The Effect of Input Enhancement and Consciousness-Raising Techniques on the Acquisition of Lexical and Grammatical Collocation of Iranian EFL Learners

Behnaz Fazlali
Ministry of Education, Iran
<fazlali.behnaz@gmail.com>

Amin Shahini
Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran
<a.shahini@gorganiau.ac.ir>

Abstract

This study is conducted to examine the effect of input enhancement as an implicit and consciousness-raising as an explicit method of instruction on improving grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. To reach this aim, a sample of sixty participants at pre-intermediate level of English proficiency in Gorgan, Golestan, Iran was selected. They were randomly assigned to one control and two experimental groups. All of them were given a pre-test to assure that they were homogeneous with regard to their knowledge of collocations. All groups received the same text with different methods of teaching during the six treatment sessions. One week after the last treatment session, a post-test was administered to them. The results of the study revealed that input enhancement had no significant effect on increasing the grammatical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners, while it had a significant effect on the improvement of lexical collocation knowledge. In addition, consciousness-raising instruction had a significant effect on increasing both lexical and grammatical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. Besides, consciousness-raising group outperformed the input enhancement and control group. This study offers some pedagogical implications for syllabus designers, material developers, teachers, and students.

Keywords: collocations, lexical collocations, grammatical collocations, input enhancement, consciousness-raising

Introduction

Using a word in its appropriate context is more important than knowing grammatical structures (Soleimani, Jafarigohar, & Iranmanesh, 2013). It would be difficult to use the correct grammatical structure without sufficient vocabulary knowledge. Considering the importance of vocabulary, there have been many techniques to its teaching and learning, one of which is collocation learning. Vocabulary teaching that draws the learner's attention to predictable patterns in target language can accelerate the learning process (Vasiljevic, 2009). In order to know the meaning of a word more efficiently, learners need to know its association with other words. By helping word companies, learner can keep the words in the memory and easily infer meaning from the context (Vasiljevic, 2009).

The term "collocation" is not perfectly defined and has been the subject of some debate until now. For example, McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) stated that collocation is "natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other" (p. 4). Elsewhere, Durrant (2008) defined collocation as a "psychological association between words which is merely evidenced by their occurrence together in corpora more often than random distribution"(p. 10). Bahn (1993) proposed that the concept of collocation includes lexical and grammatical collocations. "Lexical and grammatical collocations are distinctive, but they cannot be separated. They are two related aspects of one phenomenon" (p. 57). Lexical collocations do not have a grammatical element, they are made up of verb, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs in different possible combinations such as Verb+ Noun: e.g. (withdraw an offer), Adjective+ Noun: e.g. (feeble soup), Noun+ Verb: e.g. (storm rage), Noun+ Noun: e.g. (a world capital), and Adverb+ Adjective: e.g. (seriously rich).On the contrary, grammatical collocations include words such as verbs, adjectives, or nouns joined with a preposition or a grammatical structures such as infinitives, gerunds, or clauses such as Noun+ Preposition: e.g. (apathy towards), Noun + to-Infinitive: e.g. (they felt a need to do it), Noun+ that-Clause: e.g. (we reached an agreement that she would represent us in court), Preposition+ Noun: e.g. (by accident), Adjective+ Preposition: e.g. (hungry for news), Adjective+ to-Infinitive: e.g. (it's nice to be here), and Adjective+ that-Clause: e.g. (she was afraid that she would fail) (Benson, 1989). Elsewhere, Nation (2013) defined lexical collocations as co-occurring of lexical items repeatedly in the text, and almost prefabricated in nature. They also cannot be replaced by their synonyms. Nation also proposed that grammatical collocations are structural word phrases which include restricted grammatical patterns syntactically.

The need for collocation knowledge arose from the fact that in most cases, although the vocabulary size of intermediate and advanced language learners increase, their communication ability is not improving, and they have great difficulty in expressing and conveying their idea clearly (Webb, 2008). In other words, English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' collocation knowledge is very limited, they cannot easily choose the right word combination while they speak and write (Deveci, 2006). In spite of the importance of collocations, they do not receive much attention from teachers. Most Iranian school teachers have a tendency to teach isolated words through traditional ways; therefore, EFL learners merely rely on learning isolated words and translate their native language equivalent into English. So, their speech does not sound natural (Bahramdoust & Moeini, 2012). In order to help them to overcome such obstacles, they need to be trained in a way to know how words are combined in English.

