



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EFFECTS OF TEXTUAL INPUT ENHANCEMENT AND WRITTEN RECALL
ON IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' NOTICING AND
INTAKE OF PRESENT PERFECT TENSE***

NAEMEH NAHAVANDI

FPP 2015 25



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By

NAEMEH NAHAVANDI

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

May 2015

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved parents, to my mother who sacrificed her life wholeheartedly for her children, for her endless kindness & support, both emotionally and financially in every single step of my life, to my father who encouraged me to continue my studies, who sparkled the love of learning in me since my childhood, endless thanks to my parents for all the encouraging words and for instilling in me the belief that I could accomplish anything I wanted in life if I went after it with love & perseverance, to my supervisor who taught me to learn...



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

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NAEMEH NAHAVANDI

May 2015

Chairman : Prof. Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD
Faculty : Educational Studies

The present study investigated the effects of textual input enhancement and written recall on the development of the present perfect tense by Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. It examined the effects of textual input enhancement (TIE) in isolation and in combination with written recall (WR) on noticing and subsequently on intake of present perfect tense. Intake was further divided into receptive and productive knowledge of present perfect tense. Furthermore, there was an attempt to understand the effect of TE in isolation and in combination with written recall on comprehension of texts. Besides, the relationship between noticing and reconstruction was investigated. To achieve this end, 96 EFL students in pre-intermediate level of proficiency were randomly assigned to a control and two experimental groups. The control group included 31 participants, while the first experimental group (TE) included 34 participants and the second experimental group (TE+WR) included 31 participants. All participants were given six reading texts and comprehension questions to complete. For participants in groups 2 and 3, the input was textually enhanced through bolding, enlargement and underlining. Participants in group 3 were in addition asked to complete a reconstruction task. Noticing in the study was measured through performance on a note taking task, and intake was measured through performance on a grammaticality judgment task and fill-in-the-blank tasks. The results of the Two-Way repeated measure (ANOVA) showed that TE both in isolation and in combination with written recall affected noticing and intake of the present perfect tense significantly. There was a significant difference among pre-test, immediate post-test and the delayed post-test. While the TE group outperformed the TE+WR group in noticing of the present perfect tense, the TE+WR group outperformed the TE group in intake of present perfect tense in both post tests. However, dividing the intake into receptive and productive knowledge, the TE+WR group only outperformed the TE group in productive knowledge of the present perfect tense significantly. Considering reading comprehension, there was no significant effect of TE either in isolation or in combination with written recall on comprehension of texts. Besides, there was a positive significant relationship between noticing and reconstruction. Furthermore, the results of attitude survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview with 11 students (TE=6) & (TE+WR=5) showed that students held positive attitudes toward the employed treatment. The study concluded with a number of theoretical and pedagogical implications.

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

KESAN PENEGUHAN INPUT TEKSTUAL DAN KEMAHIRAN MENINGAT SEMULA SECARA BERTULIS KE ATAS KEMAHIRAN PENGECAMAN/PEMERHATIAN DAN PENERIMAAN SISTEM KALA *PRESENT PERFECT* PELAJAR EFL PRAPERTENGAHAN IRAN

