Iranian Educational Psychology Association

Iranian Journal of Learning and Memory

Print ISSN: 2645 - 5455
Online ISSN: 2645 - 5457

Homepage: https://journal.iepa.ir

Language Teachers' Preferred and Practiced Teaching Styles: Evidence from Iraqi High School EFL Context

Rana Kadim Rahumi[1], and Parviz Alavinia[2] ✉

1. PhD candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran, ranooshalrubaee2@gmail.com
2. *Corresponding Author*, Associate Professor in TEFL and Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran p.alavinia@urmia.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:
Research Article

Article history:
Received October 01, 2024
Received in revised form December 18, 2024
Accepted December 20, 2024
Published online December 26, 2024

Keywords:
High schools
Iraqi EFL teachers,
practiced teaching styles,
preferred teaching styles

ABSTRACT

Objective: The researchers in the current study sought to explore the status-quo of the teaching styles appealed and adopted by Iraqi EFL teachers.

Method: To conduct the study, the researchers selected 120 English language teachers from the context of Iraqi high schools employing Grasha-Riechmann's (1996) Teaching Styles Questionnaire to gather data.

Results: The analysis of data mainly through quantitative measures and frequency count revealed a clear discrepancy between the teachers' preferences and practices of teaching styles. More specifically, while the most desired teaching style among the teachers was the expert type, and the least preferred one was facilitator type, in real practice of teaching, they made a greater use of personal model style. Furthermore, 'expert style' which was the most favored type was used less frequently than the other styles. However, a go-togetherness was witnessed in the obtained data with regard to 'facilitator style of teaching' which ranked the least based on the teachers' practices in a manner identical to what was found concerning their preferences.

Conclusions: The study findings indicated a discrepancy between the preferences and practices of Iraqi high schools which may provide fruitful implications for language teachers, particularly as regards their increased familiarity with the practical teaching styles and their attempts targeted at bridging the gap between their style preferences and practices.

Cite this article: Kadim Rahumi, R., & Alavinia, P. (2024). Language Teachers' Preferred and Practiced Teaching Styles: Evidence from Iraqi High School EFL Context. *Iranian Journal of Learning and Memory*, *7* (28), 45-63. DOI: http//doi.org/10.22034/IEPA.2025.523353.1532

© The Author(s).
Publisher: Iranian Educational Research Association.
DOI: http//doi.org/10.22034/IEPA.2025.523353.1532

Introduction

Teachers as the key figures in different pedagogical contexts play a seminal role in determining the degree of learning success and achieving instructional objectives. Hence, it goes without saying that the teachers' demeanor and their adopted approaches to teaching can prove highly influential in moving toward the expected educational outcomes (e.g., Fatima, 2023; Pongpalilu & Aslan, 2025; Salsabila & Asyifah, 2025). In this regard, research has demonstrated that skills and instructional techniques of a skilled teacher in the classroom have a considerable impact on the efficiency of students' learning (e.g., Cahyono & Rusiadi, 2025; Markley, 2004; Sulastri et al. 2024). Though success in teaching can be determined by a variety of factors (e.g., Jacob et al. 2017; Samfira et al. 2023; Weissenbacher et al. 2024), the importance of employing proper teaching styles is crucial in the accountability of educational outcomes. In this regard, Sheikh and Mahmood (2014) are of the view that teaching styles serve as a major criterion for gauging the appropriacy of student-teacher relationships with the aim of achieving better educational upshots. Teaching styles are defined by Mazaheri and Ayatollahi (2019) as the "teachers' preferred ways to solve problems, perform tasks, and make decisions in the teaching process" (as cited in Sim & Mohd Matore, 2022, p. 3). Teaching styles signify teachers' instructional deportment and conduct in the process of teaching, and can hence play a key part in the degree of learning success (e.g., Rosalia, 2017).

Due to its multifaceted nature, teaching style profile of a teacher can be shaped by a multitude of individual, task-related, and context-specific factors (Baleghizadeh & Shakouri, 2019). For instance, among the demographic factors that might influence the teachers' preferences for varied teaching styles reference can be made to the role of variables like gender (e.g., Albu & Spătărelu, 2024; Amini et al. 2012; Hadjar & Backes, 2023; Karimvand, 2011) and educational background (e.g., Brew, 2002). It's also evident that teaching styles opted for by teachers might differ based on the materials and task types they use, as well as various learning environments in which they are teaching (Moradi & Alavinia, 2020; Schweisfurth, 2013).

Another significant issue of concern is the potential discrepancy between the styles the teachers prefer to use in their classes, and the ones they utilize in their real practice of teaching. The teachers' implemented styles, for instance, might be influenced by the learners' styles, preferences and expectations in a particular learning context (Grasha, 1996). Thus, probes into the teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles in different learning contexts are highly influential in providing an illustrative picture of the prevailing teaching processes currently being pursued. One such area which is in dire need of research is the educational practices, particularly as regards the dominant teaching styles being employed, in EFL contexts, including Iraq's EFL condition at the high schools. Thus, in an attempt to bridge the existing gap in this domain, the researchers in the current study sought to survey Iraqi high school EFL teachers' preferred and practiced teaching

styles. In so doing, the researchers also attempted to explore the potential discrepancies between the teachers' preferences and practices in relation to teaching styles.

