



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EFFECTS OF AWARENESS-RAISING APPROACH VERSUS INPUT-FLOOD
TREATMENT ON COLLOCATION KNOWLEDGE, WRITING PROFICIENCY, AND
COGNITIVE STYLE AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS***

ELAHEH HAMED MAHVELATI

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By

ELAHEH HAMED MAHVELATI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

March 2014

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wonderful parents whose words of encouragement and never ending support helped me complete this study, my siblings who have never left my side and are very special, and my supervisor who taught me to learn...



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EFFECTS OF AWARENESS-RAISING APPROACH VERSUS INPUT-FLOOD TREATMENT ON COLLOCATION KNOWLEDGE, WRITING PROFICIENCY, AND COGNITIVE STYLE AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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March 2014

Chairman: Prof. Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD

Faculty: Educational Studies

The aim of this study was to explore the most viable way to enhance language learners' knowledge of collocation and consequently improve their writing performance with regard to their individual cognitive style differences. More specifically, the effectiveness of implicit collocation instruction through the input-flood technique versus explicit collocation instruction through the awareness-raising approach was examined. Furthermore, the role of the learners' cognitive style of field-dependence/independence (FD/FI) in benefiting from these two teaching methods was investigated.

Three intact groups of learners, comprising 95 upper-intermediate adult learners, participated in this study. These groups were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. During the treatment period, each group was exposed to the same language input and the same course materials (except for the materials used to teach collocations in the experimental groups). The data were collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods. More specifically, the effects of the treatments were examined and compared quantitatively through writing and collocation pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed-post-tests. Then to shed more lights on the impacts of the treatments on the learners' collocation learning and writing proficiency, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of FD and FI participants and also with the raters of the writing tests. In the case of the input-flood group, in addition to the interviews, the retrospective-reflective tasks and tests of intake were also administered to help the researcher gain clearer insight into the thought and attentional processes of the learners.

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the collocation awareness-raising approach was significantly superior to the implicit method of input flood treatment since it not only increased the FD and FI learners' knowledge about the collocational fields of words but also helped them to use this knowledge in their English written production which consequently improved their writing performance. In addition, this method heightened their collocation awareness which consequently motivated them to put more efforts into learning more collocations. Moreover, the results showed that the FD and FI learners equally benefited from this type of treatment. The input-flood method was found to be beneficial for only the learners with FI tendencies. However, it is important to note that this method could only increase the FI learners' passive knowledge about the collocational fields of the words but it could not encourage these learners to actively use them in their written output. In fact, it was found that this implicit instructional method was not successful enough to help them understand the concept of collocation. Thus, their writing performance was not improved as a result of this treatment. Based on the findings of the study, the collocation awareness-raising model proposed by Ying and Hendricks (2003) is modified by adding the step of L1-L2 contrastive analysis. Pedagogical implications for language educators and learners are provided as well.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

**KESAN PENDEKATAN PENINGKATAN-KESEDARAN BERBANDING
KAEDAH INPUT-BANJIR TERHADAP PEMBANGUNAN PENGETAHUAN,
KEMAHIRAN PENULISAN, DAN GAYA KOGNITIF ANTARA PELAJAR
EFL IRAN**

Oleh

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Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan

Tujuan pembelajaran ialah untuk menyengetahui cara yang paling berkesan untuk mendalami lagi pengetahuan kolokasi dan meningkatkan tahap penulisan dengan gaya kognitif yang berbeza mengikut individu yang tersendiri. Lebih khusus lagi, keberkesanan pengajaran gabungan kata-kata yang tersirat melalui teknik input-banjir berbanding pengejaran gabungan kata-kata yang eksplisit melalui pendekatan peningkatan kesedaran diperiksa. Tambahan pula, peranan gaya kognitif pelajar untuk *field-dependence/independence* (FD/FI) dalam mendapat manfaat daripada kedua-dua kaedah pengajaran telah dikaji.

