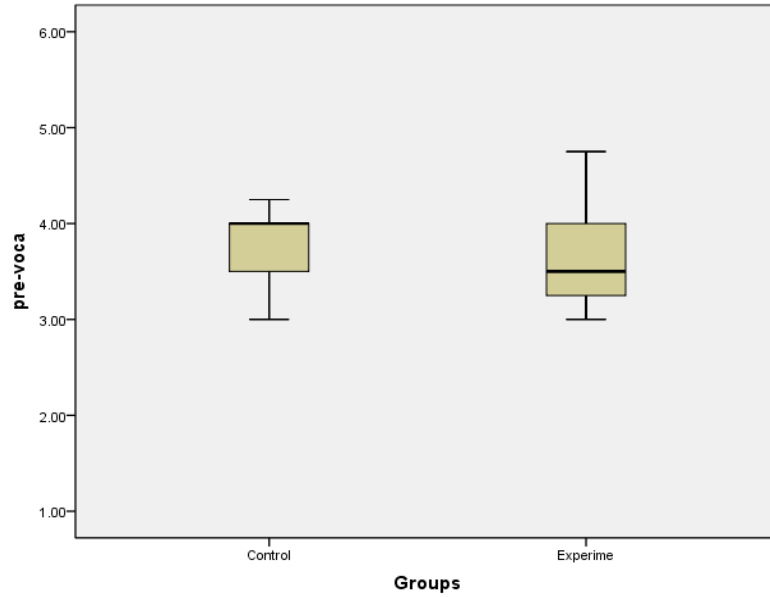
Figure 4.9 Box Plot for control and experimental group in pre-test of vocabulary

Figure 4.10 compares two experimental and control groups of learners based on their vocabulary knowledge. It is obvious that learners involved in deliberate practice outperformed learners involved in traditional modes of practice. Considering the previous results, it can be concluded that deliberate practice significantly affected learners' accuracy of speaking skill

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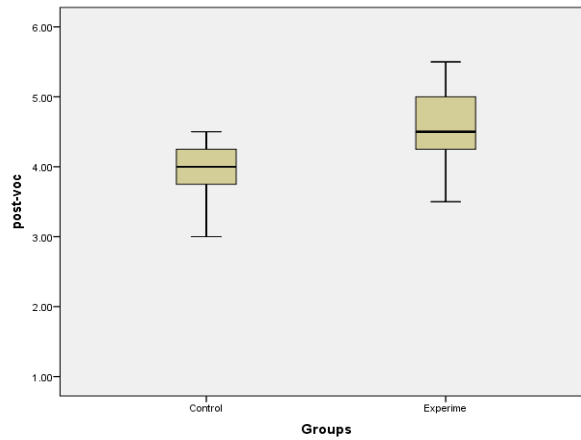
Figure 4.10 Box Plot for control and experimental group in post-test of vocabulary

Table 4.6 shows the main effect of the group is statistically significant, $F_{(1,116)} = 71.968$, $p < 0.05$. On the other hand, the main effect of status, $F_{(1,116)} = 0.171$, $p = 0.680$, and the interaction of groups and status are not significant, $F_{(1,116)} = 1.295$, $p = 0.257$. It indicates that pre-test didn't affect the result of the study. So Pre-test didn't affect learners' grammar.

Table 4.6 Test of between-subjects effects of vocabulary

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	14.294[a]	3	4.765	24.478	.000
Intercept	2163.252	1	2163.252	11113.663	.000
Groups	14.008	1	14.008	71.968	.000
Status	.033	1	.033	.171	.680
Groups * Status	.252	1	.252	1.295	.257
Error	22.579	116	.195		
Total	2200.125	120			
Corrected Total	36.873	119			

a. R Squared = .433 (Adjusted R Squared = .418)

