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Stylistics-Informed Pedagogy in Iranian EFL Contexts: Critical Implications for Academic Buoyancy and Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study is theoretically situated within the framework of a multidisciplinary synthesis of literary stylistics and applied linguistics pedagogy. Due to the previous literature's reliance on intuition and trust, there is a paucity of research that invests in empirically investigating stylistics-informed pedagogies while taking learner-centered pedagogy, contextualized language learning, psychological engagement, and classroom participation into consideration. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics, presented by the level of academic buoyancy and achievement. In this vein, the researchers availed themselves of the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS) and the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP Series), within the framework of a quasi-experimental design to elicit as much information as possible by conducting pre-tests and post-tests on the control and experimental groups, both of which consisted of 15 Iranian female EFL high school students, randomly assigned to each. As the intervention, the experimental group was exposed to stylistically-based pedagogies while the control group received the usual instruction. Following performing the independent-samples t-test and Mann-Whitney U test, the results revealed statistically significant differences, suggesting that the experimental group both psychologically and pedagogically outperformed the control group. Due to its contribution in raising critical language awareness, the outcomes of this study might be of help to material developers and syllabus and curriculum designers while corroborating the previous intuitively-based findings as well as opening up new ways of critical thinking and thus paving the way for further pertinent studies in the field of applied linguistics.

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1. Introduction

The contributions of stylistics to open up new avenues of thinking are manifold. Indeed, it entails a journey of approximately a century for stylistics to attain its present multidisciplinary status. Putting language learning and teaching and teaching-driven research at the core of our attention, pedagogical stylistics would offer a lot by playing the central role among its cognate disciplines in translating theory into practice. As a consequence of this and due to its interdisciplinary nature, i.e., pedagogies surrounding stylistics-inspired premises, pedagogical stylistics has given momentum to plenty of publications (e.g., Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Carter & McRae, 2014; Durant & Fabb, 2006; Leech & Short, 2007; Price, 2024; Short, 1989, 1996; Simpson, 1996; Wales, 2014; Widdowson, 1975, 1992, Zyngier, & Watson, 2022, etc.) dedicated to theoretical commentaries, practical textbooks and empirical research, all of which have scrutinized stylistics-informed pedagogies' efficiency from various angles. Yet, a recurrent issue which may undermine the claimed efficiency of pedagogical stylistics would be its high reliance on intuition or trust emanating from underreporting due to the taken-for-granted assumptions.

To rectify such an issue, it appears as if a conceivable solution would be investing more in robust and multi-dimensional research agendas to not only substantiate the previous findings but also widen the conceptual breadth of stylistics as a pedagogical tool. In this vein, bringing psychological notions into play appears to corroborate the potentiality and practicality of such stylistics-based pedagogies. This is largely because seeing pedagogical stylistics through a psychological lens would shed light on how it works in actual practice. Simply put, a better understanding of intricate issues embedded within stylistics-informed pedagogies can be gained by giving voice to students' inner thoughts and feelings. With this in mind, the researchers of the present paper endeavor to address and re-address the raised issues surrounding the value, efficiency, feasibility and particularly students' accounts experienced through pedagogies inspired by stylistics' premises, herein by bringing the psychological concept of buoyancy to attention. Indeed, by being “decidedly learner-friendly” and thus fostering learner-centered pedagogy, stylistics-informed pedagogy may psychologically affect EFL learners by cultivating academic buoyancy during language learning challenges (Burke et al., 2012, p. 2).

