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TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD 'FLOW THEORY' IN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT
The role of flow experiences, characterized by a balance between challenge and skills and by a person's interest, control and focused attention during a task, has been understood necessary for optimal learning (Egbert, 2003). Due to the importance of flow theory and the lack of research, the present study addressed flow to see if flow occurs in EFL classrooms and how students and teachers perceive learners' engagement. To do so, 83 students and 20 teachers are asked to fill out the flow questionnaire including 32 items ranging from never to always. The findings of the study reveal that the students have experienced the necessary concentration, interest and enjoyment for flow during their works and activities. In addition, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between flow state and the achievement of skills in the process of language learning. The active and meaningful participation in the activities depends on the level of tasks and the learners' ability. Therefore, due to the importance of flow state the practitioners are suggested to create such a condition in which students can flourish.

KEYWORDS: Flow Theory, Experience, Optimal Learning, Intrinsic Motivation

INTRODUCTION
It is very important to us that teaching generates enthusiasm, enhances concentration and favors creativity, which are very distinct but somehow interconnected phenomena. Rieber (1998) convincingly argues that the learning process itself - and not just the result - should be interesting, if one seeks higher motivation among learners. "Serious play" and "hard fun" are intense learning situations where learners engage large amounts of "energy" and time and that do provide equally intensive pleasure at certain moments which have been identified as "flow" or

"optimal experience" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1990. Flow situations have been mainly noticed and studied in play or artistic creation and are defined as states of happiness and satisfaction that arise when "carried" by an automatic and spontaneous activity. It is interesting for teachers to know that "flow states" go along with the impression of discovery and creation and boost performance in conjunction with important cognitive efforts. "Flow states" are therefore highly desirable, both for the individual student and the teacher. Conditions in which flow happens are characterized in the literature by an optimized level of challenge, a feeling of control adapted to the learner, a touch of fantasy, and feedback of the system. The Flow-theory is a concept which states activities that are in the balance between difficulty and skill which are creating a *state of flow*. This state is mostly for non-routine tasks, where over time skills and difficulty can be increased.

Various Definitions of 'Flow'

Flow, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), is a joyful experience. Each individual creates it, and it is the state in which people find themselves so involved in an activity in which nothing else matters (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is completely focused motivation in performing and learning. It is an alignment or match between the person and the task at hand. The key components of "flow," "in the zone" or "optimal" experiences are thus summarized as follows:

1. Clear goals.
2. Immediate feedback.
3. Balance between challenges and skills.
4. A sense of control.
5. Highly focused concentration/attention.
6. Transformation of time.
7. The loss of self-consciousness.
8. Autotelic or self-rewarding.

The first five elements are basic prerequisites that could be coined as "external conditions" for flow to occur, with "Challenge vs. Skills" being fundamental; a challenge or task to perform must be present, in order for skills to match it. The last three elements address the subjective experience that takes place during an activity in flow. In other words, they are the "outcomes" that characterize flow.

While Csikszentmihalyi thinks that the original flow definition rather describes components of a mental state (including perception of a situation), some researchers have attempted to narrow down the flow experience and rather conceptualize the other dimensions as some sort of contextual variables. According to Novak et al. (1997), "in Hoffman and Novak (1996), flow is defined in terms of the experience of flow (intrinsic enjoyment, loss of self-consciousness), behavioral properties of the flow activity (seamless sequence of responses facilitated by interactivity with the computer and self-reinforcement), and its antecedents (skill/challenge balance, focused attention, and tele-presence)."

Schaffer (2013) defined 'flow' in another way and proposed seven flow conditions:

1. Knowing what to do
2. Knowing how to do it
3. Knowing how well you are doing
4. Knowing where to go (if navigation is involved)
5. High perceived challenges
6. High perceived skills
7. Freedom from distractions

Schaffer also published a measure, the Flow Condition Questionnaire (FCQ), to measure each of these 7 flow conditions for any given task or activity.