In figure 4.11, C7 and C8 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in two control and experimental groups. In this figure, the post- test scores of vocabulary in control group based on status (C8 test) and the post-test scores of vocabulary in experimental group in accordance with status (C7 test) is compared and insignificance effect of pre-test is shown.
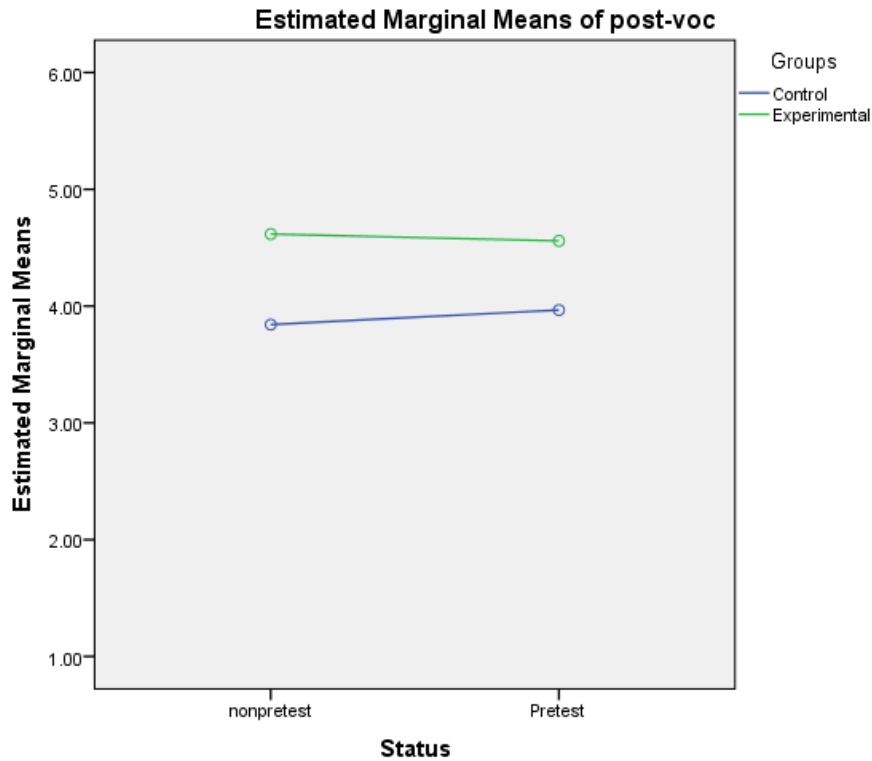
Estimated Marginal Means of post-voc

Figure 4.11 *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of post-test of vocabulary*

4.2.4 Fluency

Table 4.7 presents the descriptive information of post-test scores in both control and intervention groups based on their fluency. The lowest score in control group is 3.50 and the highest score is 5. According to table 4.7, the mean and standard deviation are 4.30 and 0.43 respectively. With 95% confidence interval mean, the scores of control group are in range (4.13, 4.46). Also the lowest score in the experimental group is 3.25 and the highest score is 5.00. The mean and the standard deviation of the experimental group is provided (M= 4.05, SD= 0.43). With 95% confidence interval for mean, the scores of experimental group are in range (3.89, 4.22). Comparing the mean scores of control and experimental group indicates that there is an insignificant difference between two groups in which control groups are higher than experimental group.

Table 4.7 *Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of fluency*

	Groups			Statistics	Std. Error
post-test of	Control	Mean		4.3000	.07897
fluency					
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.1385	
			Upper Bound	4.4615	
		Std. Deviation		.43251	
		Minimum		3.50	
		Maximum		5.00	
		Skewness		.226	.427
		Kurtosis		-1.037	.833
	Experimental	Mean		4.0583	.08013
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.8945	
			Upper Bound	4.2222	
		Std. Deviation		.43886	
		Minimum		3.25	
		Maximum		5.00	
		Skewness		.151	.427
		Kurtosis		-.527	.833

Table 4.8 shows the main effect of the group is statistically significant, F (1,116) = 19.776, p <0.05.   On the other hand, the main effect of status, F (1,116) = .014, p= .907 and the interaction of groups and status are not significant, F (1,116) =1.109, p=. /294. It indicates that pre-test didn't affect the result of the study. So Pre-test didn't affect learners 'fluency.