Oleh

NAEMEH NAHAVANDI

Mei 2015

Pengerusi : Prof. Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD
Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian ini menyelidiki kesan peneguhan input tekstual dan kemahiran mengingat semula secara bertulis ke atas perkembangan sistem kala *present perfect* oleh pelajar EFL prapertengahan Iran. Kajian ini meneliti kesan peneguhan input tekstual (TIE) secara berasingan dan secara gabungan dengan kemahiran mengingat semula (WR) ke atas pengecaman/pemerhatian dan seterusnya ke atas penerimaan sistem kala *present perfect*. Seterusnya, penerimaan pula dibahagi kepada pengetahuan reseptif dan produktif tentang sistem kala tersebut. Di samping itu, terdapat usaha untuk memahami kesan TE secara berasingan dan secara gabungan dengan kemahiran mengingat semula terhadap teks pemahaman. Tambahan pula, hubungan antara pengecaman/pemerhatian dan rekonstruksi juga dikaji. Bagi mencapai objektif ini, sebanyak 96 pelajar EFL dalam tahap kemahiran prapertengahan dipilih secara rawak bagi kumpulan kawalan dan dua kumpulan eksperimental. Kumpulan kawalan ialah sebanyak 31 responden, manakala kumpulan eksperimental pertama (TE) ialah 34 responden dan kumpulan eksperimental kedua (TE + WR) ialah 31 responden. Semua responden telah diberikan enam teks bacaan dan soalan pemahaman. Bagi responden dalam kumpulan 2 dan 3, input ialah teks peneguhan yang telah dihitamkan, diperbesarkan dan digarisbawahkan. Bagi kumpulan 3, tugas tambahan ialah menyempurnakan rekonstruksi. Pengecaman/pemerhatian dalam kajian ini diukur melalui prestasi terhadap tugas penilaian ketatabahasa dan tugas mengisi tempat kosong. Keputusan ujian 2 ANOVA menunjukkan bahawa TE dalam kedua-dua, iaitu secara berasingan dan secara gabungan dengan kemahiran mengingat semula secara bertulis mempengaruhi secara signifikan pengecaman/pemerhatian dan penerimaan sistem kala tersebut. Terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara praujian, ujian pascapertengahan dan ujian pascaterlewat. Kumpulan TE didapati mengatasi kumpulan TE + WR dari segi pengecaman/pemerhatian sistem kala, tersebut, manakala kumpulan TE + WR mengatasi kumpulan TE dari segi penerimaan sistem kala dalam kedua-dua pascajian. Walau bagaimanapun, bagi tujuan membahagikan penerimaan kepada pengetahuan reseptif dan produktif, kumpulan TE + WR hanya mengatasi secara signifikan kumpulan TE dari segi pengetahuan produktif. Bagi kemahiran membaca teks pemahaman, tidak terdapat kesan TE yang signifikan sama ada secara berasingan atau secara gabungan dengan kemahiran mengingat semula teks pemahaman. Di

samping itu, terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara pengecaman/pemerhatian dan rekonstruksi. Malah, hasil dapatan soal selidik dalam kalangan 11 orang pelajar ($TE=6$) & ($TE+WR=5$) tentang sikap dan temu duga separa berstruktur menunjukkan bahawa pelajar mempunyai sikap yang positif terhadap kajian yang dijalankan. Kajian ini disimpulkan dengan beberapa implikasi teoretikal dan pedagogi.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people without whom I could not complete this thesis. I am highly thankful to God for giving me the ability to learn that through Him, all is possible.

Special thanks go to Professor Dr. Jayakaran Mukundan, the chairman of the supervisory committee, whose overwhelming friendliness did make it a pleasure to work with him. I truly appreciate the time and effort he devoted for me to complete my thesis. His guidance, constant insight, and encouraging words were proven immeasurable to continue this process. Thanks surly go to the members of my supervisory committee, Associate Professor Dr. Arshad Abd. Samad and Associate Professor Dr. Sahandri, who provided me with crucial advice. I'd like to express my gratitude to Dr. Kamaria for her wonderful research methodology classes, Dr Bahaman for his great SPS workshops, Dr. Roslan for his encouraging words and advice, and Dr Siti for translating my abstract to Malay Language.

I am so much grateful to my mom, Rogayah Sorayaie and my father, Mohammad Ali Nahavandi, my beloved sister Mahdijeh Nahavandi & my supportive brother Mahdi Nahavandi for their endless love, prayers, support and encouraging words all through my life, and particularly the last five years of my distant learning. Without their help, I would not be able to conquer the obstacles of my life in Malaysia, and to complete my studies and make my dream come true.

Especial thanks to Dr. Amalia Madihie, & Dr. Toktam Namayandeh, my best friends in Malaysia, who supported me emotionally when I needed it the most. I am also grateful to the lecturers and students who patiently helped me in the data collection procedure.