Achieving the flow-state

The flow state can be achieved if these characteristics are involved:
a) Creativity, b) Autonomy, c) Learning, d) Progress, d) Increase of skills & difficulty

Components of the Flow Theory

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) originally identified four flow components: a) control, b) attention, c) curiosity, d) intrinsic interest.

Elements of Flow and Second Language Learning

The following is a list of elements of flow also found in SLA research and theories:

Motivation. This principle has been defined as key for achieving a balance between individuals' skills and activities (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei 2001; Gardner 2005; Keller, 1983). In addition, Gardner (2005) expounds on motivated individuals, defining them as follows: They are goal-directed. Motivated individuals express effort in attaining the goal, they show persistence, and they attend to the tasks necessary to achieve the goals. They have a strong desire to attain their goal, and they enjoy the activities necessary to achieve their goal. They are aroused in seeking their goals, they have expectancies about their successes and failures, and when they are achieving some degree of success they demonstrate self-efficacy; they are self-confident about their achievements. (p. 3)

A majority of Csikszentmihalyi's most recent work surrounds the idea of motivation and the factors that contribute to motivation, challenge, and overall success in an individual. One personality characteristic that Csikszentmihalyi researched in detail was that of intrinsic motivation. Csikszentmihalyi and his colleagues found that intrinsically motivated people were more likely to be goal-directed and enjoy challenges that would lead to an increase in overall happiness. Csikszentmihalyi identified intrinsic motivation as a powerful trait to possess to optimize and enhance positive experience, feelings, and overall well-being as a result of challenging experiences.

Flow theory is very much linked to the concept of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, instructional designers should ask how to create instructional design models that favor intrinsic motivation. Chan & Ahern (1999) state that "At its most basic, flow is simply a description of people

enjoying themselves. They are in a state of enjoyment because they have situated themselves in an optimal environment. This should strike a resonate chord for any instructional designer. The goal of any instruction is to help students acquire the requisite knowledge or skill under optimal conditions." (p.152).

Play: Children at play are naturally *engaged* and *active* with the task at hand; they are *interested* in it and can be engaged in one activity for long periods of time. They have a joyful experience; therefore don't mind repeating the tasks that bring this satisfaction. Their skills match the challenges of the tasks, and their interest and attention are focused and centered (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Enjoyment: Deci (1992) makes clear that it is not only children who become invested and engaged in tasks they enjoy and interest them, but adults also. He emphasizes that the key to this interest is the match between the person's abilities and the task at hand.

Challenge and skills: A good balance between challenge and skills is the main component necessary for supporting flow experiences. *Challenges* are the target language (TL) tasks that students are asked to do while *skills* refer to the TL skills and tools that students have in order to complete those tasks (Egbert, 2003). A match between these two refers to the degree in which a person's skills are adequate for meeting the demands of a situation. Flow research summarized by Whalen (1997) shows that the optimal balance between challenge and skill is a fundamental condition for flow to occur, and Deci (1992) also affirms the importance of person-task match in order to keep interest alive. This fair match, as if it were a game increasing in levels and complexity, invites repetition and requires a constant adjustment as the learners improve their skills. This idea is parallel to Krashen's (1985) Comprehensible Input Theory, in which he postulates that in order to acquire language successfully, learners need input that only slightly exceeds the skill level of the learner at any given moment (level i+1).

Concentration: This is another key component of flow experiences. "Focus in language acquisition […] is characterized by intense concentration and automaticity" (Egbert, 2003, p. 504). At the same time, one of the conditions in flow theory is that individuals who can become engaged in an activity, are also capable of diminishing their self-concern, and center their focus on the task at hand. In this regard, researchers have conflicting opinions on whether students should consciously focus on incoming language, or whether unintentional acquisition should be allowed to permit their attention to focus on the task, rather than on the specific details of language. Egbert (2003) suggests a balance between attention to accuracy (noticing language details) and fluency (flow in the use of language).