Table 4.8 *Tests of between subjects- groups of fluency*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.179ª	3	1.060	6.966	.000
Intercept	2091.675	1	2091.675	13750.232	.000
Groups	3.008	1	3.008	19.776	.000
Status	.002	1	.002	.014	.907
Groups * Status	.169	1	.169	1.109	.294
Error	17.646	116	.152		
Total	2112.500	120			

In figure 4.12, C7 and C8 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in two control and experimental groups. In this figure, the post- test scores of fluency in control group based on status (C8 test) and the post-test scores of fluency in experimental group in accordance with status (C7 test) is compared and insignificance effect of pre-test is shown.
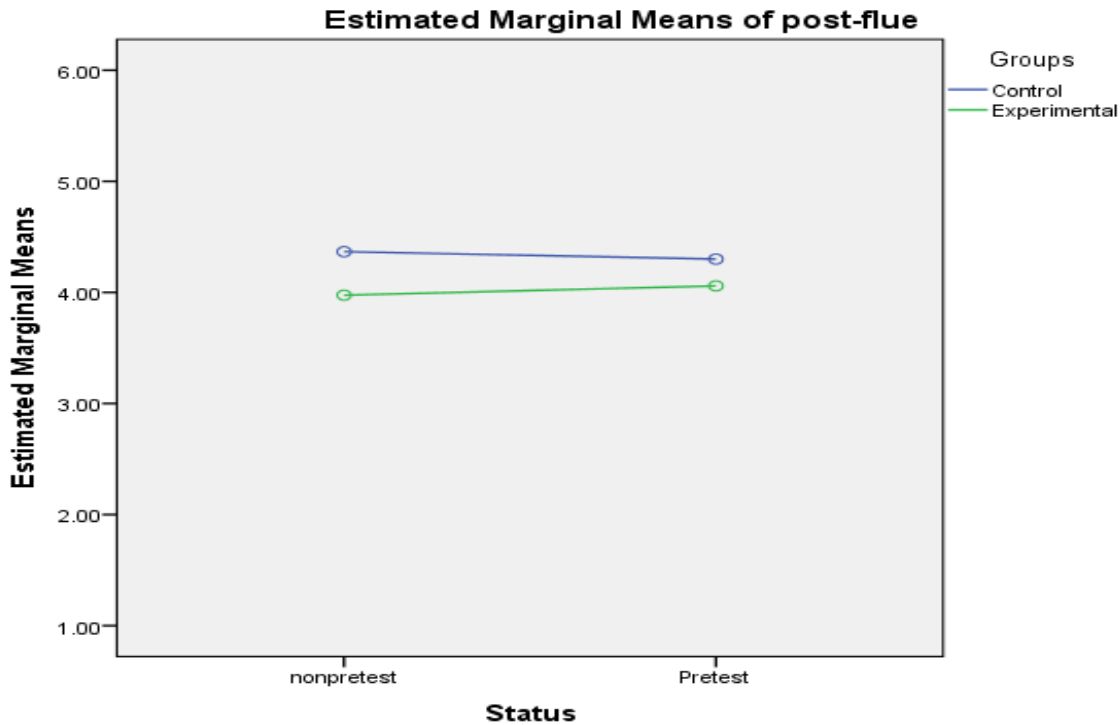
Figure 4.12 *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of fluency*

4.2.6 Oral Proficiency

Table 4.9 shows descriptive information of post-test scores of the intervention group and the control group. The lowest score in the control group was 3.31 and the highest score was 4.56. Table 4.9 presents the mean and standard deviation of scores (M=4.06, SD= 0.31) and with 95% Confidence Interval for Mean, the scores of the control group were in the range (4.17, 3.94). Also, the lowest score in the intervention group was 3.94 and the highest score was 5.12. The mean and standard deviation of the scores were (M= 4.51, SD= 0.29) and with 95% confidence interval, the scores of intervention group was in the range (4.62, 4.40). Generally, learners involved in deliberate practice outperformed learners involved in traditional modes of practice (Figure 4.14).