Tiga kumpulan pelajar, yang terdiri daripada 95 pelajar dewasa atas pertengahan, dengan penguasaan bahasa Inggeris yang lebih kurang sama mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Kumpulan-kumpulan ini ditentukan secara rawak kepada kumpulan kawalan dan kumpulan eksperimen. Dalam tempoh rawatan, setiap kumpulan telah didedahkan kepada input bahasa yang sama dan bahan-bahan kursus yang sama (kecuali bahan-bahan yang digunakan untuk mengajar kolokasi dalam kumpulan eksperimen). Data dikumpul melalui kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Lebih khusus lagi, hasil kaedah yang telah diperiksa dan dibandingkan secara kuantitatif melalui penulisan dan penempatan pra-ujian, ujian pasca segera dan ujian pasca dilewatkan. Kemudian untuk memberi lebih penjelasan tentang impak rawatan kepada pembelajaran kolokasi pelajar dan kecekapan penulisan, temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan dengan sekumpulan peserta FD dan FI dan juga dengan penilai ujian bertulis. Dalam kes kumpulan banjir input, sebagai tambahan kepada temu bual, tugas reflektif-retrospektif dan ujian pengambilan juga dilaksanakan untuk

membantu penyelidik mendapatkan gambaran yang lebih jelas ke dalam pemikiran dan proses tumpuan pelajar.

Analisis kedua-dua data kuantitatif dan kualitatif menunjukkan bahawa pendekatan kolokasi peningkatan-kesedaran jauh lebih signifikan kesannya daripada kaedah yang tersirat kaedah kebanjiran-input kerana ia bukan sahaja meningkatkan pengetahuan FI pelajar mengenai bidang kolokasi perkataan FD tetapi juga membantu mereka untuk menggunakan pengetahuan ini dalam bahasa kedua (L2) yang seterusnya meningkatkan prestasi penulisan mereka. Tambahan lagi, kaedah ini meningkatkan kesedaran kolokasi mereka yang seterusnya mendorong mereka untuk meletakkan lebih banyak usaha dalam pembelajaran kolokasi. Selain itu, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa pelajar FD dan FI pelajar sama-sama mendapat manfaat daripada jenis rawatan ini. Kaedah kebanjiran-input didapati memberi manfaat kepada hanya pelajar dengan kecenderungan FI. Walau bagaimanapun, adalah penting untuk diberi perhatian bahawa kaedah ini hanya boleh meningkatkan pengetahuan pasif pelajar FI tentang bidang kolokasi kata tetapi ia tidak dapat menggalakkan pelajar ini untuk secara aktif menggunakannya dalam output penulisan mereka. Malah, adalah didapati bahawa kaedah pengajaran implisit tidak cukup berjaya untuk membantu mereka memahami konsep kolokasi kata-kata. Oleh itu, prestasi penulisan mereka tiada penambahbaikan daripada hasil rawatan ini. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini, model peningkatan kesedaran kolokasi kata-kata, yang sebahagian besarnya berdasarkan model Ying dan Hendricks (2003), adalah dicadangkan. Implikasi pedagogi untuk pendidik bahasa dan pelajar juga diberikan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 25 March 2014 to conduct the final examination of Elaheh Hamed Mahvelati on her thesis entitled “Effects of Awareness-raising Approach vs. Input-flood Treatment on Collocation Knowledge, Writing Proficiency, and Cognitive Style among Iranian EFL Learners” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALM	: Audio Lingual Method
CLT	: Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELT	: English language teaching
ESL	: English as a Second Language
FD	: Field-dependent
FI	: Field -independent
GEFT	: The Group Embedded Figures Test
IELTS	: International English Language Testing system
SLA	: Second Language Acquisition
TOEFL	: Tests of English as a Foreign Language
L1-L2	First language-Second Language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a review of the background of the study. Then, the statement of the research problem and significance are discussed. The chapter continues with research objectives, questions and hypotheses. Next, the limitations of the study are reviewed. The chapter ends with the definitions of some of its key terms.

1.1 Background

The need for calling second language learners' attention to standardized multiword expressions, such as collocations, has been stressed by many applied and educational linguists in recent years (Alsakran, 2011; Attar & Allami, 2013; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Coady & Huckin, 1997; Durrant & Schmitt, 2010; Goudarzi & Moini, 2012; Lewis, 2000; Nesselhauf, 2003; Shokouhi & Mirsalari, 2010; Shooshtari & Karami, 2013; Sinclair, 1991; Widdoson, 1989; Zahedi & Mirzade, 2010). In fact, this idea that very few utterances in a language are completely novel creations and language mostly consists of pre-fabricated meaningful word combinations is reflected in Lewis's (1993) 'Lexical Approach' and Sinclair's (1991) 'Idiom Principle'.