The rate (Mahmoud, 2005) and the variety of lexical collocations are higher than the grammatical ones, therefore, most EFL learners feel that they can have more freedom to combine the lexical collocations without restrictions, and this results in producing erroneous utterances (Moehkardi, 2002). Moreover, English prepositions are difficult for EFL learners to master because they relate them to their first language(L1) equivalent and select the wrong prepositions which affect the whole meaning of the sentence (Mehregn, 2013). Since the order and pattern of learning grammatical and lexical collocations have not been known clearly, the study of learning different kinds of collocations gives some novel insight into the pattern of their development in second language (L2) learning, and used as an aid to language learning and teaching. (Bahramdoust & Moeini, 2012).

By knowing the appropriate method of learning and teaching collocations, teachers can devise their teaching methods, develop their techniques, and help students to improve their knowledge of collocations (Vasiljevic, 2009). In every language, there have been various issues about different influences of explicit and implicit teaching methods. It seemed that a group of researchers are in support of explicit teaching method (see Nesselhauf, 2005). Some others such as Nation (2013) remind the advantage of implicit teaching method. Also, there are researchers who believe both methods should be used for ideal learning, such as Siyanova and Schmitt (2008). However, the way in which EFL learners acquire both lexical and grammatical collocation efficiently is a great concern, and far too little attention has been paid to investigate the efficiency of different instructional methods for learning and developing learners' lexical and grammatical collocation knowledge. This study has focused on two different methods of teaching collocations to EFL learners namely input enhancement (IE) as an implicit method of instruction and consciousness-raising (CR) as an explicit method of instruction and has claimed to what extent each of these methods could bridge the gap in learner's collocation competence. The findings will have certain implications for collocation teaching and material development.

Review of the Related Literature

The Importance of Learning Collocations in EFL Context

There are many aspects and degrees of word knowledge needed for learners in order to use the words properly and efficiently. One of the most complete ones is proposed by Nation (2013) who categorized word knowledge into three main classes: a) knowledge of form (spoken and written form, as well as word part), b) knowledge of meaning (form and meaning, concepts and referents, and associations), and c) knowledge of use (grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints one use). Therefore, as Nation suggests knowledge of collocation is one of the essential components of the use of a word, "knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with." (p. 56).

Lexical approach proposed by Lewis (1993) concentrates on developing learners' proficiency with lexis or word, and word combinations. Lewis (2008) claimed that within lexical approach, language is composed of lexical phrases and meaningful chunks that combine together and generate coherent text. According to Schmitt (2000), the mind processes collocations and lexical phrases as a single unit of meaning or an individual whole. Having words in the lexical

phrases instead of the individual ones indicates how mind stores and chunks the language in order to make it easier to process.

Most people acquire the ordinary collocations of their own language without noticing them. They know how to combine words appropriately in their language, but this is not the case for EFL learners (Lewis, 2000), Benson (1989) stated that collocations are arbitrary and unpredictable. There is no logical reason why some words can collocate with some others. So, non-native speakers do not cope with them easily without instruction. For instance, as for a collocation like *commit suicide,* there is no reasonable rule for electing *commit* among its various synonyms such as *perform, do, and execute.* The arbitrary limitation of collocations allow that *commit suicide* becomes acceptable, while **do suicide* does not. Hill (2000) declared it is estimated that in any natural language more than 70% of individual's dialogs in speaking, hearing, reading or writing are to be found in several forms of fixed expressions, therefore, learning collocation is an essential factor in the formation of EFL learner's lexicon, accuracy, fluency, and natural speaking.

According to McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), fluency means talking continuously, properly, and naturally. Fluency of native speakers is due to the fact that ready-made chunks which are available from learner's mental lexicon allow them to think quickly and communicate conveniently. They can read and listen faster, because they have no problem in recognizing collocations; but EFL learners have to process multi-word unit word-by-word (Hill, 2000). Pawley and Syder (1983) suggested that by knowing collocations, learners do not struggle on thinking about what to say; they can find the right word companies without having to stop and pause a lot, so their utterances sound natural. Moreover, by knowing collocations, they store a large amount of pre-constructed chunks in their memory, and can easily choose the right collocations appropriate to the communicative situation.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) argued collocations help us to speak and write accurately and naturally. People may understand what you mean when you say *I did a few mistakes.* But, your speech sounds natural when you say *I made a few mistakes*. Learning collocations also gives us alternative ways of saying something instead of repeating it. For example, instead of saying *it was **very** cold and **very** dark*, we can say *it was **bitterly** cold and **pitch** dark*. In addition, learning collocations enhances our knowledge of vocabulary and helps the learners to choose words that are appropriate for a particular context, so it improves their writing and speaking style. For instance, instead of saying *a big meal* we can say *a substantial meal.*

In order to be a native-like speaker, learners should have the ability to choose and retrieve the accurate collocations. They should also have the ability to chunk the language successfully. When some students are not familiar with the most important collocations of a key word, they produce inaccurate sentences. Learners with deficient collocation competence often convey their intention in longer sentences which include grammatical errors (Hill, 2000).