Literature Review

In tandem with varied conceptualizations provided for the term 'teaching styles', a myriad of models has also been proposed, each of which attending to certain perspectives of the concept. As Karimnia and Mohammadi (2019) contend, teaching styles incorporate a wide range of interrelated elements, including a teacher's personality and demeanor, his/her attitudes and belief system, as well as the strategies he/she considers appropriate for a particular teaching context. In view of the fuzzy and multifaceted nature of teaching styles (e.g., Baleghizadeh & Shakouri, 2019), it is quite logical to observe that different researchers have come up with distinct, yet related, delineations of the notion of teaching styles, and have, therefore, put forth a wide variety of models for its operationalization.

A brief glance through the research done in this area reveals that the reign of teaching styles models spanned over more than two decades, mainly from 1972 to 2004, though this is not to claim that theorizing over teaching styles has now come to a standstill. Neither is this to be interpreted as implying that the researchers in the last two decades have been silent on the issue of teaching styles and its contribution to learning achievement. Nevertheless, during its heyday referred to above, teaching styles survey has led to promulgating several prominent models some of which are reviewed in this section. One of the first attempts aimed at presenting a taxonomy of teaching styles was organized by Broudy (1972), which resulted in a triarchic model encompassing the so-called didactics, heuristics, and phyletics styles. Later on, Joyce and Weil (1986) put forth their teaching styles model, which entailed different categories of styles, such as inquiry-based, interactive, learner-centered and cooperative components. The later models of teaching styles were proposed by Dunn and Dunn (1993a, 1993b), Quirk (1994), Lowman (1995), Woods (1995), and Grasha (1996), among others. Dunn and Dunn (1993), for instance, proposed a model in which they tried to link the teaching styles to learners' learning styles preferences. Quirk (1994), on the other hand, introduced a model composed of four categories of suggestive, assertive, facilitative, and collaborative teaching styles.

In the model formulated by Lowman (1995) two dominant teaching styles were introduced, one based on intellectual excitement and the other involving interpersonal rapport. Moreover, Woods (1995) referred to three separate teaching styles known as teacher-centered, student-centered and discipline-centered. Finally, Grasha's (1996) model appears to be the most comprehensive model comprising five major style types, namely *expert*, *formal authority*, *personal model*, *facilitator*, and *delegator*. Though the advent of 21st century was also marked by some advancements in the field of teaching styles, these later investigations were targeted toward the expansion of the

previously-established models. Cooper (2001), for example, declared that teachers' teaching styles were rooted in their personality.

In what follows, some of the studies related to different facets of teaching styles and their significance are browsed. As a quick glance at the available literature on teaching styles helps reveal, the first notable research strand has dealt with the gender-induced differences in the implementation of disparate teaching styles. However, the findings obtained by various researchers regarding the role of gender in the application of teaching styles seem to be somehow inconclusive and at times contradictory. Among the first cohort of researchers offering evidence for the determining role of gender in opting for varied teaching styles lie researchers like Amini et al. (2012), Brew (2002), Fadaee et al. (2021), and Karimvand (2011), all of whom support the effect of gender on the adoption of different teaching styles. In this regard, Karimvand (2011), for instance, reported that males have a greater tendency than females to opt for more domineering teaching styles. Amini et al. (2012), on the other hand, concluded that while males tend to employ *expert style*, females show more penchant for *delegator style* of teaching. In another investigation examining the role of gender in teachers' preferred teaching styles, Mazloom and Hussain (2020) gathered data about 95 secondary school teachers in Pakistan. Using questionnaire analysis, they attempted to pinpoint the potential gender-induced differences in using teaching styles. At the culmination of the study, they came up with some differences in teaching styles based on gender. As a case in point, male teachers showed an appeal for *personal model style*, whereas female teachers opted for *delegator style* more predominantly. In the opposite front, however, we encounter researchers like Baradaran (2016) and Behnam and Bayazidi (2013) who assign no significant role to gender in relation to teaching styles.

The second line of research has addressed the relationship between teaching styles and teacher autonomy. In this regard, Baradaran and Hosseinzadeh (2015) came up with a negative correlation between teaching styles, particularly *expert* and *delegator styles*, and teachers' sense of autonomy. In like manner, Mahmoodi and Zamanian (2018) found no significant relationship between teachers' styles of teaching and their autonomy. In the same vein, Baradaran (2016) reported lack of a significant relationship between teaching styles and female teachers' autonomy. In another more recent study, Fadaee et al. (2021) probed the go-togetherness between Iranian EFL teachers' autonomy and teaching styles. To conduct the study, they administered autonomy and teaching styles questionnaires to a cohort of 156 teachers from both genders. However, unlike the previous studies referred to here, Fadaee et al. (2021) encountered a significant correlation between teachers' autonomy and their styles of teaching. It's worth noting that this correlation was said to be higher in female teachers.

The third major avenue of research targeted in the literature on teaching styles has been the contribution of teachers' employed styles to learning achievement, particularly as a result of teacher

attempts to make a linkage between their styles of teaching and the learning styles utilized by different learners. In this vein, Karataş and Yalin (2021), for instance, embarked on a probe in which they endeavored to coordinate the students' learning styles to the professors' teaching styles in the academic context. In so doing, they intended to single out the professors' dominant teaching styles as well as the students overarching learning styles through a survey study. Thus, the questionnaires, as the main means of data collection, were assigned to a total of 479 participants. As their findings indicated, though students' learning styles did not play a significant role in determining their achievement, matching the students' learning styles to the instructors' teaching styles led to statistical significance differences in learners' success.

