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Textual Enhancement and Input Processing Effects on the Intake of Present and Past Simple Tenses

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to measure the effects of Textual Enhancement (TE) and Input Processing (IP) as two types of treatment versus Traditional Instruction (TI) as a controlling context for fulfilling the objectives of focus on form to teach present and past simple tenses. To this end, six junior high-school classes with 139 Iranian male students were chosen using cluster sampling. Sixty six of them were studying in grade 2 and the other 73 were studying in grade 3 in three different junior high-school in Ardakan, Yazd, Iran. In each grade, 3 classes were assigned in to 2 experimental groups of TE and IP in contrast to TI as the control group. The subjects of the study received 20 sessions of treatment on different types of instruction. Three sets of tests (Pre-test, Immediate post-test and Delayed post-test) were prepared to determine the effects of the different types of treatment on the subjects in different groups. Paired-sample T-Test and one-way ANOVA were employed as the statistical tests to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed differences between the performances of three groups in each grade in terms of the subjects' accurate use of the selected grammatical points. The results demonstrated that although both treatments (TE & IP) were more effective than Traditional Instruction, TE and IP were not meaningfully different. The implications of the study for teaching could clearly be for the teachers who wanted to help their students to improve their level of grammatical accuracy, through these different ways of grammar instruction.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, a growing concern about accuracy in learners' language has resulted in a reassertion of the role of grammar in syllabus design and the content of lessons, and even in giving explicit attention to grammatical forms and rules (Ellis, 1993). It has been necessary for English teachers to use a proper method to teach grammar. But as Ellis (1997) argued, the question is how to teach grammar from among a wide range of pedagogical options open to language practitioners. English teachers at Iranian High-School always pay much more attention to teach grammar than language skills and other language knowledge. This is mainly due to the school final examination, which is mainly grammar-based with their students' pass rate as an indicator of the teachers' success. When the students here learn English, they focus on grasping its grammar, however they have not been much successful in mastering it for they speak and write English ungrammatically. It is clear that these students spend much time on the grammar but they have difficulty for distinguishing and memorizing grammar structures.

In Iran, the students start learning English as a FL formally at the grade one in junior high-school and the teachers' focus is on the forms and rules even at the first session. They learn simple present tense in grade 2 and simple past in grade 3. But, unfortunately the learners are not able to use these tenses appropriately in a context. The researchers go for presenting a proper treatment so as to achieve slightly improvement in grammar learning.

To achieve this early aim, FonF can be useful; an approach to teach grammar in which learner's attention is drawn to a linguistic form in a meaningful context (Long, 1991). One of the fundamental assumptions of focus on form is that learners' attention can be allocated to the learning of form as well as content. Many researchers have reached a general consensus that paying central attention to items in the input is a necessary condition for its sustained processing (Long, 1991; Schmidt, 2001; VanPatten, 1996).

In order to solve the aforementioned problem and help the teachers and students, this study focuses on the form of input and the ways of presenting them in the classroom. One way to this end has been through the application of input enhancement. A typical example of input enhancement is Textual input Enhancement by which the target language forms are made salient within the text which, in turn, brings about the noticing and subsequent intake of the intended forms. Many studies have investigated the effectiveness of separate or combining different kinds of Textual Input Enhancement on the attention or intake of grammatical forms. But the current researchers believe that the results of those studies need to be taken with cautious. Thus, there is a need for an experimental study that shows the influence of Input Enhancement on the Acquisition of past and present simple tense.

In this study, Textual Enhancement (TE) and Input Processing (IP) were chosen as two treatments of input for fulfilling the objective of focus on form to teach present and past simple tense through reading texts.

TE is making a structure more salient in the text by typographically enhancing that structure, thus this can lead the learners to pay more attention to those features.

IP is another treatment of current study by which the learners themselves should enhance the features of aforementioned tenses in the given texts to learn and memorize grammar points respectively.

The aim of this study is to find out different effects of aforementioned treatments whether the input features manipulated by the teacher or by the learners.

The current study aims to explore the influence of TE and IP as two types of treatments of FonF. In order to understand the meaning, a link is created to the meaning via enhancing the form in the process of teaching and learning present and past simple tenses. Moreover, the study is conducted to identify whether TE as a treatment is more effective than IP in the short and long term memory. So the objectives of this study can be illustrated as following:

1. To investigate the short and long term effect of Textual Enhancement Instruction on developing the grammatical knowledge of students.
2. To examine the impact of Input Processing instruction on learning both past and present simple tenses.
3. To compare the short and long-term effectiveness of IP with TE treatment on facilitating the learning of grammatical points.

Based on what were discussed above, this study sought to answer the following research questions:
1. Does TE have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of English present and past simple tenses?
2. Does IP have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of English present and past simple tenses?
3. Which one of these two kinds of treatment has a higher effect?

In order to address these research questions, this study attempted to reject the following null hypotheses:
H (1): TE has no significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of English present and past simple tenses.
H (2): IP has no significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' intake of English present and past simple tenses.
H (3): TE has no higher effect than IP on Iranian EFL learners' intake of English present and past simple tenses.