Thanks surly go to the deputy dean of Jihad-e-Daneshgahi, for permitting me to collect my data and for all their help, support and patience during data collection procedure.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank the principal and staff of Universiti Putra Malaysia, Library staff of UPM, GSO and especially Faculty of Educational Studies who contributed to my academic development. Thank you all for your commitment and generosity.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted in partial as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Arshad Abd Samad, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Mohd Sahandri Gani bin Hamzah, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

BUJANG KIM HUAT, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of the thesis was under supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

Signature: _____
Name of
Chairman of
Supervisory
Committee: Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD

Signature: _____
Name of
Member of
Supervisory
Committee: Arshad Abd Samad, PhD

Signature: _____
Name of
Members of
Supervisory
Committee: Mohd Sahandri Gani bin Hamzah, PhD

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| TE | Textual Enhancement |
| TIE | Textual Input Enhancement |
| FonF | Focus on Form |
| FonFS | Focus on Forms |
| FonM | Focus on Meaning |
| TB | Task based |
| TBLT | Task based Language Teaching |
| TBLL | Task based Language learning |
| SLA | Second language acquisition |
| SL | Second Language |
| TL | Target Language |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| GTM | Grammar Translation Method |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| GJTs | Grammar Judgment Tasks |
| PET | Preliminary English Test |
| Ex1 | Experimental 1 |
| Ex2 | Experimental 2 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the background of the study, statement of the problem, general and specific objectives, research questions and hypothesis. Then, the introduction part is followed by the significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and ends with operational definition of the key terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

One of the main concerns in any classroom research is whether grammar instruction per itself makes a positive effect in SLA and whether grammar should be taught at all or not (Long 1991; Macaro & Masterman, 2006). For some researchers L2 processing and development of learners' interlanguage is fully rule governed, while for others it is probabilistic in nature. Therefore, the question of how grammar should be taught and especially whether there is a single type of grammar that is more effective than others has been a difficult question to answer. As Richards & Renandya (2002) claim "How do we go about teaching grammar items in the most effective way? is the concern of almost all grammar teachers" (p. 145). Another question relating to the effectiveness of instruction is what to teach. With a wide array of more or less clear individual differences across learners, all grammatical elements cannot be taught with equal facility across all learners (Lee, 2008). The reason for these concerns can be attributed in part to debates in the field of cognitive psychology on the role of implicit versus explicit language learning and whether such type of learning happens through conscious manipulation of information or mainly through unconscious processes while people are exposed to mere input (Bialystok, 1994; N. Ellis, 1994).

Beliefs on the necessity of grammar instruction have undergone lots of changes as well. In the early years of language teaching, grammar was considered as an inseparable element of L2 instruction. Later on, grammar was a barrier to overcome to achieve communicative competence, and thus, instruction focusing on grammatical features was regarded as useless, counterproductive, and even detrimental (Fazilatfar & Bidel, 2008; Hasannejad, Araghi, & Mirzaei, 2014; Lee, 2008; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Rodgers, 2014; Wong, 2005). Chomsky's idea of the child acquiring its mother tongue being equipped with a language acquisition device (LAD) and Krashen's Input Hypothesis which claimed that language should not be learned through formal instruction but should be acquired through natural exposure, played a significant role in decline of grammar instruction. However, documented learners' difficulty with the accurate usage of the second language (L2) even after having a substantial period of study in a meaning-first program, lead L2 researchers to reconsider the role of grammar in the L2 classrooms. Nevertheless, the question on how to integrate grammar efficiently without hindering the aims of meaning-oriented instruction hadn't been answered yet. One solution being introduced in the 1990s to address this problem was focus on form (FonF), an approach to teach grammar where the learners' attention is

drawn briefly to a linguistic form in a meaningful context. Since then, a large amount of research (Ayoun, 2001; R. Ellis, 2001; R. Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Leaser, 2004; Leow, 2001; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012; Saito, 2012; Salaberry & Lopez Ortega, 1998; Shintani, 2013; Wong, 2003) has been categorized under the term focus on form. More precisely, focus on form has attracted lots of attention in Second Language (SL) literature in the light of classroom research which supports the need for pedagogical interventions to push learners towards higher levels of proficiency in L2 (R. Ellis, 2006; Mitchell, 2000; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Williams, 2005).