As the review of literature presented in this section reveals, there is a dearth of research on the potential discrepancies between the teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles, particularly as regards the Iraqi context of education. Hence, in an attempt to bridge the gap in this area, the researchers in the current study probed the preferred and practiced teaching styles used by Iraqi high school EFL teachers. In so doing, the possible differences between their preferred and implemented styles were also explored. Thus, in accordance with the objectives of the study, the researchers sought to find cogent answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the dominant teaching styles preferred by Iraqi high school EFL teachers?

RQ2: What are the dominant teaching styles used by Iraqi high school EFL teachers?

RQ3: Are there any significant differences between Iraqi EFL teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles? If so, what are the reasons underlying this discrepancy?

Materials and Methods

Design of the Study

Though the main proportion of the study at hand followed a survey design based on questionnaire administration, since the current research also relied on interview data, and both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed in the study, it qualifies well as a mixed-methods research.

Participants

The participants in the current study were selected through convenience sampling from among a number of Iraqi high schools. The chosen sample was composed of 120 Iraqi teachers (both male and female) who taught English as a foreign language (EFL) in Iraq. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires among the participants, they were briefed on the research objectives and were ensured of the anonymity and confidentiality conditions. Though the participating teachers came

from a range of language backgrounds, the dominant language background of the participants was Arabic, the standard language used in the context of Iraq.

Instruments

To gather the data, Grasha's (1996) Teaching Styles Inventory (TSI) was utilized to gain insights into the participants' profile of teaching styles. The instrument employed in the study encompassed 40 items, arranged on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire intended to specify five types of teaching styles used by teachers, namely *expert*, *formal authority*, *personal model*, *facilitator*, and *delegator*. Although the reliability and validity of Grasha's Teaching Styles Inventory have long been established, the index of reliability calculated through Cronbach's alpha in the current research equaled .75 for the entire questionnaire. Also, in an attempt to triangulate data collection procedure and to come up with more reliable findings, a follow-up interview was held with 20 participants. The interview process was guided by narrative frameworks, which allowed participants to relate their experiences and give in-depth explanations of their styles of teaching.

Procedure

As stated earlier, the current study was done in the Iraqi context and with a sample of Iraqi high school EFL teachers. At the outset, the participants were briefed on the research aims, and then were ensured of ethical considerations. Successive to obtaining informed consent from the participants, the researchers administered Grasha's (1996) TSI to tap into the teachers' profile of teaching styles. Upon the completion of the questionnaire phase of the study, to consolidate the data and augment the generalizability of the findings, one sixth of the sample (20 participants) took part in a follow-up, semi-structured interview on a voluntary basis. It is worth mentioning that this number was found to be satisfactory on account of two considerations; first, using Cochran's formula and second, reaching the point of saturation for interview data collection. The participants' interview responses were hence recorded to be transcribed for later qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in the current study involved both quantitative and qualitative measures. The quantitative part of data analysis mainly centered on reporting the descriptive and inferential statistics. As regards the first and second research questions, the mean values and standard deviations were reported. Furthermore, to analyze the third research question and find out whether significant differences existed between the teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles, paired samples t-test was run. However, qualitative analysis entailed theme analysis conducted on the interview data, and in so doing, the interview responses provided by the participants were transcribed, and the overriding themes were extracted.

Results

As uttered previously, the quantitative phase of the study relied on the results obtained via questionnaire administration. As the instrument used in the study was adopted from Grasha (1996), which included 40 items falling on a Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the lowest possible score for an individual on the scale was 40, and the highest possible score equaled 200.

The first research question strove to find the dominant teaching styles preferred by Iraqi high school EFL teachers. Table 1 demonstrates the mean scores of teachers' responses to the teaching styles questionnaire based on its subscales across the 5-point Likert scale.

Table 1. The Dominant Preferred Teaching Styles by Iraqi EFL Teachers

Grasha–Riechmann Teaching Style	Mean
Expert Teaching Style	41.22
Formal Authority Teaching Style	39.12
Personal Model Teaching Style	40.33
Facilitator Teaching Style	38.82
Delegator Teaching Style	39.51

As seen in the Table, of the total replies to statements of teaching styles scale, many teachers agreed and strongly agreed with almost all items. The mean scores also indicated that the dominant teaching style preferred by EFL Iraqi teachers is *expert teaching style* (Mean = 41.22, SD = 3.51), followed by *personal model teaching style* (Mean = 40.33, SD= 4.03), *delegator teaching style* (Mean = 39.51, SD = 4.30), *formal authority teaching style* (Mean = 39.12, SD = 4.33), and finally the *facilitator teaching style* (Mean = 38.82, SD = 4.22), respectively. Next, to analyze the second research question, which intended to specify the dominant teaching styles used by Iraqi high school EFL teachers, the mean scores of the teachers' responses to TSI items were calculated, the results of which are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. The Dominant Practiced Teaching Styles by Iraqi EFL Teachers

Grasha–Riechmann Teaching Style	Mean
Expert Teaching Style	39.84
Formal Authority Teaching Style	41.21
Personal Model Teaching Style	41.78
Facilitator Teaching Style	39.28
Delegator Teaching Style	40.23

As displayed in Table 2, the dominant teaching style practiced by Iraqi EFL teachers is *personal model teaching style* (Mean = 41.78, SD = 3.49), which is followed by *formal authority*

teaching style (Mean = 41.21, SD = 3.49), *delegator teaching style* (Mean = 40.23, SD = 3.97), *expert teaching style* (Mean = 39.84, SD = 4.23), and the *facilitator teaching style* (Mean = 39.28, SD = 4.47). Figure 1 helps provide a more vivid visual representation of the mean values and percentages of Iraqi EFL learners' preferred and practiced teaching styles.