Several studies carried out to indicate the effect of collocation knowledge of learners on the improvement of their general proficiency and language skills (Bahramdoust & Moeini, 2012; Bonk, 2000; Mounya, 2010; Rahimi & Momeni, 2012). They revealed that enhancement of collocation competence resulted in EFL learners' communicative competence, accordingly

learners' proficiency and language skills enhanced. In an experiment, Jafarpour and Koosha (2006) came to the conclusion that difficulty in learner's speaking and writing production was not related to their grammatical or lexical knowledge. But, it was due to the lack of the collocation knowledge. Ozgul and Abdulkadir (2012) investigated teaching vocabulary through collocations in EFL classes. The vocabulary was presented to the control group via classical techniques such as providing definition, synonym, antonym, and mother tongue translation. The experimental group learned new vocabulary by various suitable collocations for each word. The result of the study led to conclude that vocabulary teaching through collocations resulted in better learning of words than learning isolated words.

Consciousness-Raising

According to Schmidt (1990), consciousness is a necessary condition in L2 learning. Schmidt divided consciousness into three categories: consciousness as awareness, consciousness as intention, and consciousness as knowledge. Awareness has three levels including perception, noticing, and understanding. "Perception implies mental organization, and the ability to create internal representations of external events" (Schmidt, 1990. p. 132). According to Schmidt (1995), "the noticing hypothesis states that what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning" (p. 20). Schmidt (1990) also asserted that the following factors affect noticing in input: instruction, frequency, perceptual salience, skill level, task demands, and comparing. Understanding is an advanced level of awareness in which learners generalize rules out of instances. Problem solving belongs to this level. Schmidt (2001) asserted that noticing is necessary for learning, but understanding accelerates it. On the whole, learning without awareness is impossible; noticing at the extent of awareness is prerequisite and as an important tool in learning language. Learning takes place when people attend to things.

As stated by Ellis (2003), a CR task is principally based on explicit learning. It improves awareness to reach at the level of understanding rather than awareness at the level of noticing. Ellis (1990) defined CR task as "a pedagogic activity where the learners are provided with L2 data in some form and required to perform some operation on or with it, the purpose of which is to arrive at an explicit understanding of some linguistic property or properties of the target language" (p. 60).

Willis and Willis (1996) claimed that comprehensive description of language is impossible because language is so expanded, it always changes and develops. Therefore, teachers should provide the learners with CR activities which are defined as "activities which encourage them to think about samples of language and to draw their own conclusions about how the language works" (p. 63). They claimed that CR task includes different techniques: identification (point out the target form), judgment (decide whether the data are accurate or not), completion (fill in the blanks), modification or reconstruction (rearrangement or rewording part of a text), sorting or classifying (assigning the forms in data to various category), matching (joining two sets of data according to some certain principle), and rule provision or hypothesis building (make verbal or non-verbal generalization). Willis and Willis also claimed that CR task is not only the main task, but also it can be used as a supplementary task. It leads the learners to concentrate explicitly on a specific point which they are unable to use or use it incorrectly.

The main characteristics of CR activities include teachers' attempt to "isolate a specific linguistics feature for focused attention", and learners are "provided with data which illustrate the target feature and are expected to utilize intellectual effort to understand the target feature." (Ellis, 1991, p. 34). CR is learner-centered. The teacher acts as a facilitator, he explains certain features; learners need time to internalize those features, generalize, and formulate the rules by relying on their intellectual capacities (Amirian & Abbasi, 2014).

The efficacy of C-R has been a controversial issue for many years. Several studies have been done to illustrate the effect of C-R on different areas of language. Some scholars proved the effectiveness of C-R in teaching and learning a language (Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Laufer, 2006; Macaro & Masterman, 2006; Rasha, 2011).

In a study, Amirian and Sadeghi (2012) examined the effect of grammar C-R task on EFL learners' performance. Sixty female students in Sabzevar, Iran participated in this study. They were divided into two groups: one experimental and one control group. The control group was taught grammatical structure via drill practice and traditional approach. The experimental group was instructed by C-R activities. Students were given examples of target form in the sentences in which target forms were bolded or highlighted, and then students induced the grammar rules and also explained them. They recognized the incorrect form, and then tried to correct them. The result of the study led to support the effectiveness of C-R task in teaching grammar.

Yarahmadzehi, Esfandiary, and Kalali (2015) conducted research to investigate the effect of grammar through C-R tasks on high school English learners' grammatical proficiency. Participants were a group of 66 male intermediate-level students at a public high school in Dashtestan, Bushehr, Iran. They were randomly divided into one experimental and one control group. The experimental group received C-R instruction of grammatical structure. The basis for C-R instruction was understanding the rule, identifying, and correcting errors. The control group received no C-R instruction. The result of the study showed that participants within the experimental group significantly improved their knowledge of target structure in comparison to control group. So, C-R task had significant effect on learner's grammatical knowledge.