Long (1991) defines FonF as overtly drawing learners' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication into tasks such as processing instruction, textual enhancement and linguistic or grammar problem-solving activities. Input Enhancement (IE) as one method of FonF is based on the idea that mere exposure to certain L2 structures is insufficient for language acquisition or a mastery of SL to occur (Winke, 2013). Sharwood Smith (1993) defines IE as a deliberate attempt for drawing learners' attention to formal properties of an L2 or increasing learners' awareness of structures and functions of the target language. However, unlike traditional grammar instruction where the manipulation of learner output is done to affect changes in their developing system, the aim of TE is to change the way input is perceived and processed by language learners. TE includes highlighting special features of input which might go unnoticed under normal circumstances through typographically manipulating them. Different techniques have been used to enhance input or increase the saliency of given features of an L2. These techniques range from explicit discussion of target forms, metalinguistic descriptions, negative evidence through overt error correction, input floods, clarification requests, processing instruction, garden-path techniques to textual input enhancement by typographical changes through boldfacing, italicizing, underlining, or capitalizing.

During the last 2 decades or so, visual input enhancement studies have been conducted to achieve the goal of teaching grammatical elements implicitly through reading activities. Based on the focus on form literature the input which is typographically enhanced through a range of enhancement cues attracts more attention from learners. These types of added attention might lead to notice more of the targets and to process them for more subsequent acquisition (Bañados, 2013; Birjandi, Alavi, & Najafi Karimi, 2014; Goudarzi & Moini, 2012; Lyddon, 2011; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2012a, 2014c; Simard, 2009). Nevertheless, findings from study to study are varied and largely inclusive. Therefore, more rigorous methodologically sound studies need to be added to the input enhancement literature.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall on noticing and intake of present perfect tense among Iranian EFL learners' at the pre- intermediate level of language proficiency. The main purpose of the study is to investigate whether textual input enhancement (TIE) in isolation and in combination with written recall have any effect on noticing and intake of present perfect tense or not. Research investigating the

effects of (TIE) has revealed mixed results. The existed problems both in educational setting of Iran and literature review have been brought up below which are numbered from 1-9.

1. The question of whether to teach grammar or not, and how to teach it: As mentioned earlier, one of the main concerns in any classroom research is whether to teach grammar or not, and if there is a single type of grammar instruction that is more useful than others. It is a fact that grammar is an essential part of the language especially when we are dealing with EFL students. Foreign learners in their attempt to learn the foreign language highly benefit from grammar (Celce Murcia, 1991; Rutherford, 1987). Conducted researches within the last decade have shown that students have many problems in learning grammar within the methodological framework focusing overwhelmingly on the communication of meaning (Celce Murcia, 1991; Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1992; R. Ellis, 1998; Hazrativand, 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 1990; Larsen, 2002).

2. Iranian EFL learners' problems in grammar learning: Grammar learning has always been the centre of attention in Iran's schools. The books are designed in a way to drill the students' minds with plenty of grammar rules and exceptions followed by a lot of drilled exercises. In fact, despite learning grammar at schools for seven years, accuracy concerns still remain a major problem in educational setting of Iranian EFL context (Esmaeelzade, 2014; Moradkhan & Sohrabian, 2009; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2012a). EFL learners in Iran lack the ability to write grammatically correct sentences and even speak English correctly and fluently (Birjandi & Seyfouriz, 2008). It can be an alarming problem that calls for continuous effort in finding its solutions. To ensure that the students are equipped with good accuracy skills is particularly important to ascertain their survival in facing academic challenges. One major problem in language classes in Iran especially from elementary to upper intermediate levels is students' inability in learning present perfect tense (Golshan & Karbalaei, 2009). Iranian EFL learners tend to have lots of problems distinguishing between present perfect and simple past tense. For Schwartz (1993) inflectional endings are among the most difficult features of non-native languages for adult learners' "highest amount of variability and lowest degree of success" (p.160). For Larsen (2002) the aspects of inflectional morphology are notable areas for learners of all proficiency levels. Is it possible to help the students in learning new target forms via TE method without drilling their minds with rules and exceptions of the target forms? Can we assist them in changing most of the input they receive to intake via TE? In order to answer these questions, and based on the expected difficulty of present perfect tense for Iranian learners and lack of previous studies on this form, the researcher was inspired to investigate whether TE technique can benefit learners in acquiring this form or not.