Academic buoyancy was selected over other psychological constructs as resilience due to its capacity to manage “academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course

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of school life", whereas academic resilience concentrates on "acute and chronic adversities that are seen as major assaults on the developmental processes", namely those dealing with "learning disabilities"; ethnic groups confronting extreme adversities; "chronic underachievers", etc." (Martin & Marsh, 2008a, p. 54). Thus, due to its very nature, which implies tolerance capability in dealing with daily challenges that occur throughout students' academic life, academic buoyancy seems to benefit from the potency to reveal a lot about many of those remaining obscure issues, concerning the practicality of pedagogical stylistics, which are intuitively claimed throughout the prior literature. It is, by and large, as a consequence of the mediating role endowed with academic buoyancy in predicting various types of academic outcomes, here, educational outcomes, e.g., language proficiency, claimed to be derived from stylistics-inspired pedagogies. To put it in a nutshell, this study enjoys the laurels of interdisciplinarity by amalgamating stylistics and language pedagogies from a psychologically based perspective.

As noted above, it becomes crystal clear that pedagogical stylistics is still in need of more robust empirical research to confirm its practicality as a mediating tool within classroom-based language learning. In this regard, employing a psychological lens to scrutinize the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics in language acquisition would not be devoid of merit. Indeed, involving the psychological notion of academic buoyancy with its own peculiarities in predicting academic outcomes would open a new page in this context. To address the commonly-held concerns surrounding pedagogical stylistics, the following questions are designated to be followed throughout this study:

RQ1. Can pedagogical stylistics be evaluated as a psychologically and pedagogically effective instructional material?

RQ2. Does applying pedagogical stylistics exert any significant effect on Iranian EFL students' academic buoyancy?

RQ3. Does applying pedagogical stylistics exert any significant effect on Iranian EFL students' academic achievement?

There exists solid evidence that academic buoyancy both educationally and psychologically affects optimal outcomes (Datu & Yang, 2018; Martin, 2014; Martin et al., 2010, 2017; Miller et al., 2013, etc.). Despite the fact that multiple studies have separately been devoted to stylistically-informed pedagogies and buoyancy-related research, prior literature does not reveal any corresponding research to explore the critical implications of academic buoyancy in

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predicting language learning through stylistics pedagogies. Thus, this study recontextualizes language learning through a stylistics lens of critical language pedagogy and critical language awareness, underscoring it as an empowering classroom practice by fostering learner agency in EFL.

2. Literature Review

In 1997, the first pedagogical stylistics special interest group (PED-SIG) convened at the Poetics and Linguistics Association conference (PALA) to delineate pedagogical praxis of stylistics-inspired premises that got underway. Collectively, the aforementioned group reached a consensus on how to define the scope of pedagogical stylistics to primarily encompass improving language awareness (e.g., Clark & Zyngier, 2003; Fogal, 2010; Kellem, 2009; Timucin, 2001; Zyngier et al., 2007) and then cultural awareness (McRae & Clark, 2004; Warner, 2012; Zerkowitz, 2007) at its best. Following this, a set of questions has been raised about whether improvement in second or foreign language proficiency can be perceived as a consequence of the claimed language awareness (Paesani, 2006; Plummer & Busse, 2006; Timucin, 2001; Yañez Prieto, 2010). Such an issue brings about a controversial situation wherein two divergent views have been held as to the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics in this context. Insofar as the notion of interdisciplinarity lies at the core, it appears as if seeking a path for bridging the gap between stylistics and language learning has had priority over sheer contradictions, duly depicted as "gross overreaction" by Fogal (2015, p. 57). And this is precisely what distinguishes pedagogical stylistics from not only other linguistic disciplines but also its own cognate disciplines in that it is well endowed with some exceptional merits, i.e., "it is not 'pure' on two grounds at least: by being interdisciplinary, as it always has been, and recently by being decidedly learner-friendly" (Burke et al., 2012, p. 2). In this way, it looks almost as if the commonly held preconceptions are kept at bay so that the limits can be redefined and thus new avenues can be opened up.