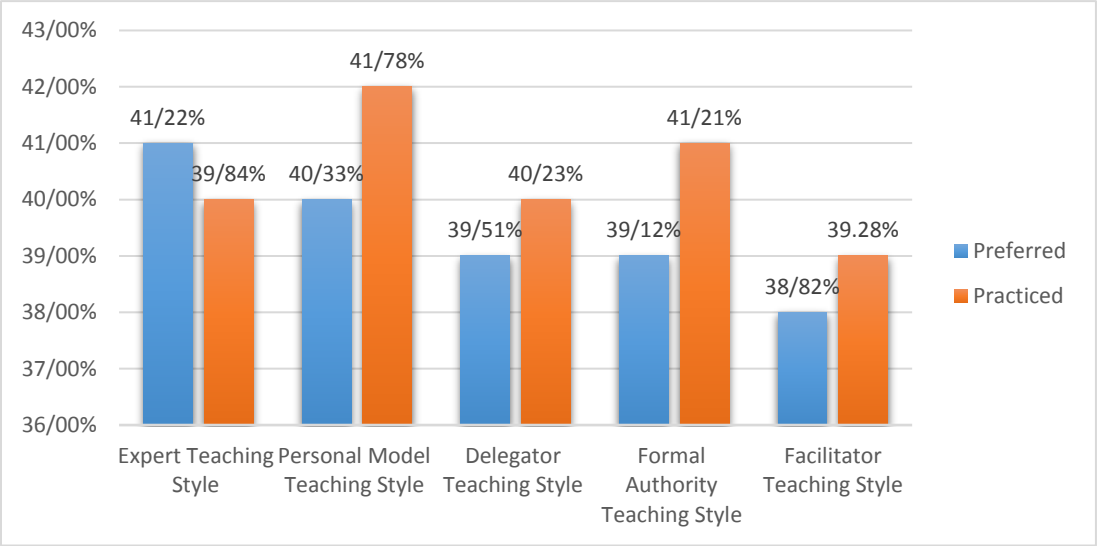

Figure 1. Mean Values and Percentages for the Dominant Preferred and Practiced Teaching Styles by Iraqi EFL Teachers

Thus, in regard to the third research question, which delved into the potential differences between Iraqi EFL teachers' preferred teaching styles and their implemented styles, as displayed in Figure 1, it is evident that the hierarchy of teachers' preferred and practiced styles is different. For instance, the first rank for preferred teaching styles which is reported by the participants to belong to *expert teaching style*, is allotted to *personal model teaching style* among the most practiced styles. Likewise, the second rank of preferred styles, which is given to *personal model style*, is allocated to *formal authority style* among the most practiced styles. *Delegator style*, characterized as the third preferred teaching style, is also in the third position among the most practiced styles. However, *formal authority style* which is reported to be the second highest style among the practiced styles is chosen as the fourth category among the preferred styles, with the fourth item in practiced teaching styles being *expert teaching style* (the first-ranking style desired by teachers, but not practiced to the same degree). However, as regards the least preferred and practiced teaching style, the teachers unanimously referred to *facilitator style*. Thus, drawing on the results obtained for research question three, it can be concluded that except the third and last categories of preferred and practiced styles, i.e. *delegator* and *facilitator styles*, which are identical, there are discrepancies in the other categories of preferred and practiced styles.

Next, to investigate whether the differences between the teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles are statistically significant, inferential statistics were run through paired samples t-test. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the paired samples t- test of the comparison of preferred and practiced teaching styles.

Table 3. The Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics for the Comparison of Preferred and Practiced Teaching Styles

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Expert Teaching Style. Preferred	41.22	120	3.51	.32073
	Expert Teaching Style. Practiced	39.84	120	4.23	.38621
Pair 2	Formal Authority Teaching Style. Preferred	39.12	120	4.33	.39545
	Formal Authority Teaching Style. Practiced	41.21	120	3.49	.31869
Pair 3	Personal Model Teaching Style. Preferred	40.33	120	4.03	.36808
	Personal Model Teaching Style. Practiced	41.78	120	3.49	.31869
Pair 4	Facilitator Teaching Style. Preferred	38.82	120	4.22	.38542
	Facilitator Teaching Style. Practiced	39.28	120	4.47	.40845
Pair 5	Delegator Teaching Style. Preferred	39.51	120	4.30	.39268
	Delegator Teaching Style. Practiced	40.23	120	3.97	.36279

Table 4 displays the statistical significance of the disparity in the comparison of preferred and practiced teaching styles of the participants.