2. Literature Review

As Nassaji and Fotos (2011) have pointed out, "nothing in the field of language pedagogy has been as controversial as the role of grammar teaching" (P.1), grammar teaching has been a matter of debate for a long time especially for foreign or second language teaching. On the one side of the continuum, there are people who claim that grammar teaching is not necessary because its teaching does not help in the acquisition of the language (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). On the other side of the continuum there are others who claim that grammar teaching is necessary. Cowan (2009 p. 3) highlights the importance of teaching grammar when he says "...grammar is one aspect of adult language on which instruction can have a lasting effect".

In spite of the arguments for both for and against teaching grammar, it has been realized that grammar teaching does help for the acquisition of language in question. Accuracy without fluency is meaningless. At the same time fluency without accuracy is not desirable. Learners are supposed to have both accuracy as well as fluency. So achieving this aim, various approaches have been planned which are different in the point of focus. Rather, what is suggested is that learners must also have opportunities to encounter, process, and use instructed forms in their various form-meaning relationships so that the forms can become part of their inter-language behavior (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Historically, approaches to grammar teaching can be viewed in terms of three general instructional approaches, beginning with those that conceptualized teaching in terms of methods with an exclusive focus on grammar(i.e. Focus on Forms), continuing later as types of exposure to meaningful communication(i.e. Focus on meaning), and emerging more recently as a set of instructional options with a focus on both grammar and meaning(i.e. Focus on Form) (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). In recent years, most teachers, teacher educators and researchers seem to agree on the importance of focus on grammar in L2 communicative instruction. Hence, in response to the problems presented by traditional approaches to the teaching grammar, on the one hand, and dissatisfaction with purely communication approaches on the other, Long (1991) proposed an approach which he called Focus on Form(FonF). FonF is a kind of instruction that draws the learner's attention to linguistic forms in the context of meaningful communication.

There are different approaches to teaching grammar. The approaches based on input give more priority to input whereas the approaches based on output give more priority to output. There are evidences to support both the approaches. Processing Instruction and Input Enhancement are the approaches based on input hypothesis, and since the aim of these approaches is to help the learner to make form-meaning connections during input processing, it is appropriate to consider them as two sub-divisions of FonF (VanPatten, 2002). The 1980s hypothesis that language can be learned without some degree of consciousness has been found theoretically problematic. Schmidt (2001) suggests that conscious attention to form, what he calls "noticing," is a necessary condition for language learning. He emphasizes the role of attention in this way:

The concept of attention is necessary in order to understand virtually every aspect of second language acquisition (SLA), including the development of inter-languages (ILs) over time, variation within IL at particular points in time, the development of
L2 fluency, the role of individual differences such as motivation, aptitude and learning strategies in L2 learning, and the ways interaction, negotiation for meaning, and all forms of instruction contribute to language learning. (Schmidt, 2001, p. 3)

Although some researchers have questioned Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (e.g., Truscott, 1998), most SLA investigators agree that noticing or awareness of target forms plays an important role in L2 learning (Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Skehan, 1998). In addition, investigators such as Skehan (1998) have presented findings indicating that language learners cannot process target language input for both meaning and form at the same time. Thus, it is necessary for learners to notice target forms in input; otherwise they process input for meaning only and do not attend to specific forms, and consequently fail to process and acquire them. Suggesting that this approach is effective for teaching grammar since it is learner-centered and turned to the learner's internal syllabus.

Sharwood Smith (1991) asserts that the most obvious way to try to affect subconscious processing beneficially is by making relevant target forms in the input salient. He further argues that making the input salient (input enhancement) has a highly positive effect on the rate and accuracy of L2 acquisition. Apparently, this salience does not involve directly manipulating the subconscious processes—this is by definition impossible—but it expands or restricts the information on which the processes may operate.

Input enhancement can vary depending on whether it is achieved internally or externally (Sharwood Smith, 1991). Internal enhancement occurs when the learner notices the form himself or herself through the outcome of internal cognitive processes or learning strategies, and external enhancement occurs when the form is noticed through external agents, such as the teacher or external operations carried out on the input (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

Textual Enhancement as an input-based approach to teaching grammar is an external form of input enhancement, by which learners' attention is drawn to linguistic forms through physically manipulating certain aspects of the text to make them easily noticed. Also, since Textual enhancement involves highlighting forms in meaning-bearing texts, it meets the requirement of a FonF approach (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

Another Input-based approach to teaching grammar developed by VanPatten and his colleagues (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 1996). They suggest that one way to teach grammar communicatively is through processing input or what they called Processing Instruction. In this approach an initial exposure to explicit instruction is combined with a series of input processing activities, consisting mainly of tasks that encourage the comprehension of the target structure rather than its production. These activities have been suggested to help learners to create form-meaning connections in input and hence process grammar for meaning. Due to the explicit focus on form component of this approach, some researchers have equated it with Long's focus on forms (e.g., Sheen, 2002). A number of studies have investigated the beneficial effects of Processing instruction (e.g., Farley, 2001) and also Textual Enhancement (e.g., Jourdenais et al, 1995; Simard, 2009). These studies have yielded important but different results. The most valuable conclusion that one can draw from them is that; when they are used in combination with explicit instruction, Processing Instruction and Textual Enhancement may be helpful particularly in enhancing learners' abilities to comprehend the target form. Thus this research has used these approaches along with explicit rule presentation to achieve proper results.