3. Learners' inability in using all of the received input: Despite the critical role of input in language development, researchers argue that learners do not use all input for further processing and claim that attending to input is essential in order for learning to take place or at least for complete mastery of it (Robinson, Mackey, Gass, & Richard, 2012). Some researchers argued that language learners acquire new target forms when the input they are exposed to is transferred into intake (Gass, 1997). Therefore, in order for input to change to intake, input needs to be enhanced so that the language learners can notice this input and convert it into intake (VanPatten, 1996).

This is the reason why “noticing” has become an essential part in SLA (Meier, 2015). The conducted researchers on the effectiveness of grammar teaching led instructed second language acquisition (SLA) researchers to investigate how to integrate grammar instruction efficiently without hindering the aims of meaning-oriented instruction. One solution that was introduced in the 1990s to address this problem was focus on form (Ebrahimi, Rezvani, & Kheirzadeh, 2015), an approach for teaching grammar in which the learners' attention is drawn briefly to a linguistic form in a meaningful context. For Skehan (1998) after the critical period, language learning is constrained by similar structures and processes to other learning, and older language learners put the priority on meaning and language form has secondary importance for them. Therefore, attention should be drawn to language form for further interlanguage development. As such, what instructions can cause such a shift of attention toward language form?

In 1990, Schmidt introduced the “Noticing Hypothesis” which claimed that noticing is the essential and sufficient condition for the conversion of input into intake for learning (Zhang, 2012). Schmidt (1995) claimed that noticing, representing the lower level of awareness is needed and attention to the new target form is necessary for any second or foreign language acquisition. Since then, lots of studies have been conducted to test the efficiency of noticing (R. Ellis, 1984; Sandra Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Fotos, 1994; Harley, 1993; Larsen-Freeman, Long, & Jiang, 1991; Robinson, 1996). A lot of researchers claimed that, noticing played a major role in second or foreign language teaching and learning. However, the review of the empirical studies in the area of TE and noticing shows lots of inconsistency. Some studies like (Catherine Doughty, 1991; Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson, & Doughty, 1995; Lee, 2007) have reported positive effects of TE on both acquisition and noticing, while others like (Alanen, 1995b; Leow, 2001; White, 1998; Wong, 2003) have reported no effect on either noticing or acquisition. Therefore, the effects of noticing have remained unclear.

4. Very short duration of the study in most TE researches: From 12 dominant studies in TE, 10 had a very short duration of treatment (from one session of 25 minutes to one hour and forty minutes). Considering Jabbarpoor & Tajeddin's (2013) claim that multiple exposures to the target form can function as an experience helping students become accustomed to the reading conditions of typographical enhancement, and Ellis(2001) and Lee's (2007) claim that frequent exposures to the target forms make the learners attend to the forms more efficiently, it was assumed that longer exposure to target forms through six sessions might have better results in both noticing and acquisition. Furthermore, there has been no study on the long term effect of TE on Intake. Some studies like (Alanen, 1995b; Jourdenais et al., 1995; Overstreet, 1998) did not use not pre/post-test design. Furthermore, in most of the reported studies there was no delayed post-test.

5. Little attention on the output role in language learning: Among different means or approaches in getting learners to focus on form, output role has received comparatively less attention from researchers (Song, 2007). After Swain's Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 2000, 2005), output has been considered not only as an end product of learning, but also as a main element in promoting L2 learning. It means that producing the target language gives learners unique opportunities for a level of processing that might be essential for the development of target-like proficiency or the enhancement of accuracy (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000). It is believed that output tasks can

lead to “the noticing of linguistic shortcomings, “pushing” learners to modify output (Swain & Lapkin ,1995, p. 376). Overall, more noticing occurs for learners, who have the opportunity or condition to produce output compared to those who do not have this opportunity (Song & Sue , 2008).