As a relatively new psychological construct, academic buoyancy, derived from the works of Martin and Marsh (2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009), would have the potential to open up new horizons by breaking through the existing conceptual barriers as to the reasons behind the educational outcomes, raising doubts concerning pedagogical stylistics' efficacy. This is largely

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because academic buoyancy is heavily integrated into a set of intricate psychological notions, namely motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy, engagement, control, etc., along with other determinative factors, all of which would seem enlightening and edifying with respect to predicting the positive outcomes of an instructional tool as stylistics-informed pedagogies. Indeed, embedded within a positive psychology context, academic buoyancy is commonly seen as a construct reflecting learners' capability in conquering typical obstacles to tackle throughout their academic trajectory. In this vein, following on from Martin and Marsh (2009), the recent decade has witnessed a substantial rise in studies devoted to tracing the journey of academic buoyancy and its cognate constructs, as well as delving into the depths of the issues surrounding academic buoyancy within varied contexts and undoubtedly, language learning is no exception. However, due to the paucity of studies concerning the allegedly complex interplay between pedagogical stylistics and academic buoyancy, the researchers have found the whole prior literature to be both thought-provoking and intriguing.

The key contention of this paper is to add a new chapter to the rich history of research surrounding stylistics-related pedagogies as an inherently interdisciplinary realm of inquiry, and herein lies academic buoyancy at the core of our attention. Indeed, the dearth of corresponding research in this context gives the researchers the impetus to go beyond the limits and expand the existing boundaries. This is not to misperceive the profound and far-reaching implications of prior research undertaken in various contexts, all of which are assuredly the reason behind the dynamic and ever-burgeoning nature of research in stylistics-informed pedagogies. Indeed, what the researchers have found about the existing literature is both challenging and reassuring. They are challenging yet ultimately rewarding since they raise a set of fundamentally important questions which indeed require constant attention to be firmly answered in situ. Such cases of prior literature accurately reflect how pedagogical stylistics have undertaken a continuing endeavor to substantiate its current status as a robust language-learning tool, especially within the contentious atmosphere derived from assumptions of those, (Bellard-Thomson, 2010; Carter, 2007, 2010; Edmondson, 1997; Hall, 2005, 2007, 2014; Paran, 2008; Verdonk, 2002; Zyngier & Fialho, 2010), etc., who cast doubt upon its efficacy to be rooted in mere intuition. Such a cynical atmosphere remains unconducive to further evolution in terms of the enlightening debates on instructional implications of stylistics-related pedagogies. Thus, a proactive solution has to invest more in empirical studies to corroborate those allegedly intuitively-inspired claims.

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Moreover, they are also reassuring and inspiring in that they are heavily based on sound and robust theoretical underpinnings founded on the premise of many prominent figures (e.g., Carter, 2010; Clark & Zyngier, 2003; Hall, 2005, etc.) and particularly indebted to the pioneering work of Widdowson (1975) on the very concept of pedagogical stylistics which serves as an inspiration and literally as the cornerstone of many subsequent studies in this regard. Such a long and rich history would indeed convince many researchers with its flexibility and immense practicality. To put it succinctly, pedagogical stylistics is decidedly considered to be extremely user-friendly and content-rich in varied contexts.

As mentioned earlier, the researchers of this study see the issue at hand through a twofold approach and on the other side of the coin, herein lies the concept of academic buoyancy. As its name suggests, it implies the ability to deal with usual difficulties within various academic environments. Or as Martin and Marsh (2008a) duly define it, "students' ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life" (p. 54). Such a concise definition sufficiently clarifies the fact that, as a recently-established psychological construct, academic buoyancy is fundamentally distinct from its cognate construct, academic resilience, in that "buoyancy may be the positive psychology version of resilience" (Martin & Marsh, 2008a, p. 55). To further elaborate, academic buoyancy has been put forward to encompass challenges typically associated with all ordinary students, not those of acute and chronic cases. In this vein, buoyancy is fundamentally in its very nature applicable to numerous contexts of study, as there exist several theoretical commentaries as well as many empirical studies in this regard. Indeed, emanating from the works of Martin and Marsh (2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009), academic buoyancy has already consolidated its theoretical underpinnings. Moreover its functionality has also been substantiated by a myriad of studies conducted surrounding its mediating role in predicting academic performance and achievement in approximately every field of study including language learning (e.g., Alazemi et al., 2023; Asif et al., 2025, Datu & Yang, 2021; Ding & He, 2022; Dine & Guerroudj, 2025; Giovanelli, 2022; Huang, 2022; Jahedizadeh et al., 2019, 2021; Jia & Cheng, 2022; Sadiq, 2023; Xu & Wang, 2022; Yang et al., 2022; Yun et al., 2018, etc.) review of which would be beyond the purview of the present study. However, enumerating such a list would at least indicate the fact that recent years saw a growth in studies around academic buoyancy within the field of applied linguistics. Yet, the researchers' quest for corresponding research that is at least akin to that of the present