More precisely, the lexical approach advocates argue that language learners can identify patterns in a language by the help of collocations (Lewis, 2000; Martyńska, 2004). Collocation, in fact, refers to the habitual co-occurrence of words together at the syntagmatic level (Lewis, 1993; Nation, 2001). Hence, the lexical approach, which is at the center of the current communicative teaching approach, has introduced new approaches to syllabus design with a focus on the importance of learning phrases or chunking language as a unit rather than as individual words (Lewis, 1997a). In fact, this approach has emphasized the need for making the neglect of collocations, as a subset of multi-word units or prefabricated chunks, in English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) classrooms a big concern for language teachers (ibid).

The reason behind such considerable attention to the role of collocation is that one of the main sources of errors in learners' language production, particularly writing, as one of the main goals of language learning in the EFL/ESL contexts, has been proved to be collocation-related (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Darvishi, 2011; Ellis, 2005; Tang, 2012; Zarei & Koosha, 2003). Given these findings, exploring the viable ways to promote collocational competence in the L2 learning environments seems to be of great importance.

The review of the literature on collocation instruction indicates that some researchers maintain that knowledge of collocation can be developed implicitly through extensive exposure (e.g. Schmitt, 2008) or, consistent with Sharwood-Smith's (1993) input enhancement hypothesis, through techniques such as input-flood treatment and visual/textual enhancement (e.g. Öztina, 2009; Fahim & Vaezi, 2011). This is while, consistent with Schmidt's 'noticing hypothesis' and Lewis's 'lexical approach', some other researchers, such as Rassaei and Karbor (2012), Wray (2002) as well as Ying and Hendricks (2003), stress the necessity of using explicit methods of instruction for facilitating collocation learning.

In addition to opposing views on the effectiveness of implicit versus explicit instruction, there has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of the implicit method of the input-flood approach. In fact, the review of the related literature shows that the effectiveness of input-flood, which is one of the employed treatments in this study, is a matter of controversy not only in the field of collocation but also in the other areas of L2 teaching, for example, grammar (Hernández, 2008, 2011; Öztina, 2009; Rassaei & Karbor, 2012; Seiba, 2001; Spada & Lightbown, 1999; Trahey & White, 1993; White, 2008; Williams & Evans, 1998).. Input-flood treatment is one type of implicit focus on form instruction in which learners' attention is attempted to be drawn to the target features by increasing their incidence in the instructional input (Ellis, 2001; White, 1998).

Furthermore, a great number of researchers, such as Davis (1991), Joyce & Weil (1986), Saracho (2003), Tinajero, et al. (2011) as well as Yousefi (2011), argue that one of the crucial factors that influence the effectiveness of a teaching method is the individual characteristics of the learners subjected to that model. This is because an optimum learning result is believed to be achieved in a condition where teaching suits the particular characteristics of the learners (Corno, 2008). Salmani-Nodoushan (2006), Tinajero et al. (2011) and Zahn and Sternberg (2006), see individuals' cognitive styles of field-dependent/field-independent (FD/FI) among the characteristics that can affect the success of an instructional approach in facilitating the process of learning. In fact, FD/FI cognitive style refers to the individual learners' differences in the degree to which their perception and processing of information are affected by the surrounding environment or contextual field (Summerville, 1999).

However, the claim of other researchers, such as Dyer and Osborne (1999) and Ellis (1994), that the learners' FD/FI cognitive style does not affect the effectiveness of an instructional approach or learning outcome has provoked an ongoing debate. In response to these arguments, some studies have been conducted to investigate the possible effect of the learners' FD/FI on the effectiveness of particular teaching methods on different aspects of L2 learning, e.g. vocabulary by Nezhad and Shokrpour (2012) and grammar by Abraham (1985). Nonetheless, to the best knowledge of the present researcher, no study in the area of collocation has addressed this issue.

1.2 Problem statement

Upper-intermediate L2 learners, in general, and Iranian EFL learners, in particular, have been found to experience serious difficulties in using even the most common or already known words in their written production (Namvar et al., 2012). Indeed, it is a serious problem in the majority of writing classes in Iran giving rise to various research studies. The findings of these studies (e.g. Bazzaz & Samad, 2011; Darvishi, 2011; Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011; Zarei, 2002) have indicated that lack of sufficient knowledge of collocational fields of words is one of the main reasons for such a deficiency. This is rooted in the fact that multi-word units including fixed expressions and collocations are not taught sufficiently in language classrooms in Iran (Bahardoust, 2013; Ghonsooli et al., 2008). Therefore, most written English of Iranian language learners, even at upper-intermediate to advanced levels, falls short of expectations and contains unacceptable word combinations (Zarei & Koosha, 2003). As a result, finding the most viable ways to help these learners enhance their knowledge about the collocational fields of words in order to improve their writing accuracy and fluency is absolutely essential (Goudarzi & Moini, 2012; Motallebzadeh et al., 2011).