Table 4. Paired Samples t-test for the Comparison of Preferred and Practiced Teaching Styles

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Expert Teaching Style. Preferred - Expert Teaching Style. Practiced	1.38	4.23	.38	.61	2.14	3.57	119	.00
Pair 2	Formal Authority Teaching Style. Preferred - Formal Authority Teaching Style. Practiced	-2.09	4.62	.42	-2.92	-1.25	-4.95	119	.00
Pair 3	Personal Model Teaching Style. Preferred - Personal Model Teaching Style. Practiced	-1.45	4.09	.37	-2.19	-.70	-3.87	119	.00
Pair 4	Facilitator Teaching Style. Preferred - Facilitator Teaching Style. Practiced	-.45	3.39	.30	-1.07	.15	-1.47	119	.14
Pair 5	Delegator Teaching Style. Preferred - Delegator Teaching Style. Practiced	-.71	3.83	.34	-1.40	-.02	-2.04	119	.04

Based on what is reported in Table 4, significant differences exist between the mean values of all teaching styles except facilitator style. More specifically, the *p*-values obtained for the differences between preferred and practiced expert teaching style ($p = .00 < .05$), formal authority teaching style ($p = .00 < .05$), personal model teaching style ($p = .00 < .05$), and delegator teaching style ($p = .04 < .05$) are all statistically significant. Thus, the only non-significant result belongs to facilitator teaching style ($p = .14 > .05$).

When inquired in a follow-up interview about the reason behind this discrepancy between their preferences and practices, the teachers mostly referred to the role of three factors in shaping their teaching practices, in spite of their preferred teaching styles. These three factors, which were extracted as the major themes and the most hindering elements in implementing a more learner-centered, communicative style in their teaching, were the *old-fashioned and inappropriate materials*, the *contextual barriers* and *learners' expectations*. For instance, while asked why they opted for more teacher-centered styles like *expert style*, *personal model style*, and *formal authority style*, as the most preferred and practiced styles, rather than more learner-centered ones, namely *delegator* and *facilitator styles*, they mostly contended that the school system, materials and learners' being accustomed to more teacher-centered styles of teaching push them toward adopting such styles in spite of their will. Below are a number of extracts from the participants' interview responses. As regards the first theme, which was the impeding role of *old-fashioned and inappropriate material*, one of the participating teachers averred that:

Extract 1

We need to adapt our teaching to the course books and material given to us by the school. These material are usually old and don't let us have creativity and use new styles of teaching.

Confirming the restrictive role of course book and materials, another teacher complained that:

Extract 2

I know that my teaching styles don't provide a lot of opportunities for interaction and creativity, but I must teach based on the material that they gave to us at the school.

Also, as regards the second theme emerging from the interview data, i.e. *contextual barriers*, one of the teachers expressed her view in the following manner:

Extract 3

As an experienced teacher, I know that I should involve the students more and give them more responsibility, but the classroom atmosphere doesn't let me do as I wish.

Another participating teacher raised her concern by saying that:

Extract 4

I need to act like the authority in the class, because it is hard to have learner-centered styles in crowded classes. If I want to do so, the class goes out of control.

Moreover, concerning the last theme arising from the interview data, namely learners' expectations, one of the teachers assumed that even if she wants, she can't practice learner-centered styles like *delegator* and *facilitator styles*. Here is what she stated:

Extract 5

I really want to involve my students more, but the problem is my students are used to this teaching. I mean, they don't know how to learn without the teacher.

Finally, among the other teachers who raised the same concern, and believed that reliance on the teacher is a part of the students' acquired culture and one aspect of their expectations, the following extract from what one of the male teachers uttered is worth mentioning:

Extract 6

My students can't learn alone, because they are accustomed to spoon-feeding, and I think they should get the habit to learn without teacher's help.

All in all, as the results obtained for the third research question help reveal, although teachers want to implement more learner-centered approaches in the Iraqi context of learning, the circumstances and infrastructures for such practices are not prepared for them, or they feel not ready to do so due to the impediments mentioned by them in their interview responses. In what follows, the findings are discussed incorporating the previous literature on the issue.

Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between Iraqi high school EFL teachers' teaching styles and their implemented assessment methods. As the findings of the first research question indicated, the participants' most preferred teaching style was found to be *expert teaching style*, whereas the least favored one was *facilitator style*. Furthermore, as regards the second research question, which sought to pinpoint the most dominant teaching styles used by Iraqi high school EFL learners, it was revealed that *personal model teaching style* was the most frequently practiced style, while *facilitator teaching style* was again marked as the one employed to the lowest degree. In addition, the finding of the third research question, examining the potential differences between Iraqi EFL teachers' preferred teaching styles and their implemented styles, presented that several discrepancies purportedly existed between the teachers' desired and implemented styles. This distinction prevailed for three categories of teaching styles, and only two items, namely

delegator and *facilitator styles*, filling the second and fifth ranks, based on what the teachers declared, were characterized by identical levels in the hierarchy.

As stated earlier, and as the finding for the third research question depicted, Iraqi high school EFL teachers had a greater inclination toward applying more teacher-centered styles, including *expert style, personal model style*, and *formal authority style*, and failed to prioritize learner-centered ones, namely *delegator* and *facilitator styles*. This overreliance on teacher-centered styles, as explained before, emanated from a number of hurdles that allegedly existed in the Iraqi educational context at the high school, mainly the three factors referred to earlier, i.e. *old-fashioned and inappropriate material*, *contextual barriers* and *learners' expectations*. The hampering role of contextual factors and learners and parents' expectations, as the factors hobbling the proper implementation of learner-centered education, has also been highlighted by Alavinia (2013) and Moradi and Alavinia (2020). This finding is in keeping with the findings of several other researchers. As a case in point, the finding resonates with the one reported by Mazloom and Hussain (2020) who concluded that *expert teaching style* was more dominantly used by secondary school teachers, whereas the *facilitator teaching style* was the least frequently implemented teaching style. The result is also consistent with the one claimed by Sim and Mohd Matore (2022), since they also found *facilitator style* to feature as the last category of styles utilized by teachers, while *personal model style* functioned as the topmost category in their study. Though their study was conducted in Malaysian primary school context, and the current research was carried out in Iraqi high school settings, the obtained results can be partly comparable.