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study in its key concepts led to no avail. Hence, it appears as if conducting such a multidisciplinary study would mark a turning point in the literature. Due to the paucity of regional scholarship in the Iranian EFL context, except a conceptual study by Hokmabadi et al. (2022), and also the focus of prior empirical studies on issues as literary awareness, textual analysis, and learner reflection, the present study extends the existing scope toward measurable psychological outcomes as academic buoyancy and achievement, thereby substantiating the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics as a learner-centered pedagogy.

3. Methods and Materials

3.1. Context and Participants

To address the raised questions, a quasi-experimental design is adopted. Indeed, this study was conducted in a public high school located in the suburbs of Gorgan, a city in Golestan province, Iran. Through a convenience sampling strategy, a number of 30 female EFL students aged between 16 and 18 were selected. However, to have two equally comparable groups, 15 students are assigned to each of the control and experimental groups. It should also be mentioned that, beyond mere statistical homogeneity, the participants demonstrated equivalent proficiency level, while they had limited exposure to English, as it is merely confined to school English classes held twice a week. It should be noted that both groups were instructed by the same teacher and thus teacher influence is also acknowledged as a potential confounding variable that may affect intervention's efficacy. As a moral requirement for research, ethical considerations were also met in this study. With this in mind, some major factors, namely "competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension" as major characteristics of a reasonably informed consent, were taken into account (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 51). Further to this, the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy, along with withdrawal right were assured throughout the stages of the study. Further to this, the present study's reliance on convenience sampling and the relatively small sample size may confine the generalizability of the findings

3.2. Instruments and Instructional Materials

To assist in providing sound empirical data, a highly-regarded instrument, i.e., the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS), is employed. This 4-item scale, first put forward by Martin

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and Marsh (2008b), is developed via a 7 point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Disagree somewhat; 4= Neither agree nor disagree; 5= Agree somewhat; 6= Agree; 7= Agree strongly), in a way to present participants' self-reported accounts on their innate potential in dealing with usual academic hassles, herein language learning challenges. Germane to its reliability, Martin and Marsh (2008a) underscore the fact that "this scale is reliable from internal consistency and test–retest perspectives (Time 1 Cronbach's α=.80; Time 2 Cronbach's α=.82; test–retest r= .67)" (p. 63). About its validity, they also mention that "although no formal validity-check items were included in the instrument, the psychometric properties…, the inter-factor correlations…, and data from previous research… jointly indicate that the items and factors 'behave' in the ways intended" (Martin & Marsh, 2008a, p. 63). The participants are also requested to sit an achievement test adapted from a highly acclaimed test battery, i.e., Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP Series). With the aid of such instruments, the researchers endeavor to take proper measures for comparing the experimental and control groups. As the instructional material, the experimental group receives a set of adapted stylistics-informed pedagogies derived from some notable volumes in form of classroom-ready textbooks, i.e., *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* (Simpson, 2004), *Stylistics: A Practical Coursebook* (Hope & wright, 1996), *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (Wales, 2014), etc., while the control group receives the typical instruction.