Interest: In flow theory, there should be a balance between "threat-free environments" and "anxiety"—a person needs safety to perform at their best ability, but also sufficient challenges to be alert. Egbert (2003) believes that the same applies to the FL classroom; a safe environment does not imply a challenge-free environment. She affirms that students will be more engaged when tasks spark students' personal interests, and therefore, including student-generated topics and ideas into tasks will create higher interest.

Control: A sense of autonomy and control is always present in flow experiences. This characteristic is also considered a key aspect in the acquisition of a second language (Dickinson, 1987), where learners take responsibility for their learning (self-management, self-monitoring, setting goals, collaborating, etc.). However, Whalen (1997) reports there is also a need for rules and structure in the classroom, rather than complete freedom. Rules provide opportunities for the individual to exercise autonomy and feel "in control." These principles seem to be at the core of motivated individuals and successful learning experiences.

Feedback: "Positive feedback strengthens the self, and more attention is freed to deal with the outer and the inner environment" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 39). These aspects of Flow Theory coincide with Dörnyei's (1994) suggestions to "giv[e] positive competence feedback, pointing out the value of the accomplishment; and not overreacting to errors" in order to not cause anxiety to the language learner (p. 282).

Goal-setting: Cognitive engagement is strongly related to research on goals and self-regulated learning (Bandura, Martinez-Pons, & Zimmerman, 1992). Fredericks et al. (2004) state that, "students who endorse mastery goals are more likely to use deep-level strategies" (p. 67). In addition, Dörnyei (1994) affirms the positive effect of promoting students' self-efficacy in setting and achieving realistic language goals. Furthermore, he indicates the benefits of group goal-orientedness in second language acquisition.

Activities in Flow Theory

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) states that there are some activities that can put any human in an *state of flow* that is motivational. Lots of these are derived from activities like making music, climbing, dancing and so forth. It is because these activities require the player to learn, set up goals and also because these activities are providing feedback and they make control possible. These activities also are enjoyable because they are making the player cease to act in terms of common sense, and start acting for the purpose of the activity.

To understand better, the flow state is a balance between the skill level and the challenge of a task. The Flow state will never occur if the challenge will be insignificant in balance with the individual skill. State of flow which is motivational is more likely to occur when the activity has an above-average skill. When a task is too difficult, it causes people to be anxious. When a task is too easy, it causes boredom. When the task is just right, we are in a state of heightened focus and immersion, or in other words a state of Flow.

Challenges to staying

Some of the challenges to staying in flow include states of apathy, boredom, and anxiety. Being in a state of apathy is characterized when challenges are low and one's skill level is low producing a general lack of interest in the task at hand. Boredom is a slightly different state in that it occurs when challenges are low, but one's skill level exceeds those challenges causing one to seek higher challenges. Lastly, a state of anxiety occurs when challenges are so high that they exceed one's perceived skill level causing one great distress and uneasiness. These states in general differ from being in a state of flow, in that flow occurs when challenges match one's skill

level. Consequently, Csíkszentmihályi has said, "If challenges are too low, one gets back to flow by increasing them. If challenges are too great, one can return to the flow state by learning new skills."

Flow in education

In education, the concept of overlearning plays a role in a student's ability to achieve flow. Csíkszentmihályi states that overlearning enables the mind to concentrate on visualizing the desired performance as a singular, integrated action instead of a set of actions. Challenging assignments that (slightly) stretch one's skills lead to flow.

In the 1950s British cybernetician, Gordon Pask designed an adaptive teaching machine called SAKI, an early example of 'e-learning'. The machine is discussed in some detail in Stafford Beer's book "Cybernetics and Management". In the patent application for SAKI (1956), Pask's comments (some of which are included below) indicate an awareness of the pedagogical importance of balancing student competence with didactic challenge, which is quite consistent with flow theory:

1. If the operator is receiving data at too slow a rate, he is likely to become bored and attend to other irrelevant data.
2. If the data given indicates too precisely what responses the operator is required to make, the skill becomes too easy to perform and the operator again tends to become bored.
3. If the data given is too complicated or is given at too great a rate, the operator is unable to deal with it. He is then liable to become discouraged and lose interest in performing or learning the skill.