Furthermore, as regards the teachers' predilection for adopting either more teacher-centered or learner-oriented styles, the findings of the current study revealed that teachers mostly tended to use teacher-centered styles, due to course-related, context-dependent and learner-relevant factors. This finding is in partial agreement with the one attained by Kassaian and Ayatollahi (2010) who maintained that the teachers' preference for various degrees of teacher control mainly depended on the course nature and the contextual factors. However, the finding runs contrary to what was reported by Yoshida et al. (2024). Unlike the current study that came up with the teachers' preference for and practice of more teacher-centered styles of teaching, their research culminated in claiming that teachers' preferences for diverse teaching styles varied, hence implementing a combination of both teacher-centered and learner-centered styles. The difference in the findings obtained by the current researchers and those of Yoshida et al. can be ascribed to differences in the study context. More specifically, while the current investigation was performed in the Iraqi high school context, their probe was carried out in the university settings.

Another important issue emerging from the findings is the need for diversification of instruction and using a variety of styles in accordance with different learners' characteristics, needs and preferences. In this regard, previous research also supports the contribution of differentiated

instruction by adopting varied teaching styles on the learners' further achievement. As a case in point, Sabado and Allan (2019) contended that diversifying the teaching styles and trying to adjust them to different learners' needs can help attain better learning outcomes. In much the same way, Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) underscored the importance of linking the teaching styles to diverse learners' needs for creating stronger rapport and interpersonal relationships with learners.

All in all, based on the attained findings, Iraqi EFL teachers' greater predisposition for using more teacher-centered styles, such as *expert*, *personal model*, and *formal authority*, was obvious. Though the possible reasons for such a phenomenon were discussed before, it must also be noted that the implementation of more learner-centered styles necessitates the provision of all the prerequisite conditions, as well as reappraisal of the requirements in different learning contexts, including Iraq's context of learning, to pave the way for teachers' improved conduct.

Conclusion

The researchers in the current probe, set out with the aim of singling out the dominant teaching styles both preferred and used by Iraqi high school teachers. In so doing, an attempt was also made to identify the potential discrepancy between the teachers' preferences and their real practices of instruction, as regards the implementation of different teaching styles. As the findings revealed, the teachers showed a greater penchant for *expert teaching style*, while their least desired style was indicated to be *facilitator style*. Additionally, when it comes to real practice, it was disclosed that *personal model style* was implemented to the highest degree by the participants, while again *facilitator style* of teaching was opted for to the least amount, compared to other teaching styles. The results further divulged that a discrepancy prevailed between Iraqi EFL teachers' preferred and practiced teaching styles, and only two styles (*delegator* and *facilitator* ones) were given the same rank by the participants in terms of both what they preferred and the way they put the styles into practice.

In light of the current findings, a number of practical implications might be offered for different people, including students, teachers, educational administrators and syllabus designers and materials developers, particularly in Iraq's context of teaching and learning. As noted earlier, teachers in the current study referred to a number of impediments preventing them from the proper practice of their desired teaching styles, among which reference can be made to the hindering role of *contextual barriers* and the *learners' expectations*. Thus, in addition to the importance of setting the scene in a cogent manner to facilitate the practice of more learner-centered and more engaging teaching styles, the learning communities must also be enlightened as regards the benefits of such avant-garde styles. Even other stakeholders in the learning environment, including the students' parents, must be familiarized with the advantages that can be reaped from such learner-oriented practices. Based on previous research, the use of proper teaching styles is likely to result in better

learning outcomes in terms of factors like motivation (e.g., Wiangga, 2024), involvement (e.g., Xiong, 2025), and value-system development (e.g., Dallasheh, 2024). Therefore, by preparing the ground for such changes in the people's mindset, and also through providing the infrastructure for such learner-centered practices to take place, educational administrators are likely to succeed in modifying the learning conditions in such contexts and help the teachers with the proper implementation of the styles that lead to more learner engagement, further critical thinking, and better educational outcomes. However, in this reform process, the role of other factors, such as appropriating the course books and materials in tandem with these new styles, must also be taken into consideration, because as social-constructivist perspective, as one of the latest models proposes, all four components of learning (teacher, learner, task/material, and context) are in a constant interplay with one another, and if one of these elements goes wrong, the others can't do their function well (Williams & Burden, 1997).

After all, inspired by the rigor, grandeur and further efficacy of learner-oriented approaches to teaching, reflected in Grasha's (1996) *delegator* and *facilitator* categories of styles, teachers must be assisted to gradually move beyond their tendencies for sticking to the traditional roles for teachers that are based on higher degrees of teacher authority, agency and control. The latter roles for teachers are epitomized in Grasha's *expert style*, which focuses on the mere transmission of knowledge by the teacher as a more expert and knowledgeable person in the learning context, *formal authority style*, which assigns the role of a decision-maker and feedback provider to the teacher, as well as *personal model style*, which is based on the view of teacher as a role-model for the learners. Although these teacher-centered styles of teaching which assign more power and control to the teachers might be favored by the teachers more, they must be trained in how to delegate a part of learning responsibility to learners, and step away from their conventional role as the sole authority in the class (e.g., Moradi & Alavinia, 2025). This will facilitate their transition away from the banking system of education (Freire, 2000), in which learners are regarded as the receptacles whose minds are to be filled with the teachers' imparted knowledge, toward adopting the role of a facilitator and guide in the process of learning.