Of the four functions of output specified by Swain (1998), output in the form of productive recall is emphasized in the present study. Productive recall includes the retrieving the input from short-term memory, such as the one that happens in a reconstruction task (Cho, 2010). Written recall includes retrieving detected input from short term memory and producing it in writing. As highlighted by Cho (2010) the effects of written recall on SLA is relatively unexplored, although there is lots of support for its effect on retention, from studies in psychology (N. Ellis, 1996; Newell & Rosenbloom, 1981).The few studies on written recall have reported similarly positive findings but these studies have merely looked at the acquisition of vocabulary and morphosyntax (N. Ellis & Schmidt, 1997). The present study can be important as it can contribute to the understanding of the SL learning process and can also have implications for SL teaching.

6. Using L2 learners of some commonly taught European languages like English, Spanish, French, and German in most of TE studies: Most of the conducted studies have looked at the usefulness of some modes of input enhancement (IE) by l2 learners of some commonly taught European languages like English, Spanish, French, and German. Nevertheless, as Cho (2010) claims, based on the IE studies which are grounded on the cognitive mechanism, which is common to all human beings, the data from different languages should be incorporated to observe the similarities or differences of the different studies for strengthening the theory. Thus, the present study might be beneficial in contributing to the body of knowledge regarding the theory of noticing through choosing Iranian learners as the subjects of the present study. Besides, to the researcher’s best knowledge, no study was found on the effect of TE on present perfect tense whether in ESL or Iranian context. The two studies by (Leow, Egi, Nuevo, & Tsai, 2003; Shook, 1994) were on Spanish present perfect.

7. No consideration on the effect of TE on comprehension: For some researchers (Han, Park, & Combs, 2008; Cho, 2010; Wong 2003) the role of TE is incomplete without information concerning how comprehension is affected when learners’ attention is directed at form. The available data whether TE affects comprehension or not is inconclusive. Few studies have measured the effect of TE on comprehension. And those few studies have reported different results. Leow, (2001), and Wong (2003) have reported no debilitating effects on comprehension. However, Overstreet (1998) and Cho (2010) claimed that TE might hinder students’ comprehension. Mixed results on whether inducing learners’ attention to a linguistic form via TE affects comprehension or not, calls for further investigation in this area.

8. No division of intake into receptive and productive knowledge: Most of the conducted researchers have reported intake as a general concept without any consideration whether TE is as much effective as enhancing both receptive and productive knowledge of target forms. In most of these studies both measures of receptive and productive tests like fill in the blanks and sentence combination, true/false and multiple choice questions have been used. However, all questions have been gathered together to comprise a single mark named as learning, acquisition or

intake. Therefore, the picture is still unclear whether TE affects receptive knowledge in the same way it affects productive knowledge or not. In one study by Cho (2010), study results showed that TE was only effective in enhancing receptive knowledge of target forms not productive ones.

9. No consideration on learners' attitudes towards the conducted treatment: In almost all studies, there was no consideration on learners' attitudes towards the conducted treatment. In one study by Latifie (2007), attitude survey questionnaire was given to the participants at the last session of treatment and the results indicated that learners held positive attitudes about the employed treatment. Till now, to researcher's best knowledge, no study has included qualitative design in TE literature. As Ellis (2001) claims, there is a healthy sign that form-focused instruction studies have shifted from an overreliance on the confirmatory research paradigm. Alternative research procedures such as descriptive and introspective ones provide the emic that can holistically enrich the knowledge related to the field. Therefore, it is hoped that the qualitative part of this research might offer valuable information regarding the application of TE in foreign language classes.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the general objective of the study, which is understanding the effects of TE in isolation and in combination with written recall on noticing and intake of present perfect tense among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners at the pre-intermediate level, the following specific objectives were proposed in the present study.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