Ideally, for an operator to perform a skill efficiently, the data presented to him should always be of sufficient complexity to maintain his interest and maintain a competitive situation, but not so complex as to discourage the operator. Similarly these conditions should obtain at each stage of a learning process if it is to be efficient. A tutor teaching one pupil seeks to maintain just these conditions.

Around 2000, it came to the attention of Csíkszentmihályi that the principles and practices of the Montessori Method of education seemed to purposefully set up continuous flow opportunities and experiences for students. Csíkszentmihályi and psychologist Kevin Rathunde embarked on a multi-year study of student experiences in Montessori settings and traditional educational settings. The research supported observations that students achieved flow experiences more frequently in Montessori settings.

Performance and learning

Flow experiences imply a growth principle. When one is in a flow state, he or she is working to master the activity at hand. To maintain that flow state, one must seek increasingly greater challenges. Attempting these new, difficult challenges stretches one's skills. One emerges from such a flow experience with a bit of personal growth and great "feelings of competence and

efficacy". By increasing time spent in flow, intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning also increases.

Flow has a documented correlation with high performance in the fields of artistic and scientific creativity;, teaching, learning, and sports. Flow has been linked to persistence and achievement in activities while also helping to lower anxiety during various activities and raise self-esteem. However, evidence regarding better performance in flow situations is mixed. For sure, the association between the two is a reciprocal one. That is, flow experiences may foster better performance but, on the other hand, good performance makes flow experiences more likely. Results of a longitudinal study in the academic context indicate that the causal effect of flow on performance is only of small magnitude and the strong relationship between the two is driven by an effect of performance on flow. In the long run, flow experiences in a specific activity may lead to higher performance in that activity as flow is positively correlated with a higher subsequent motivation to perform and to perform well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1975, Mihaly Csikszentmihályi and his fellow researchers began researching flow after Csikszentmihályi became fascinated by artists who would essentially get lost in their work. Artists, especially painters, got so immersed in their work that they would disregard their need for food, water and even sleep. Thus, the origin of research on the theory of flow came about when Csikszentmihályi tried to understand this phenomenon experienced by these artists. Flow research became prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s, with Csikszentmihályi and his colleagues in Italy still at the forefront. Researchers interested in optimal experiences and emphasizing positive experiences, especially in places such as schools and the business world, also began studying the theory of flow at this time. The theory of flow was greatly used in the theories of Maslow and Rogers in their development of the humanistic tradition of psychology. Flow has been recognized throughout history and across cultures. The teachings of Buddhism and of Taoism speak of a state of mind known as the "action of inaction" or "doing without doing" (*wu wei* in Taoism) that greatly resembles the idea of flow. Also, Hindu texts on Advaita philosophy such as Ashtavakra Gita and the Yoga of Knowledge such as Bhagavad-Gita refer to a similar state.

Although Flow Theory has not yet been tested in the area of foreign or second language learning, Egbert (2003) tried to establish the foundation for a research stream addressing flow in language learning and investigate whether flow exists in foreign language (FL) classrooms. Findings revealed that flow does exist in the FL classroom and also Flow Theory offers an interesting and useful framework for conceptualizing and evaluating language learning activities.

Another study was done by Eisenberger et al. (2005) who applied Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Flow Theory of optimal experience to the workplace. This study examined the relationship of employees' perceived skill and challenge at work and the need for achievement with their positive mood, intrinsic task interest, and extra-role performance. Among achievement-oriented employees only, high skill and challenge was associated with greater positive mood, task interest,

and performance than other skill/challenge combinations. Additionally, positive mood mediated the interactive relationship of skill/challenge and need for achievement with performance.