As mentioned earlier, widening the scope of prior research to include varied contexts as secondary education, rather than merely higher education, is intended. With this in mind, the researchers make their best to simplify the instructions to fit the proficiency level of the high school students. Moreover, such studies substantiate the potential of pedagogical stylistics to reach a more inclusive definition beyond its primary working definition, merely revolving around language or cultural awareness, by empirically supporting gains in foreign language proficiency. In this vein, what Yañez Prieto (2010) depicts of pedagogical stylistics duly defines its potentiality in language learning contexts. Indeed, she argues that "stylistics-inspired pedagogy … offers authentic opportunities for the development of the analytical, critical, creative knowledge necessary to deal with how real-life language functions" (Yañez Prieto, 2010, p. 73). And herein lie the notions of academic buoyancy and achievement, which are deeply embedded within every EFL learner's academic life.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

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As is often the case with quasi-experimental studies, ahead of intervention, pre-tests on buoyancy and language proficiency are administered to provide a yardstick by which to subsequently compare the two groups. After gathering the required data, the experimental group is exposed to pedagogies surrounding stylistics within their English language classes throughout a period of four weeks, while the control group pursues the annual syllabus during the allocated time. It should also be mentioned that while a four-week intervention is relatively brief, it is theoretically substantiated by the facilitation of scaffolded interaction within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). To further elaborate on how stylistics-inspired pedagogies are implemented, the predetermined schedule is briefly described below.

Inspired by its edifying and enlightening arrangement of content, the researchers place Simpson's (2004) textbook at the center of attention as the main source of instruction. Following on from this, an intentionally simplified version of the practices surrounding pedagogical stylistics is provided. Following guidelines proposed by Simpson (2004), this course of study looks at a diverse range of activities to be covered within the given four weeks. Defining a step-by-step approach, these pedagogies fall within the scope of the introduction of key concepts as a warm-up activity, development by putting into practice the acquired knowledge, exploration by allowing learners to individually have hands-on experience and extension by providing the opportunity to delve into the depths of the issue at hand. In this vein, through the introductory phase of the schedule, some concise yet informative fundamental principles of grammar and how they are linked to style in language are introduced, while the learners are asked to participate in a set of warm-up activities in this context. The second phase, called development, involves translating the ideas on grammar and style into action by analyzing the sentence styles of a short passage derived from Dickens's novel *Bleak House*. Exploration is the third phase through which some intricate activities surrounding grammar and a new literary genre, i.e., a short poem, are offered to get the learners involved in trying out their newly acquired stylistic techniques, that is, producing a few lines in the form of a short poem on a given subject, unscrambling a short poem in this context and then comparing the two. To further gain experience, the extension phase is implemented to prove the ubiquitous practical use of these stylistics-inspired pedagogies by shifting the attention to include other literary and even non-literary texts. This is carried out using the tenets of comparative textology derived from Carter's (1989) work, herein by

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addressing the grammatical similarities between a given newspaper heading and the passage from Dickens discussed in the second phase.

After a brief interval to let the learners get a handle on the provided information, post-tests are administered to measure the level of academic buoyancy and language proficiency of both the experimental and control groups. This also be noted that the pre-test and post-test of language proficiency are slightly adapted from the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP Series) in that the concentration is on assessing grammar and vocabulary. Next up in this empirical study would indeed be the analysis of the gathered data. The following section, therefore, deals with the comparison of the two groups carried out by using certain statistical procedures.

3.4. Data Analysis

As the issue under discussion is to compare two individual groups, implementing some commonly-used statistical analysis methods, e.g., the independent-samples t-test and Mann-Whitney U test, on the accumulated data would be illuminating in this respect. In this vein, as a parametric test, the independent-samples t-test is utilized to examine any significant difference between normally-distributed data. And as a non-parametric test, the Mann-Whitney U is performed to evaluate the difference between the control and experimental group, as a non-normal distribution of data is the case in Likert scale data analysis.