1. To examine whether textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall would have any effect on noticing of present perfect tense of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.
2. To examine whether textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall would have any effect on comprehension of texts among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.
3. To examine whether textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall would have any effect on intake of present perfect tense in general and intake of receptive and productive knowledge of present perfect tense in particular in the immediate and delayed post-tests among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.
4. To examine whether there is a significant difference among all three groups in general intake of present perfect tense, and receptive and productive knowledge of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests.
5. To examine whether there is a relationship between noticing and reconstruction.
6. To identify learners' attitudes towards the applied treatment.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study the following research questions are raised:

1. Does textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' noticing of present perfect tense?
2. Does textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' comprehension of texts?
3. Does textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' intake of present perfect tense in general and intake of receptive and productive knowledge in particular in the immediate post-test?
4. Does textual input enhancement in isolation and in combination with written recall affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' intake of present perfect tense in general and intake of receptive and productive knowledge in particular in the delayed post-test?
5. Is there a significant difference among all three groups in general intake of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests?
6. Is there a significant difference among all three groups in receptive knowledge of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests?
7. Is there is a significant difference among all three groups in productive knowledge of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests.
8. Is there any relationship between noticing and reconstruction?
9. What are the learners' attitudes about the employed treatment?

1.6 Research Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are presented to answer the research questions properly:

- Ho1: Textual input enhancement either in isolation or in combination with written recall doesn't have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' noticing of present perfect tense.
- Ho2: Textual input enhancement either in isolation or in combination with written recall doesn't have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' comprehension of texts.
- Ho3: Textual input enhancement either in isolation or in combination with WR doesn't have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of the

present perfect tense in general and intake of receptive and productive knowledge of present perfect tense in particular, in the immediate post-test.

Ho4: Textual input enhancement either in isolation or in combination with WR doesn't have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of the present perfect tense in general and intake of receptive and productive knowledge of present perfect tense in particular in the delayed post-test.

Ho5: There is no significant difference among all three groups in general intake of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests.

Ho6: There is no significant difference among all three groups in receptive knowledge of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests.

Ho7: There is no significant difference among all three groups in productive knowledge of present perfect tense across time in pre, immediate and delayed post-tests.

Ho8: There is no significant relationship between noticing and reconstruction.

1.7 Significance of the Study

As mentioned earlier, learning and teaching present perfect tense has been a demanding task for both EFL learners and teachers in Iranian context. Despite learning tenses for 7 years, Iranian EFL learners tend to have lots of problems in accuracy, one of which is distinguishing present perfect tense and simple past tense. The question remains as how to integrate grammar successfully in communicative settings without hindering the principles of form focused instruction. The present study used TE as a method of FonF in helping the learners to notice and if possible to acquire the employed target structure in a meaningful way. To the researcher's best knowledge no comparative study was found addressing this issue in Iranian context. Furthermore, the literature on the effect of TE on learning tenses is so mixed and inconclusive that more methodologically sound frameworks need to be added to TE research. In addition, as Ellis (2001) claims, form-focused instruction studies should shift from an overreliance on the confirmatory research paradigm and add alternative research procedures such as descriptive and introspective ones to enrich the knowledge related to the field. Therefore, the present study examined the methodological potential of this technique more deeply by including a qualitative phase to gain more knowledge about the effectiveness of the employed treatment. Besides, most of the conducted researches in TE area have used intact groups with short treatment sessions which make the generalizations of the study more difficult. Therefore, it is hoped that through having true randomized groups and longer duration of the study together with a qualitative phase, more knowledge is obtained about the usefulness of this method.

Besides, considering schools and classes as communities of students who have gathered together to explore the world and learn how to navigate it productively, it is hoped that their members become highly literate, read perfectly and write with skill and delicacy and become proficient in using a foreign language soon. The results of

this study might be useful for all those who are concerned with teaching grammar in Iran, making them aware of the vital role of the right method to obtain the above-mentioned goals, and to improve the language accuracy of the Iranian learners. Second, it might help the language practitioners in our country to find a method in grammar teaching that results in students' increased abilities in learning more easily and effectively in the future, because of the skill and knowledge they have acquired. Finally, the results of the present study might motivate Iranian language teachers to focus more on learning than teaching, bearing in mind that the models of teaching are usually models of learning. As we assist students in acquiring new information, idea, skills, values, ways of thinking and means of expressing themselves, we also teach them how to learn. In addition, it is hoped that the result of the present study may benefit theorists, mainly those working in the fields of linguistics and cognitive psychology; empirical researchers investigating L2 learning in laboratory, classroom, or natural settings; and educationalists, mainly those working in the field of foreign and second language pedagogy.