Elsewhere, Fatemipour and Hemmati (2015) indicated the impact of C-R activities on young English language learners' grammar performance. Sixty male and female pre-intermediate learners at English Language institute in Tehran took part in this study. The selected classes were randomly assigned to one experimental and one control group. An experimental group was exposed to grammar C-R activities, and control group was exposed to deductive grammar teaching. All the learners were trained through the same grammatical points, sessions, and also the same teacher. The result of the study indicated that grammar.

C-R activities could make a high degree of development even in grammar performance of non-proficient learners. Significant development in experimental group distinguished it from control group. C-R had a direct positive effect on learner's application of English language grammar. This study also revealed that the nature of C-R made the learners aware of their learning process, and increased learner's curiosity. On the contrary, there are some studies that failed to prove the positive effect or superiority of C-R task on teaching and learning language

features. Soleimani, Jahangiri, and Jafarigohar (2015) investigated the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on implicit knowledge of simple past tense. Fifty-nine intermediate EFL learners were divided into one control and one experimental group. The experimental group received explicit explanation through C-R activities such as familiarity with the content of the text, exposure to the target feature, inducing the rule, and finding examples of the target feature in the text. Moreover, they received feedback from the teacher. The control group read the same comprehension text with implicit instruction without grammatical explanation and focus on the features. They only read the text to find the whole idea of it. Besides, they did not receive any feedback from the teacher. The result of the study indicated no superiority of explicit instruction over implicit instruction.

In an experiment, Pakbaz and Rezai (2015) examined the effect of C-R task as post-task activity on accuracy and complexity of writing performance. Sixty lower-intermediate EFL learners were chosen. They were divided into one experimental and one control group. C-R tasks on comparatives, superlatives and articles were implemented in the experimental groups. The result of the study indicated that applying C-R task brought on more accurate writing, however, it did not improve the complexity of writing performance.

Input Enhancement

There has been controversial debate among L2 researchers on whether language features should be taught or not. Some researchers such as Krashen (1985) believed that learning an L2 takes place unconsciously without awareness. According to his belief, it is not necessary for teachers to instruct learners explicitly. They should expose learners with enough comprehensible input that is a bit above their present level of knowledge. In this case, learners will acquire language spontaneously. Schmidt (1990) introduced noticing hypothesis in which he claimed that when a particular form is more salient in the exposed input, learners will select those forms more than other forms. Therefore, noticing L2 is necessary and enough for changing input into intake. Sharwood Smith (1991) proposed IE as an implicit method of instruction and defined it as "the process by which language input becomes salient to learners" (p. 118). He also suggested that there are several ways to draw the learner's attention to the target language such as color coding, bold-facing, capitalizing, underlining, and italicizing. Lee and Lee (2012) claimed that there are different ways for enhancing input, one of which is visual enhancement. In visual enhancement, input becomes visually prominent by italicizing, capitalizing, bolding, or underlining. Another way of enhancing input is semantic elaboration. It refers to enhancing the meaning of exposed input by giving some extra information such as synonyms, rephrasing, restatement, repetition, and using appositional phrases for difficult items. IE can also be achieved by input flooding. Gass (1997) proposed that frequency of forms through repeated exposure influences noticing.

Elsewhere, Sharwood Smith (1993) stated that there are two types of salience of input. The first one is internally derived salience which is internally generated by the learners, i.e. learners themselves process their own natural learning. Because of some internal cognitive changes in learners, input becomes noticeable. The second one is external derived salience in which the form is noticed by an external agent such as the teachers or the researchers through various means. Sharwood Smith also asserted that when there is no guarantee for internal awareness to

happen, the external one can be the best substitute. Park and Han (2008) specified some factors that can enhance external salience such as learners' first language, learners' present inter-language knowledge, and comprehension failure. It could be implemented in both oral and written form. Alsadan (2011) argued that in written form, the teacher provides the learners with text in which target forms are highlighted. In oral situation, the teacher repeats the specific target form more frequently than other forms. The teacher can also raise his tone of voice to focus the learners' attention to specific feature.

Various studies have been carried out about the effect of IE on different parts of language learning such as reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Some of these studies such as (Khatib & Safari, 2013; and Lee & Benati, 2007) found the positive effect of IE on acquisition of language learning.

In a research study, Jabbarpoor and Tajeddin (2013) found a positive effect of IE on the acquisition of English subjunctive mood. Ninety first-semester B.A. students at intermediate level were selected in this study. They were randomly assigned to one control, and two experimental groups. One of the experimental group was exposed to the reading text with typographical enhancement. The other experimental group was exposed to output task. The result of the study revealed that IE had a positive effect on foreign language learning of the participants.