The review of the related literature indicates that as with other areas of L2 teaching (e.g. vocabulary), there seems to be considerable debate between researchers in terms of the potential of implicit and explicit instructional techniques in developing L2 learners' knowledge of collocation (Wray, 2000; Schmitt, 2008). One of the most controversial issues is the efficacy of input-flood treatment, as an implicit input-enhancement technique, versus more explicit forms of instruction. Notwithstanding, the review of the related research shows that only a few empirical studies (e.g. Oztina, 2009; Rassaei & Karbor, 2012) have compared the outcomes of these instructional methods to find out which one can be the most efficient type of collocation instruction.

In addition, even those few studies which have addressed this issue reported mixed results. This means that the fundamental question regarding the most effective way of enhancing learners' knowledge of collocation has remained unresolved. Furthermore, most of these studies (e.g. Fahim & Vaezi, 2011; Mirzaii, 2012; Zaferanieh & Behrooznia, 2011) only focused on the efficacy of these methods in enhancing the learners' passive knowledge of collocations and did not assess or compare the potential of these methodologies in helping L2 learners to go one step further in using the acquired knowledge of collocation in either their written or spoken L2 production. L2 learners need an instructional method which not only increases their knowledge about the collocational fields of words but also helps them to use such knowledge in practice, i.e. in their speaking and writing as well as heightening their collocation awareness in a way that leads them to actively search to learn more collocations even in their out-of-class time (Ying and Hendricks, 2003). Thus, further research in this area is still needed.

Furthermore, the studies which have been conducted on the possible ways of facilitating collocation learning have only focused on the effect of teachers' methods of instruction without considering the role of learners as the ones who are the targets of those methods and are supposed to have learning take place as a result even though it has been proved that optimum learning performance can only be achieved when the instructional method is aligned with the particular characteristics of the learners (Tinajero, et al., 2011). According to a great number of researchers, such as Nezhad and Shokrpour (2012), Tinajero et al. (2011) and Zahn and Sternberg (2006), one of the particularly influential characteristics in the area of L2 learning is the learners' cognitive style of FD/FI.

In fact, these researchers contend that learners' FD/FI cognitive style is one of the determining factors which affect the way learners perceive and respond to a teaching method and therefore the degree to which they can benefit from that particular instructional approach. Although it has attracted the attention of many researchers and specialists (e.g. Abraham, 1985; Dabaghi & Goharimehr, 2011; Wang, 2012) in different areas of L2 learning, e.g., grammar and vocabulary, it is a neglected issue in the field of collocation teaching and learning. That is, the individual cognitive differences between learners were not taken into account in the studies where the efficacy of particular collocation teaching approaches was examined. There is an obvious need to conduct empirical studies in this area.

In brief, the Iranian language learners' problems in using collocations in their writing and the lack of sufficient empirical studies into exploring the pedagogically viable ways to help learners develop their knowledge of collocations which take into account their individual FD/FI cognitive differences, led the researcher to propose the following objectives.

1.3 Objectives

With the general objective of finding the most efficient ways to assist EFL/ESL learners in enhancing their knowledge of collocation in order to improve their written production with regard to their cognitive style of FD/FI, the following specific objectives were proposed in the present study:

1. To examine the short-term and long-term effects of collocation awareness-raising approach and of input-flood treatment on collocation knowledge development of Iranian FD and FI learners at upper-intermediate level.
2. To compare the effectiveness of the collocation awareness-raising approach with the input-flood treatment on collocation knowledge development of FD and FI learners.
3. To examine the short-term and long-term effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and the input-flood treatment on the writing proficiency of FD and FI learners.

4. To compare the effectiveness of the two treatments on the writing performance of FD and FI learners.

1.4 Research hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions properly, the following null hypotheses are presented:

Ho.1. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FI and FD learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.1a. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FI learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.1b. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FD learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.2. There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' knowledge of collocation as a result of the input-flood treatment in the short and long term.