Furthermore, Clarke and Haworth (1994) investigated whether the experience of situations where high challenge is matched by skill (termed 'flow') can be classed as 'optimal experience'. The results showed that the positive poles of subjective experience tended to cluster in 'control' (skills exceeding moderate challenge) rather than flow. However, more optimal experience (considered as high enjoyment) occurred in flow than expected. In addition, optimal experience in flow was characterized by high cognitive involvement. Subjects who experienced flow as optimal experience were found to score significantly higher on measures of psychological well-being than those who did not experience flow as highly enjoyable.

In the field of education, a different study was conducted by Stormoen et. al (2016) which identified factors that promote positive experiences in high school physical education (PE). The study combined elements of Self-determination Theory (SDT) with the theory of "flow. The majority of the students reported having flow experiences, although this was truer for boys than for girls. Those who had experienced flow also tended to be like those who had experienced the fulfillment of basic psychological needs and were characterized by a high level of autonomous motivation. In boys, the need for competence was a stronger predictor of flow than other factors, while for girls the need for relatedness was the stronger predictor of flow.

Moreover, Chan & Ahern (1999) investigated the effect of activity content, its presentation, and the interactions between the two on flow experience (intrinsic motivation) in instructional activity. Results suggested that the activity content had major influences on motivation, but argued that while Hypermedia presentation added appeals to instructions that motivate students, complex presentations can be distracting and should be used gradually."

Asakawa (2004) examined whether flow theory's most basic and general hypothesis, that quality of experience is a function of perceived challenges and skills, was applicable to a Japanese sample. Furthermore, whether autotelic and non-autotelic groups' perceptions of challenges and skills affected the quality of these two groups' experiences, and how these two groups balanced their perceived challenges and skills when engaged in daily activities. The results showed that high challenge/high skill situations created an optimal state of mind for the Japanese college students, as flow theory postulates.

Besides, Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005) compared the time use and perceptions of schools, teachers, and friends of approximately 290 demographically matched students in Montessori and traditional middle schools. Their study revealed that Montessori students spent more time engaged with school-related tasks, chores, collaborative work, and individual projects, while traditional students spent more time in social and leisure activities and more time in didactic educational settings (e.g., listening to a lecture, note taking, watching instructional videos). These results are discussed in terms of current thought on motivation in education and middle school reform.

In another study, Shernoff et al. (2003) presented a conceptualization of student engagement based on the culmination of concentration, interest, and enjoyment (i.e., flow). It was investigated how adolescents spent their time in high school and the conditions under which they reported being engaged. Participants were also more engaged in individual and group work versus listening to lectures, watching videos, or taking exams. They concluded that increased engagement, such as focusing on learning activities that support students' autonomy and providing an appropriate level of challenge for students' skills are so effective.

Finally, Meyer and Turner (2006) discussed how the research findings about motivation in classrooms have led to a closer examination of emotions. They described how motivation theories such as Academic Risk Taking, Flow Theory, and Goal Theory have helped them better understand emotions in their classroom research. Their research findings suggested that engaging students in learning requires consistently positive emotional experiences, which contribute to a classroom climate that forms the foundation for teacher–student relationships and interactions necessary for motivation to learn. They concluded that integration of emotion, motivation, and cognition theoretically and methodologically to move the research forward was mandatory.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

How do students' evaluations of their engagement in the tasks coincide with or differ from their teachers'?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

To answer the research question and perceive how students and teachers evaluate their students' engagement in the tasks, the study was conducted with two groups of participants. One group would be the teachers' group with 20 participants and the other would be the group of 83 students. The participants were selected from sophomores studying 'English translation' at Shiraz Azad University and the teachers were veteran in TEFL. They were asked to fill out the flow questionnaire including 32 items ranging from never to always.