A research study conducted by Mayen (2013), explored the effect of textual enhancement and visual enhancement in acquisition of Spanish verbal morphology. Nineteen students- eleven girls and eight boys- ranged in age from seven to thirteen took part in the study. They were exposed to fourteen treatment sessions lasting one hour per week. One of the experimental groups was exposed to the textual enhancement; the other one was exposed to both textual and visual enhancement. Control group received no enhanced text. The result showed the positive effect of textual and visual enhancement.

Elsewhere, Nahavandi and Mukundan (2014) proved the positive effect of input enhancement on vocabulary intake of Iranian elementary EFL learners. Ninety-one students (both male and female) participated in the study. Both control and experimental groups were exposed to the same vocabulary in the same text. The experimental group was exposed to the text with highlighted words, whereas the control group read the same texts without input manipulation. The results of the study showed the superiority of the experimental group over control group.

On the contrary, there are research studies that failed to prove the effectiveness of IE on learning different features of L2. Lee and Huang (2008), and Yeun-hee and Hee-kyung (2012) revealed the ineffectiveness of IE in second language acquisition (SLA).

In a research study, Leow (2001) explored the effect of textual enhancement and noticing on Spanish formal commands and intake. Thirty-eight native English speakers participated in the study. The target forms were underlined and bolded. Experimental group exposed to enhanced text and control group did not have any exposure to textual enhanced. Both groups received immediate and delayed post-tests in form of multiple choice and fill in the blanks. The result

indicated that there was no significant difference between two groups in comprehension and noticing the target form and readers' intake.

Izumi (2002) conducted a study about the effect of output and visual IE on the learning of English relativization. The participants were sixty-one English L2 learners. They were divided into one experimental and one control group. The linguistic item was presented through reading texts. Experimental group was instructed by enhanced texts, and control group was instructed by non-enhanced texts. The result of the study indicated that experimental group who received enhanced input did not show any convincing achievement compare to control group.

In brief, there is no doubt that collocations are one of the necessary components of foreign / second language acquisition. Based on the review of the literature, this study was designed to proceed these theoretical issues into practice and apply two different methods of teaching namely IE and CR on lexical and grammatical collocations. In order to reach this aim this study tried to answer the following research questions:

- Does input enhancement have any significant effect on the improvement of both grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners?

- Does consciousness-raising have any significant effect on the improvement of both grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners?

- Is there any significant difference between the performance of the three groups in terms of the improvement of the grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners?

Method

Participants

A total of ninety female participants from three senior high schools in Gorgan, Iran participated in this study. There was no random assignment of the participants. We applied naturally occurring treatment groups. The participants were between 16 and 17 years old. After administering Oxford Quick Placement Test, twenty students from each class who were at pre-intermediate level of proficiency were selected. Then, the groups were randomly assigned to one control group and two experimental groups.

Instruments

Oxford Quick Placement Test was used for assessing participants' level of proficiency and determining their homogeneity. Eighty-nine collocations (including 52 lexical collocations, and 37 grammatical collocations) were presented to the students through six reading texts (See Appendix B).Five reading texts were selected from *"collocation in use"* by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), and one reading text was selected from a study by Rezvani (2011). According to McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), the selected "collocations are a representative picture of how English is really used and which words naturally and frequently go together" (p. 4). They are

based on real English taken from conversations, radio, television, books, newspapers, letters, etc. They were the most useful ones that might be used in written and spoken forms, and can cause problem for students.

The pre-test consisted of 25 lexical and 15 grammatical collocations items randomly distributed within the test (See Appendix A); students selected one correct answer from any of the four choices. Most of the items of the questions of the pre-test were taken from *"collocation in use"* by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), and some of them were taken from "free on line dictionary" such as http://www.yourdictionary.com via Google search. Since some of the items did not have enough distractors, some were added. Then, the reliability of the test estimated through Cronbach's alpha proved to be 0.75 indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for measuring collocation knowledge. The pre-test was administered to the students before the treatments. One week after the last session of treatment, a post-test was administered to the students. Because of the time gap (about 8 weeks) between the administrations of the pre and post-test, a probable test-wiseness and practice effects could be predicted. So, the same test was used as the pre/post-test.