Like the other studies dealing with human participants, the current study also suffered from a number of limitations. Among the major problems faced in the research at hand, mention can be made of the difficulty of convincing the participants to provide the researchers with their perceptions and insights on the administered questionnaires. Though the intended number of participants was finally achieved, this required a lot of negotiations not only with the participants themselves, but also with the principals and administrators of the schools where the study was conducted. With an eye on this limitation, future investigators might be recommended to replicate the study with even larger numbers of participants. Another chief limitation encountered was the mere use of questionnaires and interviews as the main means of data collection. Thus, future

researchers are recommended to opt for other possible data collection tools, such as observations and narratives to cater for triangulation and come up with more generalizable findings. The current study relied inevitably on the participants' self-reports, which can't be a highly reliable source of data and conclusion.

Furthermore, the context of the study was only limited to high schools in Iraq. In an attempt to get around this issue, and add to the depth and breadth of the future replications of the current investigation, the future interested researchers are advised to perform similar probes with instructors teaching in other contexts, including language schools and universities. It must also be acknowledged that the researchers in the present study didn't delve into the profile of teacher and learner characteristics and how the spectrum of such features might tamper with the choice of teaching styles. Therefore, informed by this limitation, further research on the issue might also be rendered more efficacious, provided that the following researchers take account of different learner and teacher traits, and try to link the teaching styles to such teacher and learner characteristics. After all, it is hoped that the current research will help expand the frontiers of knowledge on teaching styles a bit further and open up new horizons for further research on the topic, which will sure help come up with more conclusive results.

Author Contributions

The first author was mainly responsible for data collection and analysis based on the guidelines provided by the second researcher (corresponding author), whereas the second researcher assisted in a part of data collection, as well as in guiding the research and editing and proofreading the whole work.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all participants of the present study.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Funding

No funding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

Alavinia, P. (2013). [Review of the book *Learner-centered Education in International Perspective: Whose Pedagogy for Whose Development?* by M. Schweisfurth]. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1*(3), 115-119. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378852622

Albu, S. C., & Spătărelu, E. M. (2024). The gender and the teaching style influence over the mathematics and communication results in pre-school education. *Journal of Educational Studies*, *6*(1), 75–96.

Amini, M., Samani, S., & Lotfi, F. (2012). Reviewing Grasha teaching methods among faculty members of Shiraz Medical School. *Research and Development in Medical Education, 1*(2), 37–43. https://doi.org/10.5681/rdme.2012.009

Baleghizadeh, S., & Shakouri, M. (2019). Investigating the relationship between teaching styles and emotional intelligence among Iranian English instructors. *Issues in Language Teaching, 8*(1), 225–248. https://doi.org/10.22054/ilt.2020.28311.258

Baradaran, A. (2016). The Relationship between teaching styles and autonomy among Iranian female EFL teachers, teaching at advanced levels. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(3), 223–234. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n3p223

Baradaran, A., & Hosseinzadeh, E. (2015). Investigating the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' teaching styles and their autonomy. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World, 9*(1), 34–48.

Behnam, B., & Bayazidi, M. (2013). The relationship between personality types and teaching styles in Iranian adult TEFL context. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 2*, 21–32. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258344172

Brew, R. (2002). Kolb's learning style instrument: Sensitive to gender. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 62*, 373–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164402062002011

Broudy, H. S. (1972). The life uses of schooling as a field for research. *Teachers College Record*, *73*(5), 219-238. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146817207300509

Cahyono, D., & Rusiadi, R. (2025). The role of the teacher as a facilitator in the learning process: A review of educational psychology. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning (INJOTEL)*, *3*(1), 205–212. https://injotel.org/index.php/12/article/view/380

Cooper, T. C. (2001). Foreign Language Teaching Style and Personality. *Foreign Language Annals*, *34*(4), 301-317. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2001.tb02062.x

Dallasheh, W. (2024). Parenting styles and teachers' teaching styles impact on students' values development. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, *3*(4), 1406–1427. https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i4.3671

Dunn, R., & Dunn, K. (1993a). *Teaching elementary students through their individual learning styles: Practical approaches for grades 3-6.* Allyn & Bacon.

Dunn, R., & Dunn, K. (1993b). *Teaching secondary students through their individual learning styles: Practical approaches for grades 7-12*. Allyn & Bacon.

Fadaee, E., Marzban, A., & Najafi Karimi, Sh. (2021). Teacher autonomy and teaching styles: A gender-comparative study of Iranian EFL academics. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *10*(3), 1–15. https://doi.org/20.1001.1.24763187.2021.10.3.1.9

Fatima, I. (2023). Role of Teachers to impart quality education for equitable learning. *Shodh Sari-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, *2*(3), 462–471. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377471148

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (30th Anniversary Ed.). Continuum. https://www.amazon.com/dp/0826412769?tag=scribbr00-20&linkCode=osi&th=1&psc=1

Grasha, A. F. (1996). *Teaching with styles: A practical guide to enhance learning by understanding learning and teaching styles*. Alliance Publisher.