Ho.3. The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FI and FD learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.3a. The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FI learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.3b. The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FD learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.4. There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' knowledge of collocation as a result of the collocation awareness-raising approach in the short- and long-term.

Ho.5. There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input-flood treatment on the learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term regarding their cognitive style of FD/FI.

Ho.5a. There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input-flood treatment on the FI learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.5b. There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input-flood treatment on the FD learners' collocation knowledge development in the short and long term.

Ho.6. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FI and FD learners' a) overall writing performance, and b) writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short- and long-term.

Ho.6a. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FI learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.

Ho.6b. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FD learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.

Ho.6c. The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FI learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.

- Ho.6d.** The input-flood treatment has no effect on the FD learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.
- Ho.7.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' a) overall writing performance, and b) writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct as a result of the input flood treatment in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.7a.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' overall writing performance as a result of the input flood treatment in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.7b.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct as a result of the input flood treatment in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.8.** The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FI and FD learners' a) overall writing performance, and b) writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.8a.** The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FI learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.
- Ho.8b.** The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FD learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.
- Ho.8c.** The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FI learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.
- Ho.8d.** The collocation awareness-raising approach has no effect on the FD learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.
- Ho.9.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' a) overall writing performance, and b) writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct as a result of the collocation awareness-raising approach in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.9a.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' overall writing performance as a result of the collocation awareness-raising approach in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.9b.** There are no significant differences between the FD and FI learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct as a result of the collocation awareness-raising approach in the short- and long-term.
- Ho.10.** There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input flood treatment on the learners' a) overall writing performance, and b) writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short- and long-term regarding their cognitive style of FD/FI.
- Ho.10a.** There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness- raising approach and input flood treatment on the FI learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.
- Ho.10b.** There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input flood treatment on the FD learners' overall writing performance in the short and long term.
- Ho.10c.** There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input flood treatment on the FI learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.

Ho.10d. There are no significant differences between the effects of the collocation awareness-raising approach and input flood treatment on the FD learners' writing performance in terms of each writing sub-construct in the short and long term.

1.5 Significance of the study

Collocations pose serious problems for L2 writers in EFL/ESL contexts (Goudarzi & Moini, 2012; Zhang, 1993). In fact, the significant correlation between the knowledge of collocation and writing fluency and accuracy has highlighted the importance of teaching collocations in language learning settings (Hsu, 2007). Conducting empirical studies which compare the effectiveness of various teaching approaches is one possible way to provide language teachers with the most efficient practical ways of facilitating collocation learning in EFL/ESL educational settings. This study, therefore, attempted to address this need due to insufficiency of rigorous research in this area and gave special attention to the teaching methods that can be helpful for Iranian language learners to develop their collocational competence with regard to their cognitive style of FD/FI. In addition, the present study intends to make a contribution to the series of empirical research studies investigating the possible connections between collocations and writing. Hence, the findings of this study can have important implications for language educators and curriculum designers in Iran.

More specifically, in this study, implicit teaching was more than mere exposure in the form of meaning-focused instruction. In fact, input-flood treatment as one of the input enhancement techniques, which has been empirically proved to be more efficient (Goudarzi & Moini, 2012), was employed. It is worth noting that in comparison to the other studies in this body of research, the present study examined the methodological potential of this technique more deeply by employing the qualitative methods of retrospective-reflective tasks, tests of intake and in-depth interviews.

Additionally, the explicit form of instruction employed in the previous studies in the related literature was limited to the traditional teaching of the collocational fields of some words. However, the explicit collocation teaching method used in this study was more comprehensive. In fact, it was presented through an awareness-raising approach, mainly based on Ying and Hendricks' (2003) proposed model of 'Collocation Awareness-Raising (CAR) Process'. More precisely, in this type of instruction, students were made aware of the idea of collocation, provided with both positive and negative evidence of word combinations through L1-L2 contrastive analysis, thus helping students to notice the gaps in their linguistic system, familiarized with some available resources, such as web-based concordances, out of classroom self-study, and finally given some useful feedback on their language production, especially on their written output.