Instructional Material

Six reading texts in which collocations were bolded were used as instructional materials. Using http://readability-score, the researcher examined the readability of the reading texts. The readability-score was used to measure the reading ease and grade level of the text. The reading ease scores of the texts used in the present study were between 76.7 and 87.8 with average grade level of 6. It showed that they were easy and fairly easy texts. So, they were at the same level of students' English proficiency level. The collocation types which were presented to students are illustrated in table 1 as follow:

Table 1. Grammatical and Lexical Collocation Types Used in Treatment Sessions

Grammatical Types:	Lexical Types:
Verb + Preposition: e.g. bring up	Verb + Noun: e.g. expect baby
Adjective + Preposition: e.g. good at	Noun + Noun: e.g. world record
Noun + Preposition: e.g. problem with	Adjective + Noun: e.g. steady income
Preposition + Verb: e.g. in earning	Verb + Adverb: train hard
Verb + to Infinitive: tend to be	Adverb + Verb: desperately want
	Idiom: e.g. money was always tight

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

In the outset, all participants were asked to answer Oxford Quick Placement Test in order to homogenize them in terms of their general proficiency. They were given thirty minutes to answer the test. Then, sixty participants (twenty students from each class) who were at pre-intermediate level of proficiency were selected. In order to decide the reliability of the pre-test and the post-test and ensure that the test well-matched the learners' level of collocation knowledge, a group of twenty students who were at the same proficiency level, age, and sex of the participants were selected for the pilot study. After the first version of the test was given to them, 2 items which were confusing and difficult to understand were deleted, and the distractors of 1 item which were confusing were revised, then the final version included 40 items was given to the actual participants. According to their answers, the reliability of the test was estimated at 0.75 which was at an acceptable level. All three groups were given the pre-test before the treatment sessions to ensure that the students did not have any prior knowledge about the collocations and were homogeneous with regard to their knowledge of collocations. The treatment sessions began two weeks after the pretest in order to make a time gap between the pretest and the posttest administrations to decrease test-wiseness and practice effects. The three groups were exposed to the same texts in which the collocations were embedded, but the method of instruction was different for each group. The three groups were taught by the same teacher for a period of six weeks. Each week consisted of one session of 80 minutes.

In the first experimental group, the explicit method of C-R was used. Students were given a copy of a reading text in which collocations were bolded to draw their attention. The teacher clarified the meaning of unknown collocations by definition, synonym, and mother tongue translation (*e.g. money was tight means there was not much money.* or *broken family: children whose parents have separated or divorced come are said to come from a broken family)*. Students summarized the text by using the collocations of the text. At the end, the students were provided with some C-R exercises such as identifying, completion, and judgment. By working on these activities, learners directly concentrated on collocation words and thought about the correct use of them. The second experimental group received IE (implicit) instruction. Learners were exposed to texts in which the collocation words were bolded to draw their attention. But, they had no explicit instructions on collocation words. Students read the text, and the teacher clarified the meaning of unknown collocation words by definition, synonym, and mother tongue translation like C-R group. Students focused on the gist of the text rather than direct attention to collocations. Then, they answered reading comprehension questions. Meanwhile, the comprehension questions or their answers involved using collocations which were used in the text. So, by answering the questions, learners used collocations unintentionally.

The control group was also exposed to the same text of two experimental groups. However, they received no implicit or explicit instruction. They attended their regular English lessons and merely read the unenhanced text. The teacher worked on the unfamiliar isolated words (not collocation words) by defining, giving their synonym, and mother tongue equivalent. Then, students answered the comprehension questions and summarized the text in their own words. The questions of the control group were the same as the IE group, but the method of instruction differed for them. One week after the last session of the treatment, a post-test was administered

to the participants in order to explore the effectiveness of the treatment in all groups. Students' answers were rated as follow: the correct answer= 1 point, the incorrect answer= 0 point (with maximum score of 25 for lexical collocations, and 15 for grammatical collocations). Then, the gathered data from students' pre-test and the post-test was entered into SPSS to be analyzed. Paired-sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Prior to running the paired-sample t-test and one-way ANOVA, the normality of the data was checked by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The significance in the pre-test and post-test of the three groups (control group, IE group, and C-R group) ranged between 0.06 and 0.20. Since it was greater than the significant value of .05, it can be concluded that the data were distributed normally.

In addition, the mean scores of the pre-test in all three groups ranged between 3.35 and 4.65. Hence, it could be concluded that all the participants had nearly similar knowledge of lexical and grammatical collocations before the treatment sessions, and the participants were safely assigned to the control and experimental groups.

Table 2. Paired-Sample T-Test Statistics for Paired Differences in IE Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre/ Post-Test of Gram	-.85	2.66	.59	-2.09	.39	-1.42	19	.16
Pair 2	Pre/ Post-Test of Lex	-6.45	3.17	.70	-7.93	-4.96	-9.09	19	.00

The first research question posed whether input enhancement has any significant effect on the improvement of grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. Table 2 revealed that in pair one, the observed P-value (sig) was estimated to be more than 0.05 (0.16> 0.05). Thus, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test. That is to say, IE instruction had no significant effect on increasing grammatical collocation knowledge within the group. Table 2 also indicated that in pair two, the P-value (sig) was less than 0.05 (0.00< 0.05) indicating that there was a significant mean difference between participants' pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, IE had a positive significant

effect on increasing lexical collocation knowledge of learners with an increase of 6.45 in the mean score of their post-test.