Table 4.9 _Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of oral proficiency_

	Groups			Statistics	Std. Error
post-test of oral proficiency	Control	Mean		4.058333	.0559766
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.943848	
			Upper Bound	4.172818	
		Std. Deviation		.3065965	
		Minimum		3.3125	
		Maximum		4.5625	
		Skewness		-.237	.427
		Kurtosis		-.337	.833
	Experimental	Mean		4.506250	.0537186
		95% confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.396383	
			Upper Bound	4.616117	
		Std. Deviation		.2942288	
		Minimum		3.9375	
		Maximum		5.1250	
		Skewness		.203	.427
		Kurtosis		.025	.833

Figure 4.13 compares two groups of control and experimental group in pre-test based on their oral proficiency. It indicates that all of the learners are at the same level. They enjoy the same level of oral proficiency.
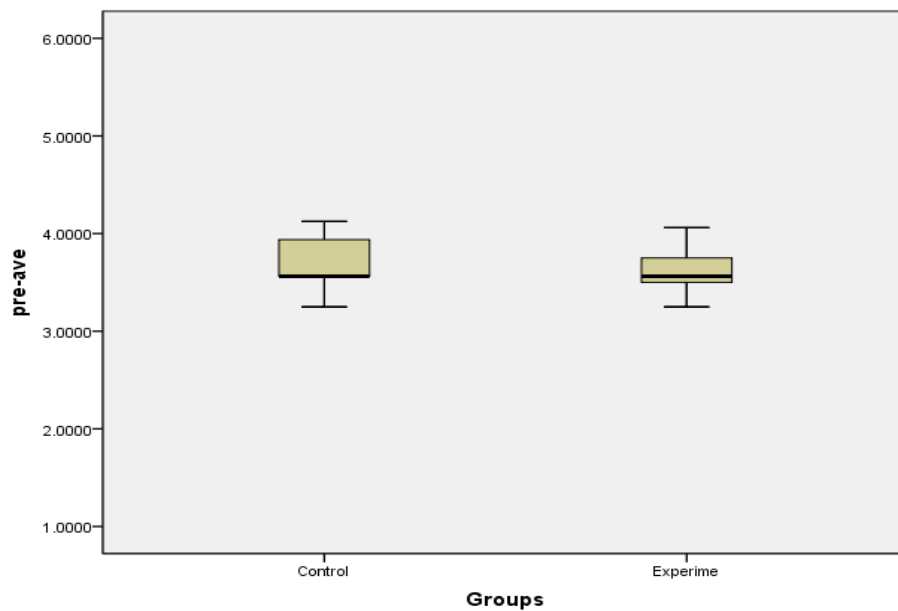
Figure 4.13 Box plot for control and experimental groups in pretest

Figure 4.14 compares two groups after intervention. It's obvious that learners involved in experimental group outperformed learners in the control group. Generally, deliberate practice significantly affected learners' performance. Learners` oral proficiency was improved after utilizing deliberate practice in the classroom rather than learners who were involved in traditional modes of practice.
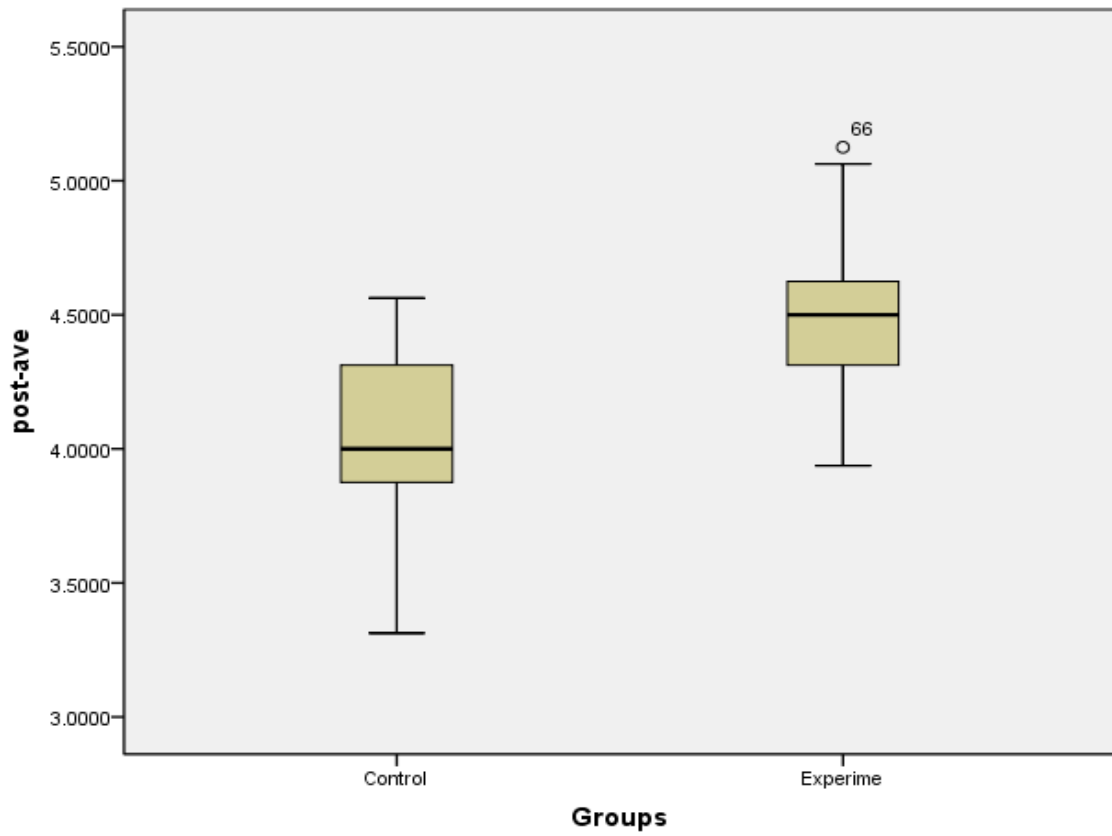
Figure4.14 *Box plot for control and experimental groups in posttest*