In all, the two conflicting views of explicit and implicit teaching were studied in terms of their effectiveness on learning collocations. By comparing the effectiveness of input flood treatment and the awareness raising approach, this study contributes to the body of research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) exploring the effects of various types of implicit versus explicit attention drawing techniques on L2 acquisition, in general, and collocation learning, in particular. In addition, the present study aimed to fill some gaps which exist in the few previous research studies investigating the effectiveness of these two opposing types of instruction on collocation knowledge development. First, most of the conducted empirical studies in this area (e.g. Rassaei & Karbor, 2012; Zaferanieh & Behrooznia, 2011) did not test the durability of their findings. However, the present study examined the long-term effects of the treatments as well as their short-term impacts.

Moreover, since it has been found that both grammatical and lexical collocations are challenging and difficult for language learners, the present study focused on both types. This is while some studies in the related literature, such as Qztina (2009), were limited to only one type. In addition, most of the conducted studies in this body of research, particularly in the case of input-flood treatment, investigated the efficacy of the employed methods in terms of their potential for extending learners' passive knowledge of collocation. That is, the efficiency of the methods in terms of helping L2 learners to go beyond the passive knowledge and use this knowledge in their L2 production, i.e. speaking and writing, was not explored. In fact, the learners need a type of instruction that helps them increase their active/productive knowledge of collocations which consequently improve their writing and speaking skills. Thus, the present study attempted to ascertain if the employed treatments are methodologically sound enough to help the learners in this regard.

Furthermore, this is the first study in the area of collocation that focuses on the role of learners' personality factors. To put it more simply, the present research is the initial attempt to explore the impact of collocation teaching methods with regard to the learners' FD/FI tendencies. The interactions between learners' FD/FI tendencies and teaching methods have already been discussed in some other fields of language learning, e.g., vocabulary, grammar and listening comprehension. Hence, the present study aimed to fill this gap in the area of collocation. In particular, it is believed that learners' FD/FI characteristics, as one of the most heuristic constructs of cognitive style (Zahn & Sternberg, 2006), can significantly affect the effectiveness of implicit and explicit lesson designs (Johnson, et al., 2000).

Taking all these facts into consideration, the significance of conducting a study which can give language educators practical suggestions for how to help L2 learners extend their productive knowledge of collocation which has the potential to affect their writing quality positively, is clearly evident. Moreover, conducting a study which can provide them with practical suggestions on how to individualize their collocation instruction to meet the requirements of particular FD/FI students is also of great importance. Indeed, the available empirical evidence in the field of SLA on the close link between individual's learning behavior towards different types of

instructional methods and their cognitive style (Tinajero, et al., 2011) and also a high correlation between learners' collocation knowledge and their writing proficiency have encouraged the present researcher to carry out such a study.

Thus, this study can be regarded as pioneering research which has attempted to shed light on the learning of collocations from information processing perspectives. Indeed, the present study created a shift from a uni-dimensional look at learning collocations to a multi-faceted understanding.

1.6 Limitations of the study

No quasi-experimental research is without its limitations. In future efforts to investigate in this area, researchers may wish to consider the following limitations of the current study:

First, it is necessary to take the particularity of the study into account when interpreting the findings. This means that further research on this issue has to be conducted to make a more valid generalization on the basis of the results. Hence, replication is necessary.

Second, this study investigated the effect of the learners' FD/FI cognitive style differences in benefiting from the employed treatments. However, the impacts of factors other than FD/FI cognitive style need to be considered. For example: other cognitive styles, sex and age of learners. Moreover, this study investigated the impacts of the treatments on only one of the L2 productive skills, i.e. writing, and was limited to the learners of upper-intermediate level of proficiency.

Another limitation is that only one of the input-enhancement techniques, i.e. input-flood treatment, was employed in this research study. The effectiveness of other input-enhancement techniques such as visual enhancement can be explored in other experiments.

Furthermore, the experiment was conducted within two months and a half. It could not be carried out in a longer period due to some practical limitations. A longer treatment period, particularly in the case of the input-flood group, might have brought about different results. Additionally, the delayed post-tests were administered two weeks after the immediate post-tests. This time lag could not be longer than this since the student' term break would finish and they had to attend their classes for the new term. Therefore, it would not be possible to set one date on which all of them could take the tests. Hence, the long-term effects of the employed treatments could not be sought over longer period of time (i.e. longer than two weeks).

In the present study, the learners' receptive and productive knowledge of the target collocations were tested through multiple-choice tests and gap-filling test items. Other types of tests, such as translation, cloze test, grouping as well as correct/incorrect tests, could be employed. Moreover, the qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, retrospective-reflective tasks as well as tests of intake. Other qualitative data collection techniques such as journal writing, classroom observation, etc. could be used to probe into the issue in more depth.