Instrument

The main source of data was a questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale regarding students' and teachers' perceptions toward flow in the classrooms. It was used for the purpose of measuring the overall level of their engagements while performing the tasks. The Likert-scale questionnaire developed by Jackson and Marsh (1996) followed heavily the flow state. It included eight components of the flow as Challenge-Skill Balance, Clear Goals, Clear Feedback, Concentration on the Task at Hand, Sense of Control, Loss of Self-Consciousness, Transformation of Time, and Autotelic Experience. To better measure the students' engagements in the tasks and activities, four questions proposed corresponding to each component of the flow state. The results for each component of the questionnaire from both groups were analyzed to provide an answer to the research questions regarding the extent of students' engagement and flow occurring in English language classes.

Procedure of the study

The current study implemented a qualitative methodology to understand the EFL students' experiences in regards to engagement in the completion of the target tasks in language classes. Moreover, a quantitative approach was used to compare the level of engagement experienced by students from the viewpoints of both teachers and students.

RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

Based on data analysis, the following table represents the findings for all the components of the questionnaire in both groups. As table shows, both groups verify the existence of flow state in the classroom. The mean scores obtained for both teachers and students are 3.20 (representing students' engagements midway between 'often' and 'usually'), 2.59 (representing very close to 'often'). Comparing all components of flow in both groups shows consistency between the elements, only with some exceptions. The highest mean score was recorded for the element 'clear feedback'. The mean scores of 3.23 was for teachers and 2.50 was for students. While the other components were nearly close, the feedback item showed a slight difference between teachers and students. In addition, all components had low standard deviation (SD < 1) except three components of challenge-skill balance, loss of self-consciousness, and autotelic experience (SD >1).

Table 1: Flow State

Components of Flow	Groups	N	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Challenge-skill balance	teachers	20	2.7500	1.00656	.22507
	students	83	2.3293	.77467	.08555
Clear goals	teachers	20	2.9875	.99166	.22174
	students	83	2.6738	.70567	.07793
Unambiguous feedback	teachers	20	3.2333	.91830	.20534
	students	83	2.5020	.73873	.08109
concentration	teachers	20	2.9625	.90784	.20300
	Students	83	2.2620	.75193	.08254
Sense of control	Teachers	20	2.9250	.90721	.20286
	Students	83	2.3102	.91364	.10029
Loss of self-consciousness	Teachers	20	2.7000	1.13149	.25301
	Students	83	2.3765	.78123	.08575
Transformation of time	Teachers	20	2.7750	.96621	.21605
	Students	83	2.4699	.69886	.07671
Autotelic experience	Teachers	20	2.9000	1.00459	.22463
	Students	83	2.3765	.93327	.10244
Overall Flow	Teachers	20	3.20	1.005	.225
	Students	83	2.59	.663	.073

To examine any probable difference between teachers' perception and students' perception, independent samples *t*-test was run. The results showed that there was significant difference (p> .05) regarding challenge-skill balance, clear feedback, concentration, sense of control, loss of consciousness, and autotelic experience. But the amount of P was lower than .05 for two components of 'clear goals' and 'transformation of time'. Therefore, it can be concluded that both groups of teachers and students do not differ in their perception toward their engagement in the flow state.