Table 4.10 shows the main effect of the group is statistically significant, F (1,116) = 74.507, p <0.05. On the other hand, the main effect of status, F (1,116) = 1.824, p=. /17, and the interaction of group and status is not significant (1,116) =. 046, p=. /83. It indicates that pre-test didn't affect the result of the study.

Table 4.10 Tests of between- subjects effect of oral proficiency

Table 4.10 Tests of between- subjects effect of oral proficiency

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	6.490[a]	3	2.163	25.459	.000
Intercept	2163.783	1	2163.783	25465.618	.000
Groups	6.331	1	6.331	74.507	.000
Status	.155	1	.155	1.824	.179
Groups * Status	.004	1	.004	.046	.830
Error	9.856	116	.085		
Total	2180.129	120			
Corrected Total	16.346	119			

In figure 4.15, C7 and C8 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in two control and experimental groups. In this figure, the post- test scores of oral proficiency in control group based on status (C8 test) and the post-test scores of pronunciation in experimental group in accordance with status (C7 test) is compared and insignificance effect of pre-test is shown.
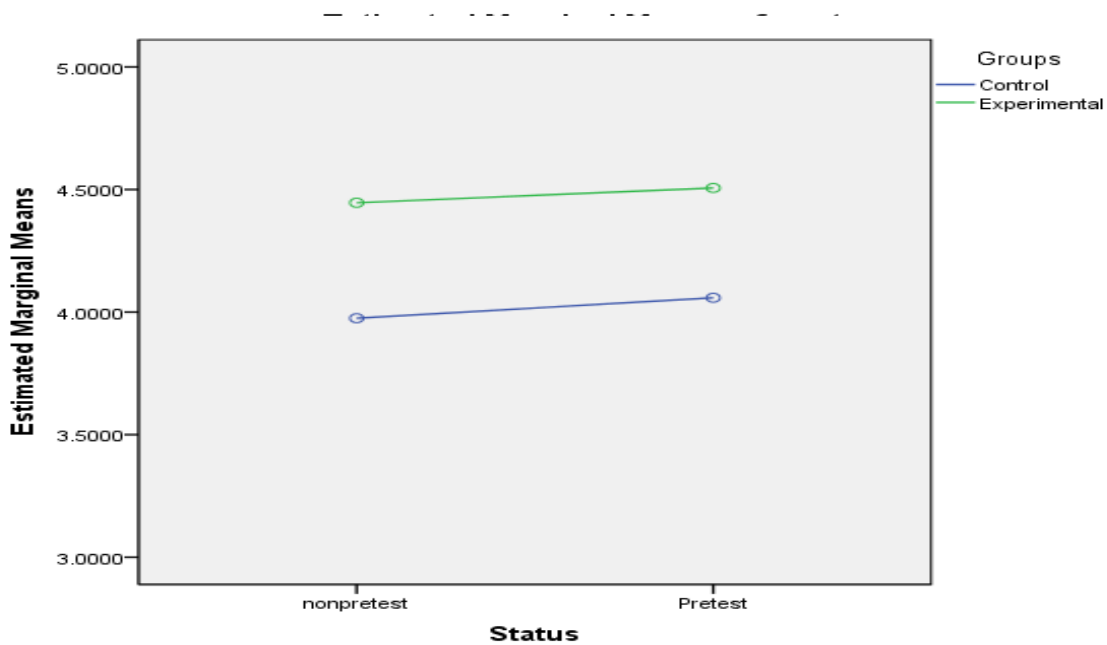
Figure 4.15 *Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of oral proficiency*