4. Results

Tests of homogeneity of variances were initially conducted through Levene's test to indicate that the two groups are homogenous in terms of language proficiency. As can be seen, F (1,28) = .334, p = .568, the homogeneity of variance assumption held for these sample groups.

Table 1

Testing homogeneity of variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Scores	Based on Mean	.334	1	28	.568

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	Based on Median	.007	1	28	.934
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.007	1	19.973	.935
	Based on trimmed mean	.266	1	28	.610

Further to this, data normality was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. However, since Shapiro-Wilk test is considered to be a more appropriate method for small sample sizes as the given groups, its results were taken into account here. As demonstrated through Table 2, results indicated non-normality of distribution, W (15) = .866, p = .029 for the control group and W (15) = .870, p = .034 for the experimental group.

Table 2

Tests of normality (Pre-test)

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Groups	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Scores	Control Group	.260	15	.007	.866	15	.029
	Experimental Group	.260	15	.008	.870	15	.034

Since the data are not normally distributed, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the academic achievement in control and experimental groups before pedagogical stylistics' intervention. The following results indicated that there was not a significant difference in academic achievement between control and experimental groups, Z = -.955, p = .340.

Table 3

Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U test summary

	Scores
Mann-Whitney U	90.000
Wilcoxon W	210.000
Z	-.955
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.340

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Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.367

Subsequently, another test of normality was performed so as to decide on the best statistical procedure to compare the post-test results for both groups. Because the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is a preferred measure for small samples, i.e., less than or equal to 50, data normality was checked through the Shapiro-Wilk method. As the results indicated, data were normally distributed throughout both groups, W (15) = .947, p = .483 for the control group and W (15) = .900, p = .095 for the experimental group.

Table 4

Tests of normality (Post-test)

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Groups	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Scores	Control Group	.151	15	.200	.947	15	.483
	Experimental Group	.221	15	.047	.900	15	.095

Since the data were normally distributed, an Independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the academic achievement in control and experimental groups following the pedagogical stylistics' intervention. Results indicated that there was a significant difference in the scores for the control group (M= 31.46, SD= 7.21) and the experimental group (M= 40.40, SD=12.70); t (28) = -2.36, p = 0.025.

Table 5

Independent-samples t-test

	Levene's Test of Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper

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Score	Equal variances assumed	1.987	.170	-2.367	28	.025	-8.933	3.774	-16.664	-1.202
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.367	22.183	.027	-8.933	3.774	-16.756	-1.109

The following Tables compare the items of the academic buoyancy scale in the pre and post-tests, respectively, i.e., before receiving pedagogical stylistics intervention and following that. Indeed, due to the nature of Likert scale data, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to investigate the difference in academic buoyancy between the aforementioned groups.

Table 6

Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U test summary (Pre-test)

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4
Mann-Whitney U	108.000	99.500	82.500	87.000
Wilcoxon W	228.000	219.500	202.500	207.000
Z	-.192	-.552	-1.263	-1.121
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.848	.581	.207	.262
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.870	.595	.217	.305

As mentioned above, to evaluate the difference between the control and experimental group for academic buoyancy, the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized. As shown above, the aforementioned groups were not significantly different in each of the four items of the academic buoyancy scale at the beginning of the research. That is because, the test revealed no significant difference in item 1 surrounding being good at dealing with setbacks (e.g., bad mark, negative feedback on my work) for the control group (Median= 4, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 5, n= 15), U= 108, z= -.192, p= .848, r= .03 before employing pedagogical stylistics. As can be seen from Table 6, the control group (Median= 5, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 5, n= 15), U= 99.5, z= -.552, p= .581, r= .10, also did not show a significant difference comparing item 2, which revolves around coping with stress. Moreover, the test results were not

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statistically significant for item 3, suggesting no significant difference in being good at dealing with schoolwork pressures between control group (Median= 4, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 5, n= 15), U= 82.5, z= -1.263, p= .207, r= .23. For item 4 regarding confidence, the test indicated no significant difference for control group (Median= 7, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 6, n= 15) as well, U= 87, z= -1.121, p= .262, r= .20.