Table 3. Paired-Samples T-Test Statistics for Paired Differences in CR Group									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre/ Post- Test of Gram	-7.10	3.59	.80	-8.78	-5.41	-8.82	19	.00
Pair 2	Pre/ Post-Test of Lex	-16.95	5.68	1.27	-19.61	-14.28	-13.32	19	.00

The second research question dealt with the effect of CR on increasing both grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. Table 3 indicated that the P-value (sig) was 0.00 (sig< 0.05) in pair one. This implied that CR had a positive significant effect on increasing grammatical collocation knowledge within the group with a mean difference of 7.1. Moreover, the significance was 0.00 (sig< 0.05) in pair two. It demonstrated that CR had also a significant effect on increasing lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners with a noticeable mean difference of 16.95.

Table 4. Post-Hoc Test for Grammatical Collocations							
Paired Differences							
	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tamhane	Control	CR	-5.10*	.91	.00	-7.41	-2.78
		IE	1.15	.73	.33	-.69	2.99
	CR	Control	5.10*	.91	.00	2.78	7.41
		IE	6.25*	1.00	.00	3.74	8.75
	IE	Control	-1.15	.73	.33	-2.99	.69
		CR	-6.25*	1.00	.00	-8.75	-3.74

The third research question propounded whether there is any significant difference between the performance of the three groups in terms of the grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge. According to Table 4, the comparison between the control and CR group indicated that the P-value (sig) was 0.00 (sig< 0.05). So, the experimental group with CR instruction performed

better than control group with a mean difference of 5.10. The comparison between the control and IE groups revealed that the P-value (sig) was 0.33 (sig> 0.05) indicating no group had any superiority over each other. Finally, CR group outperformed IE in the post test (sig< 0.05) with a mean difference of 6.25. Therefore, CR group outperformed IE and control group in increasing the grammatical collocation knowledge of the Iranian EFL learners.

Table 5. Post-Hoc Test for Lexical Collocations							
	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tamhane	Control	CR	-8.85*	1.73	.000	-13.17	-4.52
		IE	1.65	1.37	.55	-1.81	5.11
	CR	Control	8.85*	1.73	.00	4.52	13.17
		IE	10.50*	1.45	.00	6.81	14.18
	IE	Control	-1.65	1.37	.55	-5.11	1.81
		CR	-10.50*	1.45	.00	-14.18	-6.81

Regarding the comparison between the three groups in their performance on lexical collocation knowledge post-test, Table 5 illustrated that CR group outperformed the control group with a mean difference of 8.85 (p<0.05). Besides, the CR group also outperformed IE group in terms of lexical collocation knowledge in post-test (p< 0.05) with a mean difference of 10.50. Finally, the results indicated that neither the IE group nor the control group had any superiority over each other in terms of lexical collocation knowledge measured (p>0.05).In sum, consciousness group outperformed the other two groups. Meanwhile, IE and control group performed similarly in their post-test scores in terms of their lexical collocation knowledge.

Discussion

The results of the first research questions revealed that IE method did not have any significant effect on increasing grammatical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. The results of the study confirm those of Swain (2000) who believed acquiring a language through rich input does not lead to increasing the learners' present level of knowledge. It is also in accordance with Izumi (2002) that expressed input enhancement cannot develop noticing and learning. In addition, the result of the study is in agreement with Gass (1997), Vanpatten and Long (1996). They claimed that input is necessary, but it is not enough for acquiring a language.

Interestingly, a review of the literature indicates that the finding of the current research study is in accordance with the observations of Izumi (2002), Lee and Huang (2008), and Leow (2001) who revealed the ineffectiveness of IE in SLA. Although these studies did not employ

collocation instruction treatment, they reached the same conclusion of the current study about the ineffectiveness of IE on the features of L2.

However, there are some studies that are not supporting the result of the present study. The finding of the first question about the lack of the effectiveness of IE on the improvement of grammatical collocations is not in accordance with Krashen's (1985) belief that there is no need for explicit instruction done by teachers. Comprehensible input itself is enough for acquiring a language. Similarly, the result of the study is not in agreement with what Schmidt (1995, 2001) called IE which increases the learners' attention to the target features which in turn brings on more noticing to the target features and hence more acquisition. Likewise, the result of the study is not in line with Jabbarpoor and Tajeddin (2013) who revealed the positive effect of IE on foreign language learning of the participants. In the present research, the lack of the effect of the treatment sessions might be due to difference in proficiency level of the participants. Participants of the present research study were at pre-intermediate level, while participants of the above-mentioned research were from a B.A. program in TEFL and had more knowledge of English language. The other factor that possibly had influenced the result of the study was the number of the participants. Insufficient number of the participants in the present research can be among the problems that affected the results.