In figure 4.16, C1 and C5 tests are indicated. This figure indicates the comparison of mean scores in both control and experimental groups based on the status. In this figure, the post test scores of groups which had pre-test in both control and experimental group (C1 test) and the post-test scores of groups which had not pre-test in both control and experimental group (C5 test) are compared and the meaningless effect of pre-test is
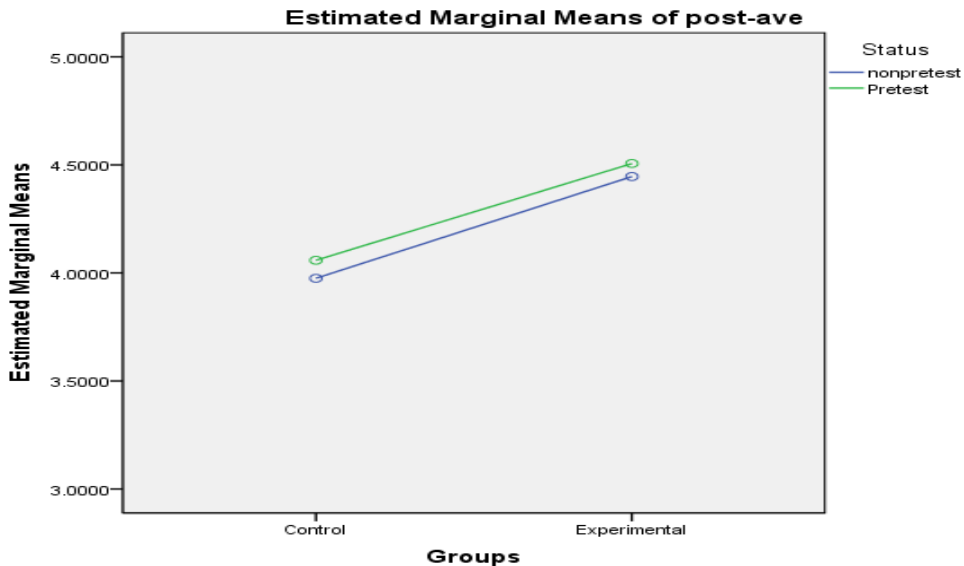

Figure 4. 16*. Comparisons of Estimated Marginal Means of oral proficiency*

CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

Deliberate practice is regarded as the main key to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency. This study was quantitative study which was designed to investigate the influence of deliberate practice on learners' oral proficiency. Considering the purpose of the present study, Solomon four- group design was found to be appropriate, since it enjoys a high degree of internal validity and controls the effect of pre-test on the results of the study. The whole sample size of this study consisted of EFL learners studying English at private language schools of Gonbad and Azadshahr, two major cities of Golestan province with age range 14 to 18 years. The subjects of the study were 120 learners with equal number of boys (n=60) and girls (n=60). Since in educational setting, simple random sampling is not allowed, we followed cluster sampling. In Solomon four-group design, four groups are needed. Groups of learners were randomly assigned to one of the groups. In two groups, learners were instructed through deliberate practice with only one difference that one of the groups had pre-test. On the other hand, two other groups were instructed through traditional modes of practice. In order to obtain data for oral proficiency development, the scores of learners in post-test were used. The data were analyzed by using two- way analysis of variance.