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Table 7

Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U test summary (Post-test)

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4
Mann-Whitney U	48.000	53.000	42.500	38.500
Wilcoxon W	168.000	173.000	162.500	158.500
Z	-2.733	-2.525	-2.970	-3.177
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.012	.003	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.007	.013	.003	.001

As can be seen from Table 7, after the treatment, i.e., employing pedagogical stylistics, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed again to investigate any potential differences between the control and experimental group. This time, the test revealed a statistically significant difference in academic buoyancy between the two groups. Indeed, the test results for item 1, which evaluate the level of dealing with setbacks, were significantly different for control group (Median= 5, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 3, n= 15), U= 48, z= -2.733, p= .006, r= .49. The test also indicated that the level of coping with stress, i.e., item 2, was significantly greater for experimental group (Median= 3, n= 15) than for control group (Median= 5, n= 15), U= 53, z= -2.525, p= .012, r= .46. In addition to this, the experimental group (Median= 4, n= 15) outperformed the control group (Median= 5, n= 15), U= 42.5, z= -2.970, p= .003, r= .54, in dealing with schoolwork pressures (item 3). There was also a significant difference in confidence level (item 4) for the control group (Median= 6, n= 15) and experimental group (Median= 4, n= 15), U= 38.5, z= -3.177, p= .001, r= .58.

5. Discussion

Research has shown that foreign language learners tend to be prone to different levels of worry and lack of ease in the classroom (Moazzeni Limoudehi & Mazandarani, 2020). Therefore, they have always been in want of a versatile instructional tool which not only pedagogically meets their language needs but also psychologically embraces their interests. Indeed, it seems that one of the single most important challenges almost all language teachers

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have encountered would be selecting good enough materials. In this vein, there exist plethora of volumes dedicated to designating sets of criteria to consider while selecting the most appropriate instructional material. As previously mentioned, what is intended herein is to assess the efficacy of stylistically-informed pedagogies both psychologically and pedagogically. And this perfectly seems to be in line with assessing the effectiveness of instructional materials in terms of their "psychological, pedagogical, and process and content validity" (Rubdy, 2003, p. 45).

To prove whether stylistically-based instructions inform each of the aforementioned criteria, it seems to be reasonable enough to merely consider the fact that pedagogical stylistics is both "interdisciplinary" and "decidedly learner-friendly" in the sense that it constantly offers learners some "hands-on experience with texts" (Burke et al., 2012). Such peculiar characteristics simply indicate how stylistics-informed pedagogies stand on the shoulders of giants, as the linguistic and the literary to provide the learners a great opportunity by placing them at the core and letting them experience how to work with a given text while equipping them with sound pedagogical tools, herein, stylistics in a foreign language classroom. Although this seems reassuring, it still raises some fundamental questions which cannot be definitely answered unless by meticulously reporting what is actually going on in a foreign language classroom based on stylistically-oriented pedagogies. That is precisely what Carter (2007) accentuates by praising "the place of literature in the foreign language classroom as the custodian of style, [and] …, as a warrant of authenticity" while also putting them into question about their efficacy in "language acquisition, especially reading development" (p. x).