As literature indicates the findings of the present study does not support Mayen (2013) who showed the positive effect of textual and visual enhancement. Several factors are supposed to be the reason for finding different results. One of them might be the length of the exposure. Maximum length of the treatment sessions in the current research was eight hours. In such a limited time, participants might not perform well and indicate their outmost ability. Another possible problem might be differences in participants' age. Children become motivated easier and have more positive attitudes towards learning new materials, while teenagers are affected by the affective factors which results in the lack of developmental readiness for acquiring new features. Using different kinds of IE are among the possible factors which influences the result. The present research used only bolding which is one type of enhancing input. Using combination of IE such as visual enhancement, input flooding, and semantic enhancement might lead to have different result. At last, only female students were chosen in the present research study. Conducting a research with both male and female could lead to have different result.

Moreover, this research study did not reach the same conclusion of Nahavandy and Mukundan (2014) who revealed the effectiveness of IE on vocabulary intake of EFL learners. It is supposed that complexity of collocation structures in comparison to isolated vocabulary can be one of the possible explanations for having different results because complex and new structures demand more effort and time in comparison to simple structures.

According to the findings of the first research question, it was clear that IE had no significant effect on improving grammatical collocation knowledge, while it had significant effect on improving lexical collocation knowledge. Although we had the same treatment sessions within the same group and also the same teacher, we obtained two different results. The lack of the efficiency of treatment sessions in learning grammatical collocations might be the idea that grammatical and lexical part differ in nature, so they should be taught differently.

According to Zhang (2009), grammar is not achieved naturally, it requires to be taught. So, one possible answer for getting different results in IE instruction is that in grammatical part, explicit teaching should play an important role to achieve the end. In addition, the present study spent the same amount of time for teaching both lexical and grammatical collocations. It is supposed that learning the grammatical part requires more time than the lexical part.

The results of the second research question proved that C-R instruction had a significant effect on increasing both grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. The results of the study are consistent with Ellis (2003), and Willis and Willis (1996) who believed by doing C-R activities, learners consciously think about and discuss certain linguistic features. Therefore, it helps them to focus directly on a specific feature and perform the task. As the relevant literature indicates, the results of the study reached the same conclusion as Amirian and Sadeghi (2012), Fatemipour and Hemmati (2015), Laufer (2006), Rasha (2011), and Yarahmadzehi, Esfandiary, and Kalali's (2015) studies who proved C-R is one of the valuable methods of teaching in developing learners' understanding of linguistic features.

Although there are some studies (Pakbaz and Rezai, 2015; Shook, 1994; Soleimani, Jahangiri, & Jafarigohar, 2015) which are not in line with the results of the current study, this study lend support to the benefits of C-R on the acquisition of both lexical and grammatical collocation knowledge. The effective method is probably to provide students with typographical enhancement followed by C-R activities. Teachers need to intentionally provide tasks in which students' attention is focused on particular target features. According to Leow (2001), it is desirable that language instruction and classroom activities are organized in a way that increase learners' noticing to the particular target form while providing input to the learners. It is believed that the degree of attention to the form may affect converting input into intake (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The findings of this study have certain implications for syllabus designers, material developers, teachers, and students. Syllabus designers and material developers should design more appropriate syllabuses. By developing materials which encourage using different activities and various methods of instruction, they inspire teachers to integrate variety into their teaching and prevent doing routinized activity. English books in Iranian high schools involve single word lists at the end of each lesson. They could be substituted by collocations. In addition, this study suggests that students' attentions should be explicitly drawn to the way words combine into collocations and develop their collocation knowledge. Moreover, knowing how collocations are learned is essential for devising teaching method and strategies that affect promoting collocation knowledge of Iranian EFL learners.

The present research can have suggestions for further research. Further studies can investigate the collocation learning of the participants with different proficiency levels and decide which stages are more appropriate for learning collocation among Iranian EFL context. It can also consider other types of enhancement such as input flooding and semantic enhancement. At last, since it would be a great value to understand whether or not IE and CR help students to increase their oral proficiency and speaking ability, further research can investigate the productive collocation knowledge of the learners by providing different measurement types like interview and gap-filling exercises.

About the Authors

Behnaz Fazlali is an MA holder in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Iran. She is also an English teacher at the ministry of education in Iran.

Amin Shahini is an assistant professor at Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran. He has published a number of papers in national and international journals.

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