5.2 Conclusion

It was found that Learners involved in deliberate practice were found to be more successful in improving their knowledge of vocabulary rather than learners involved in traditional modes of practice. Deliberate practice provided a situation for learners to identify their weaknesses and worked on them to cover and improved them. Interaction effect of status and group were found to be insignificant in order to prove that pre-test didn't affect learners' post-test scores of vocabulary. Learners involved in deliberate practice were significantly higher in their grammar scores as compared to the learners involved in traditional modes of practice. Group effect and interaction effect of group and status were found to be insignificant. It indicated that pre-test didn't affect learners' vocabulary scores in post-test. There was a significant difference in pronunciation achievement of learners involved in deliberate practice compared to the learners involved in traditional modes of practice. Learners involved in deliberate practice outperformed learners involved in

traditional modes of practice based on their pronunciation. Group effect and interaction effect of group and status were found to be insignificant. It indicated that pre-test didn't affect learners' pronunciation scores in post-test. Insignificant difference was observed in control and experimental group based on their fluency. Control groups were higher than experimental group which was not statistically significant. Control and experimental group were found to be parallel in their scores of fluency. In general, F value was found to be significant for control and experimental group in relation to their scores of oral proficiency. Generally, deliberate practice significantly affected learners' oral proficiency compared to traditional modes of practice.

Deliberate practice influenced learners' level of accuracy (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) and it didn't affect learners' fluency. It can be concluded that accuracy and fluency are regarded as two opposite points in which an increase in one of them causes decrease in another. In this case learners involved in deliberate practice tried to speak accurately in the post-test and it reduced the speed of their speaking. However, more research is needed in this area.

5.3 Discussion

Previous Studies conducted on the effect of mechanical drills such as repetition, memorization and chain drills indicated repetition and memorization affect accuracy and fluency of the learners. On the other hand, it has no significant effect on the complexity. It means learners are not able to generate complicated grammatical constructions. It has also been found that audio-lingual drills don`t work in all conditions. Learners are linguistically competent but communicatively incompetent. They are not able to communicate. Because techniques are not efficient in order to develop students` communicative competence. When the majority of the class time is devoted to mindless repetition, the foundation for learning becomes shaky. Learners should never practice mindlessly any time they learn something new. Learners' mind should be engaged when they practice. They should follow systematic and purposeful practice which is called deliberate practice. In this practice, learners constantly challenge themselves in order to find their weaknesses and using specific tasks to cover their deficiencies.

In the light of previous research, the main focus of the present study was using deliberate practice to improve learners' oral proficiency. Deliberate practice was implemented in experimental group. The general findings indicated that deliberate practice significantly improved learners` oral proficiency. The detailed description is provided as follows;

First deliberate practice improved learners' speaking skill in some aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Learners' knowledge of vocabulary increased. Learners were armed with sufficient vocabulary and it provided an opportunity to expand their speaking time. They could communicate well as they mastered more various vocabularies and knew their spelling, pronunciation, collocations, uses, antonyms and their synonyms. This is in line with cook (2013). Based on cook, appropriate and sufficient vocabulary results in real life communication. Learners involved in deliberate practice also were more proficient than learners involved in traditional mode of practice. In accordance with Schmitt (2008), vocabulary is regarded as a crucial indication of language proficiency. Learners also used more words since they were acquaintance with their pronunciation. This made learners feel more confident and secure to use and pronounce words correctly. In line with Roohani (2013), the importance of pronunciationin speaking is obvious and it is regarded as one of the main features of language learning and teaching. Second, learners could use correct grammatical structures as they were aware of the structures. Learners were able to use well-formed sentences. This is in line with Heaton (1978) who believes that learners' ability to use correct grammatical structure and distinguishing appropriate grammatical forms are important.

5.4 Pedagogical Implication

- Recent educational researches regarding oral proficiency development have demonstrated gaps in using a comprehensive and in-depth kind of practice or deliberate practice. The present research is an attempt to fill this gap and provides a new horizon in educational achievement, since it employed an appropriate teaching strategy. The findings of the study can be used to guide teachers in areas of teaching.
- The difference in oral proficiency scores of learners involved in deliberate practice and learners involved in traditional modes of practice indicates that the

experimental group performed better than control group. Therefore, deliberate practice should be designed and implemented in all classes.