Maximizing learning experiences and opportunities in English language education in the higher education sector has long been the preoccupation of L2 researchers (Mazandarani, 2024). As such, this empirical study has endeavored to answer some key questions usually asked about the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics in terms of its pedagogical and psychological relevance within an English as a foreign language classroom, as well as showing how it helps maximizing the process of language learning. The data gathered from the pre- and post-tests that are adapted from the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP Series) and the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS) indicate how employing pedagogical stylistics rather than relying on usually one-dimensional traditional methods engages the learners in the process of teaching-learning by allowing them to take control of their academic journey. Indeed, to assist in answering the questions raised thus far, the items of the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS) were

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illuminating and edifying. This is because these items concentrate on addressing some fundamental issues which would facilitate answering the second question guiding this study and thus highlight important advantages of stylistically-based teaching practices. In answering these items, students acknowledged how the pleasure of their first-hand experience with a piece of novel as a pure and authentic text let them to gain confidence in encountering more complicated texts and vocabularies (items 3 and 4), to overcome the stress usually experienced while facing sentences with flows of intricate words and eventually to cope with their academics ups and downs, here learning English as a foreign language (items 1 and 2). In light of this, the findings suggest that pedagogical stylistics may positively contribute to learners' academic buoyancy in this specific instructional context, which is congruent with Fogal's (2015) detected theme, i.e., pedagogical stylistics as a tool for building other academic skills (here, academic buoyancy).

About the implications of these stylistically-informed pedagogies on learners' language performance, which would explicitly address the third raised question concerning the effect of pedagogical stylistics on academic achievement, statistically significant results were revealed, suggesting significant improvement after the treatment, i.e., exposure to stylistically-based pedagogies, since the experimental group outperformed the control group. Such an empirically-based outcome might be of help in addressing the doubts concerning trust or intuition. It may also best answer the concerns of those as Zyngier and Fialho (2010), who call for researchers who will "invest in empirical research to verify what is actually happening in the classroom and whether the orientation that is informing the practice actually works" (p. 29). Indeed, the findings of this study would serve as a complement to the existing studies by substantiating the efficiency of pedagogical stylistics. In this vein, it is recommended for language teachers and material and curriculum developers to include such stylistically-based practices in their syllabus and curriculum so that learners feel at ease in analyzing a text through the critical lens of stylistics, while an adequate time is allocated to this issue. In so doing, this study also extends the literature on critical literacy in (Aghaei, 2024; Aghaei et al., 2014; Rajabi & Aghaei, 2014; Rajabi, 2015) by exploring its practical implications through pedagogical stylistic interventions.

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6. Conclusion

The potential of pedagogical stylistics to improve language performance was frequently accentuated throughout the previous literature. However, merely relying on the usually intuitively-based claims and unidimensional perspectives brings about a broad chasm between theory and actual practice, particularly within classroom-based language learning contexts. To ameliorate the situation, based on an interdisciplinary approach, this experimental study endeavored to reveal several psychological and pedagogical advantages of pedagogical stylistics-based teaching practices by examining the levels of academic buoyancy and achievement, which indeed were significantly influenced. By virtue of this, the researchers came up with the fact that pedagogical stylistics-based practices not only influence language acquisition but also psychologically affect the academic journey of acquiring a foreign language, the generalizability of which is constrained by the peculiarities of the Iranian EFL context. Such a peculiar feature makes it plausible for material developers, syllabus and curriculum designers and preservice and in-service teacher trainers, involving teacher effectiveness, e.g., (Mazandarani & Troudi, 2017, 2022), to take the opportunity provided by this all-pervasive influence of pedagogical stylistics. Furthermore, the researchers also attempted to broaden the working definition of pedagogical stylistics to reach beyond its conventional scope, i.e., by placing it in an EFL and non-university context, which is in line with Fogal's (2015) call for expanding the research foci. In this respect, derived from the psychological implications of academic buoyancy, this study aimed to open up new avenues of thinking to substantiate the efficacy of stylistics-informed pedagogies and their ever-burgeoning potential for further studies in varied contexts.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors have contributed to this work.

Declaration of Interest

The authors have no competing interests or other interests that might be perceived to influence the results and/or discussion reported in this paper.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and guidelines.

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Transparency of Data

All data and materials, including classroom activities and instructional procedures used in this study, are available upon request.

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