Hadjar, A., & Backes, S. (2023). Gender, teaching style, classroom composition and alienation from learning: an exploratory study. *Educational Research*, *65*(1), 121–142. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2022.2143388

Jacob, B., Frenzel, A. C., & Stephens, E. J. (2017). Good teaching feels good—but what is "good teaching"? Exploring teachers' definitions of teaching success in mathematics. *ZDM: The International Journal on Mathematics Education, 49*(3), 461–473. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-017-0848-6

Joyce, B. R., & Weil, M. (1986). *Models of teaching*. Prentice-Hall.

Karataş, E., & Yalin, H. I. (2021). The impact of matching learning-teaching styles on students' academic achievement. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 92*, 377–402. http://eric.ed.org

Karimnia, A., & Mohammadi, N. (2019). The effects of teachers' gender, teaching experience, and brain dominance on their teaching styles. *International Journal of Research in English Education, 4*, 37–46. https://doi.org/10.29252/ijree.4.1.37

Karimvand, P. N. (2011). The nexus between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy, teaching experience and gender. *English Language Teaching, 4*(3), 171–183. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n3p171

Kassaian, Z., & Ayatollahi, M. A. (2010). Teaching styles and optimal guidance in English language major. *Quarterly Journal of Research and Planning in Higher Education, 55*, 131–152.

Lowman, J. (1995). *Mastering the techniques of teaching*. Jossey-Bass.

Mahmoodi, T., & Zamanian, M. (2018). The relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' personality and their teaching preference. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 8*(6), 686–693. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0806.20

Markley, N. G. (2004). *Principles of differential equations* (Vol. 67). John Wiley & Sons.

Mazaheri, S., & Ayatollahi, M. A. (2019). Relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' brain dominance, teaching experience and their teaching style. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research, 7*(25), 115–126. https://journals.iau.ir/article_615588.html

Mazloom, S., & Hussain, M. A. (2020). Identification of teaching styles in English language classrooms at secondary level. *Bulletin of Education and Research, 42*(3), 257–273. http://files. Eric. ed/

Moradi, M. R., & Alavinia, P. (2020). Learner-centered education in the Iranian EFL context: A glance through the impediments. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills, 38*(4), 95–121. https://doi.org/10.22099/jtls.2020.36293.2780.

Moradi, M. R., & Alavinia, P. (2025). The amelioration of learner-centered instruction through training: The case of Iranian EFL teachers. *Journal of Language Horizons, 9*(2), https://doi.org/10.22051/lghor.2025.48509.1976.

Pongpalilu, F., & Aslan, A. (2025). The role of teachers as agents of change in shaping students' creativity, character, and social sensitivity: A literature review. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning, 2*(11), 1399–1407. https://doi.org/10.26737/ij-mds.v7i1.5024

Quirk, M. (1994). *How to teach and learn in medical school: A learner-centered approach*. Charles C Thomas Pub Ltd.

Rahimi, M., & Asadollahi, F. (2012). Teaching styles of Iranian EFL teachers: do gender, age, and experience make a difference? *International Journal of English Linguistics, 2*, 157–164. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v2n2p157

Rosalia, H. (2017). *The analysis of English teachers' teaching styles and their effects on students' interest*. Doctorate Thesis, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Sabado, R. R., & Allan, O. (2019). Junior and senior technical vocational education teachers' performance and teaching styles: a comparison. *International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science, 2*(6), 32–42. www.ijlrhss.com

Salsabila, I. N., & Asyifah, A. (2025). Transforming the role of teachers in the AI era: An analysis critical to competence professionals and needs training in Indonesia. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research, 1*(2), 51–62. https://jouair.com/index.php/Joair/article/view/12

Samfira, E. M., Dughi, T. S., & de la Fuente, J. (2023). Successful teacher: personality and other correlates. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1293759. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1293759

Schweisfurth, M. (2013). *Learner-centered education in international perspective: Whose pedagogy for whose development?* Routledge.

Sheikh, A., & Mahmood, N. (2014). Effect of different teaching styles on students' motivation towards English language learning at secondary level. *Science International, 26*(20), 825–830. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334626377

Sim, S. H., & Mohd Matore, M. E. E. (2022). The relationship of Grasha–Riechmann teaching styles with teaching experience of national-type Chinese primary schools mathematics teacher. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1028145. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1028145

Sulastri, A., Adri, H. T., & Syamsudin, D. (2024). The role of teachers in improving quality of education and developing competencies of primary school students at Muslim Suksa School Thailand. *Continuous Education: Journal of Science and Research, 5*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.51178/ce.v5i1.1656

Weissenbacher, B., Koschmieder, C., Krammer, G., Müller, F. H., & Neubauer, A. C. (2024). What makes future teachers successful? A longitudinal study on pre-service teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2414200

Wiangga, I. A. (2024). The impact of educators' teaching styles on secondary school learners' motivation in English. *Journal of Educational Management and Strategy, 3*(2), 136–144. https://doi.org/10.57255/jemast.v3i02.361

Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Woods, D. R. (1995). Teaching and learning: What can research tell us? Some considerations for both students and instructors. *Journal of College of Science Teaching, 25*, 229–232.

Xiong, X. (2025). Influence of teaching styles of higher education teachers on students 'engagement in learning: The mediating role of learning motivation. *Education for Chemical Engineers*, *51*, 87–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ece.2025.02.005

Yoshida, F., Conti, G. J., Yamauchi, T., & Kawanishi, M. (2024). A teaching styles typology of practicing teachers. *Journal of Education and Learning*, *13*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v13n1p1