1.7 Definition of terms

The conceptual and operational definitions of the key terms related to the study are defined in this section:

1.7.1 Collocation

The concept of collocation can generally be defined as the co-occurrence of words together "in natural text with greater than random frequency" (Lewis, 1997a, p.8) which, in fact, "contain some element of grammatical or lexical unpredictability or inflexibility" (Nation, 2001, p. 324). In this study, collocation refers to the relations between words that co-occur habitually at the syntagmatic level. The forms and components of this co-occurrence enjoy a certain degree of fixedness. Collocation in this study features both lexical and grammatical types.

1.7.2 Input

Input is generally described as the written or oral form of linguistic data to which learners are exposed in the environment (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). In the present study, input refers to language data that the learners are purposefully exposed to through reading.

1.7.3 Input-flood approach

Input-flood, as one type of input enhancement approach, referring to the artificial increase in the frequency of a particular form in the input in order to enhance the learners' chance of noticing it (White, 2008). Input-flood treatment in this study refers to the teacher's attempt to expose the learners to the texts flooded with artificially increased occurrence of the target lexical and grammatical collocations in order to extend their knowledge of these collocations. In this kind of instruction, no explicit attention drawing techniques are employed.

1.7.4 Awareness-raising approach

In language learning, awareness-raising, in general, is described as any kind of attempt to help learners notice the target linguistic features and also the gap between their own language production and the native speakers' linguistic system (Rutherford & Sharwood Smith, 1985; Schmidt, 1990; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). In the area of collocation teaching, Collocation Awareness-Raising (CAR) Process, proposed by Ying and Hendricks (2003), refers to a "threefold process" which "bridges students from *noticing* to *noting* to *incorporating*" the target collocations (p. 58).

In this study, awareness-raising approach, which is mainly based on Ying and Hendricks' (2003) proposed model, refers to the teacher's explicit instructional attempt to draw learners' attention to the target collocations, highlights the gaps in their linguistic knowledge and helps them to fill these gaps by providing them with both positive and negative evidence of word combinations through L1-L2 contrastive analysis, introducing some reference materials, and giving some useful feedback on their production. It was employed in this study as an explicit method of collocation instruction.

1.7.5 Field-dependence/independence

Cognitive style refers to the individual's habitual or typical approach to processing information (Altun & Cakan, 2006; Graff, 2003). One type of cognitive style is field-dependence/independence (FD/FI) which is generally described as the extent to which the surrounding environment or contextual field can influence an individual's perception and processing of information (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993; Summerville, 1999; Witkin & Goodenough, 1981). In this study, FD/FI refers to the individual learners' differences in the degree to which their information perception, storage, organization and retrieval are affected by the surrounding environment or contextual field in a particular lesson design. To determine the FD/FI cognitive style of the participants, the group embedded figures test (GEFT) was employed in this study. In particular, FD is differentiated from FI as detailed below.

1.7.5.1 Field-independence

FI cognitive style refers to the learners' tendency to analyze the received information actively, notice relevant details and identify their patterns even in the presence of distracting items and then to impose their own structure. Additionally, it is associated with the learners' ability to organize and encode information efficiently in their working memory, and use previous information to effectively retrieve items from their long-term memory (Cao, 2006; Carter, 1988; Chen & Macredie, 2002). In fact, learners whose cognitive style is FI tend to be more autonomous and intrinsically motivated and therefore less influenced by their surrounding environment or

contextual field (Tinajero, et al., 2011). In this study, those learners who could more successfully recognize the simple forms hidden in the complex geometric figures in the test of GEFT were classified as the FI learners.

1.8.5.2 Field-dependence

FD cognitive style is described as the learners' tendency to approach the received information holistically without paying attention to the details. Furthermore, field-dependence refers to learners' tendency to be easily distracted by irrelevant items, accept the structure as it is presented and depend on external references for perceiving and processing the relevant information in their short and long-term memory (Cao, 2006; Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Tinajero & Páramo, 1998). Hence, learners who have FD characteristics tend to be more dependent, externally motivated and passive in learning (Huang & Chao, 2000; Tinajero, et al., 2012). In this study, those learners who were not successful enough in recognizing the simple forms hidden in the complex geometric figures in the test of GEFT were classified as the FD learners.

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