Table 2: Independent Sample t-Test for Flow Components

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
1st item	Equal variances assumed	2.563	.113	2.048	100	.043	.42073	.20544	.01315	.82832
	Equal variances not assumed			1.747	24.765	.093	.42073	.24078	-.07541	.91687
2nd item	Equal variances assumed	2.759	.100	1.637	100	.105	.31372	.19159	-.06640	.69383
	Equal variances not assumed			1.335	23.898	.195	.31372	.23504	-.17148	.79892
3rd item	Equal variances assumed	.064	.801	3.785	101	.000	.73133	.19322	.34803	1.11462
	Equal variances not assumed			3.313	25.246	.003	.73133	.22077	.27687	1.18578
4th item	Equal variances assumed	1.484	.226	3.588	101	.001	.70045	.19520	.31323	1.08767
	Equal variances not assumed			3.196	25.638	.004	.70045	.21914	.24970	1.15120
5th item	Equal variances assumed	.267	.606	2.705	101	.008	.61476	.22728	.16389	1.06563
	Equal variances not assumed			2.717	29.020	.011	.61476	.22629	.15195	1.07757
6th item	Equal variances assumed	3.170	.078	1.513	101	.133	.32349	.21375	-.10053	.74752
	Equal variances not assumed			1.211	23.544	.238	.32349	.26715	-.22843	.87542
7th item	Equal variances assumed	4.152	.044	1.619	101	.108	.30512	.18842	-.06865	.67889
	Equal variances not assumed			1.331	24.004	.196	.30512	.22926	-.16805	.77829
8th item	Equal variances assumed	.100	.753	2.219	101	.029	.52349	.23592	.05550	.99149
	Equal variances not assumed			2.120	27.449	.043	.52349	.24689	.01731	1.02968

According to above tables, the participants approved the balance between 'challenge and skills' provided in the classroom. Creating flow state depends on this element and the similar perceptions between teachers and students revealed that the level of tasks meet the level of students' skills and abilities. Thus, there was an overall match between 'challenges or the difficulty of skills' and their skills. Having clear goal was an important element for creating high engagement experience, implying that the students had a strong sense of what needed to be done during the tasks. The results showed that students understood the clarity of goals and purpose in the tasks. Considering 'the feedback', findings from teachers were higher than those of students. It showed that the feedbacks were useful in teachers' term. However, students felt that they had received the needed support 'nearly often' and the difference between both groups' understanding was bigger than the other components.

Moreover, here, a question has been arisen: "How students concentrated and attended the tasks?" The results revealed that it happened 'often' to them and teachers approved it too. Both groups, also, supported the sense of control among learners. It revealed that they felt much involvement, creativity, and decision-making. Besides, the extent to which learners feel safe and comfortable during the task referred to loss of self-consciousness in the state of flow. The registered scores revealed that the students felt midway between 'seldom and often' whereas teachers understood it rather high. It means that loss of self-consciousness occurred 'often' during their performance.

Furthermore, the component of transformation of time referred to the quality of immersion and enjoyment. The close relationship between the groups revealed similar perceptions in the groups. The results for the last component 'autotelic experience' revealed that the overall experience left the majority of the students feel good about their work and the activities. However, the most interesting result gained from both groups was that all components classified under "conditions of flow" (challenge – skill match, feedback, clear goals, concentration, sense of control, loss of self-consciousness, and autotelic experience) had similar scores, just with the highest score for 3rd component in both groups. In fact, the findings indicated the existence of flow and the students' engagements in language classes. According to the principles of flow, the engagement during the work intensifies the students' engagement at behavioral, emotional and cognitive levels and it is the main goal in applying flow state.

CONCLUSION

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) emphasizes that flow is experienced when *concentration*, *interest* and *enjoyment* are experienced simultaneously. The findings of the study revealed that students experienced the necessary concentration, interest and enjoyment for flow during their works and activities. In addition, it was concluded that there is a relationship between flow state and the achievement of skills in the process of language learning. The active and meaningful participation in the activities depends on the level of tasks and the learners' ability. Therefore, due to the importance of flow state, the practitioners are suggested to create such a condition in which students can flourish. The key goal in education is to design learning experiences that stimulate students' interests and give them a better perspective of involvement in real situations. It seems that other researchers interested in the interplay between flow state and the affective domains

EFL can carry out a research to delve into this issue as well as the achievement of language components.

Limitations of the study

The study was conducted among English translation students and their instructors, so the obtained results are not generalizable to other EFL learners. The age, gender, and experience of both teachers and learners have been taken into account, but due to the space constraints, the researchers did not mention them in data analysis section.

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