- Practice and achievement go side by side together. If the practice is done deliberately and purposefully, the achievement is greater. It means the better the practice, the better learning and achievement. If the practice is deliberately and purposefully toward a specific skill, the results of the practice are satisfying. So applying a purposeful and deliberate practice in learning is needed and essential. Learners involved in deliberate practice had better achievement. The achievement of the learners is a vital indicator of the kinds of their practice.

- One point to consider is that instructors and researchers should give considerable research attention to the important role of deliberate practice as a key factor in learners' academic achievement.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Research
The following suggestions are;

- The findings of the study are not generalized to all private language schools and public schools. Although regarding Solomon-four group design, the sample size was big enough, it was from only three private language schools. Further research can be done with other sample size from private and public schools in different areas with different ages and different level of language knowledge.

- Other language skills that may be influenced by deliberate practice such as reading, writing and listening. These skills should be considered for further research. The present research paves the way for further research in different areas of learning and teaching.

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Appendix A: Teacher-made Test

Teacher- made Test

1: What do you think the worst disease to have would be?

2: What technology helps you to be productive?

3: What do you think was the most productive period of your life so far?

4: Talk about your best memory from a holiday.

5: What are some of the advantages of books vs. movies? How about the disadvantages of books vs. movies?

6: Talk about how technology has changed in your lifetime.

7: What are three natural wonders you would like to see before you die?

Appendix B: Standard IELTS speaking test

Part 1:

The first part of the test begins with the examiner introducing himself or herself.

Part 2:

1) What's your favorite type of holiday?
2) What do you do to stay healthy?
3) What are your reading habits?
4) What do you do to prevent our environment from pollution?
5) What kind of things do you enjoy doing at the weekend?

Part 3:

Describe a book or a film that had a strong impact on you. You should say:

- What was it
- When you read or saw it
- How it influenced you.
- And say if you liked it and why

Part 4:

Describe a tourist attraction you once visited. You should say:

- When you visited it
- Where it is situated
- Who you went with
- And say what about it you like the most

چکیده

اگرچه تاثیر روش های سنتی مورد آزمایش قرار گرفته است,اما تاثیر تمرین خودآگاهانه مورد آزمون قرار نگرفته است.برای پر کردن این شکاف، این مطالعه به بررسی تاثیر تمرین خودآگاهانه بر روی مهارت گفتاری زبان آموزان میپردازد. در این بررسی از یک نمونه متشکل از ۱۲۰نفر زبان آموز ایرانی که در سطح متوسط زبان انگلیسی هستند استفاده شده است. نمرات پیش آزمون و پس آزمون طبق طرح سالومن چهار گروهی مورد بررسی قرارگرفته است. گروه زبان آموزان به صورت تصادفی به گروه های کنترل و آزمایش تقسیم بندی شدند. گروه آزمایش از طریق تمرین خودآگاهانه و گروه کنترل از طریق روش های سنتی آموزش داده شدند. نمرات پیش آزمون از طریق آنالیز واریانس دوطرفه مورد بررسی قرار گرفت.نتایج($F_{(1,116)} = 74.51, p <0/005$) نشان داد که تمرین خودآگاهانه تاثیر بسزایی در بهبود مهارت گفتاری زبان آموزان دارد. همچنین نتایج($F_{(1,116)} = 1.83, p=0/17$ and $F_{(1,116)} = 0/047, p=0/83$) نشان داد که پیش آزمون تاثیری بر روی نتایج مطالعه نداشته است. یافته های این مطالعه کاربرد روشنی برای زبان آموزان و معلمان دارد.

کلید واژه ها: مهارت گفتاری،تمرین خودآگاهانه،تمرین سنتی

گروه زبان انگلیسی

پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد آموزش زبان

تاثیر تمرین خودآگاهانه بر روی مهارت گفتاری زبان آموزان ایرانی

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بهمن ۱۳۹۷