Last but not least, the result of this study might help curriculum planners in Iran in designing appropriate grammar courses. Identifying learners difficulties will help curriculum planners to develop a pedagogically sound grammar programs. In addition, this study might benefit EFL practitioners such as teachers, lecturers, and textbook writers.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study is an attempt to understand the effects of TE in isolation and in combination with written recall on noticing and subsequently on intake of present perfect tense in Iranian context. While the target population are pre-intermediate English learners in Iran, the accessible population are students studying in one of private institutions in the North West of the country. In this study, the north west of Iran refers to Tabriz. Therefore, the collected data and the related findings are only adequate in this limited context. So, generalizations of the findings of this study to other contexts would not be suitable. However, institutions and universities with the same characteristics may benefit from the results of the present study.

Other limitations of this study are in terms of the number of participants, and instructional limitation as in the duration of the instruction. The relatively small pool of participants (n=96) certainly limits the statistical potential. A larger pool of participants will increase the chances of obtaining results that are statistically significant. An instructional limitation is the short instructional duration due to some practical limitations. In this study instructional time was 6 sessions each lasting approximately one to one and half an hour. An exposure to a longer period of instruction may produce better results. Another limitation can be choosing present perfect tense. Other target forms can be explored by other interested researchers.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Important and recurrent terms that are used in this study are defined in this part. They are first defined constitutively, followed by operational definitions specific to the study.

1.9.1 Textual Input Enhancement

Visual input enhancement which is also called textual input enhancement, written enhancement or typographical input enhancement is a kind of FonF technique focusing on the written mode of the language on the implicit end of the explicit-implicit continuum. Variety of enhancement methods can be employed to highlight specific properties of the input, such as colour coding, bold facing, capitalizing, underlining, italicizing, and using different font types and sizes (Schmidt, 2001). In the present study the target forms (present perfect tense) are **bold** faced and enlarged. Besides, the accompanied adverbs such as since, for, so far, till now are enlarged, **bold** faced, and underlined.

1.9.2 Noticing

Schmidt's (1993, 1995) noticing hypothesis proposes that noticing is a necessary and sufficient condition in which second language learners should be able to convert input to intake. For Batstone (1996) noticing is "the intake of grammar as a result of learners paying attention to the input" (p.273). In the present study, noticing is investigated through performance on a note taking task.

1.9.3 Intake

For Sharwood Smith (1993) while input is the "potentially processable language data which are made available to the language learner", intake is "that part of input that actually has been processed and turned to knowledge of some kind" (p.167). As White (1998) states, in order for input to become intake a particular attention of the learners to actual forms of language is needed. In this study intake is measured through both receptive and productive measures of performance on a grammaticality judgement task and fill-in-the-blank tasks.

1.9.4 Written Recall

Written recall includes retrieving detected input from short term memory and producing it in writing (Cho, 2010). In the present study, students in the second experimental group are asked to take notes while involved in reading activities, then they do some reconstruction tasks on the basis of the notes they have taken.

1.9.5 Present Perfect Tense

While the past tense forms indicate the completeness or remoteness of some actions in the past (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), the present perfect tense is the results of past actions which are still operative at the present time (Binnick, 1991). In the present study, the tense and aspect of present perfect is investigated through Leech & Svartvik (2013) guidelines.

1.9.6 EFL & ESL

The major differences between EFL and ESL are the students and the place in which English is being taught to speakers of other languages. EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language and ESL stands for English as a Second Language. In this study, EFL learners refer to students of pre-intermediate level in Iran, where English is treated as a foreign language. It is different from Malaysia where English is spoken as a second language.

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