In the context of Iran, Sarkhosh and Sarboland (2012) have studied on the differential effect of different textual enhancement formats on the acquisition of English past simple tense. They concluded that TE formats might not be effective per se and the relationship between them and learners' learning strategies has an important impact. Therefore, this study suggests that teachers ask learners to do TE themselves but this suggestion needs further research. Achieving proper influence of these approaches, the researchers coined a new treatment which is composed of Internal Input Enhancement and tasks of processing Instruction which is named Input Processing(IP). The present study was conducted to measure the effects of Textual Enhancement (TE) and Input Processing (IP) as two types of treatment versus Traditional Instruction (TI) as controlled context.
3. Method

3.1. Instruments

In order to examine the research hypotheses of this study, three sets of test (Pre-test, Immediate post-test and Delayed post-test) were prepared. The focus of these tests was eliciting understudy grammatical development. Achieving acceptability of tests, they were given to three English teachers to check them as test raters. The post-tests were the parallel forms of the pre-tests and they enjoyed multiple-choice format. The question son neither pre-tests nor post-tests were comprehension questions, but they were all about past simple in grade 3 and present simple in grade 2. These tests were not reading comprehension tests; although, the teacher used some authentic passages to teach grammar in experimental groups. The reading passages were selected from New Interchange Series (Richard, 2000) and Anecdotes in American English (Hill, 1979) books. Both of these books have authentic texts which are relevant to current study participants' level. It is noteworthy that the researchers designed some tasks administered after each passage. These tasks were elicited from Vanpatten's approach for IP Groups and from Nassaji and Fotos' paper for TE groups.

3.2. Participants

This study was conducted in a junior high school in Ardakan, Yazd, Iran, with the participation 139 Iranian male students. 66 of them were studying in grade 2 and the other 73 were studying in grade 3. Their age-level ranged from 13 to 15 with the same first language background. The second graders were divided into three groups composed of 19, 22 and 25 students respectively and the third graders were also in three groups consisted of 27,25 and 21 students. The type of sampling employed in this study is cluster sampling, since it is not possible to base the selection on individual units. That is, it is not possible to take a random sample of all junior high-school students in a city, because the number is large and the scope is quite vast but the selection procedure starts with randomizing the larger groups and moves towards smaller groups. Therefore, the local educational department first has selected 3 junior high-schools for the first researcher of the current study as their teacher through simple randomization. Then, from every school the researcher has selected randomly two grades: grade 2 and grade 3. Finally, from every grade one class has been selected and then assigned as an experimental or control group.

3.3. Procedure

The study was performed in six intact classrooms by the first researcher of the study as the English teacher of the classes. He was familiar with the students and the classroom contexts. The classes were randomly assigned to the 3 homogenous groups A, B and C. Group C was considered, as control group while group A and B were the experimental groups. In the experimental group A, present and past simple tenses were taught through TE treatment. However, in the second experimental group (group B) IP treatment was used. The subjects in the control group, on the other hand, attended their regular English lessons throughout the study and received Traditional Instruction (TI).

The present study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a Pre-test, treatment, Immediate post-test and Delayed post-test design; At first, all participants were asked to take the pre-test before the treatments in order to make sure that all the subjects of the study were initially homogeneous with regard to their knowledge of simple present for grade 2 and simple past for grade 3. In TE groups the learners were provided with some texts involving bolded new tense words along with some related tasks. And in IP groups, the teacher tried to draw learner's attention to present and past simple tense verbs and adverbs through highlighting these words by their own and then doing some tasks elicited from Processing Instruction Approach of VanPatten. In Control Groups, The subjects did not receive any treatment. At the end of the last treatment session, the immediate post-tests were administered to the participants in all three groups of two grades in order to assess the short-term effects of the treatments on the subjects' past or present simple tense knowledge development and explore the possible differences between them. Then, in order to examine long-term effects of the treatments, the participants were asked to take the delayed post-test two weeks later. All data were collected over a period of two months.
3.4. Method of Data Analysis

Paired Sample T-Tests and ANOVAs were the statistical tests which were used to answer the questions of the present study. In other words, paired samples T-Test was used to compute the within group comparison from pre-test to post-tests in order to reveal the differences between the pre-test and the immediate and delayed post-test scores. One way analysis of variance was carried out on the pre-test and post-tests scores in order to examine any significant differences among the groups at the beginning of the treatments and also after performing them. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 18.

4. Results and Discussion

Firstly, SPSS (version 18) was used to calculated descriptive statistics. Table 1 shows the mean scores of three groups of each grade. There were no significant differences across the mean score of these groups on the pre-test. Therefore, it proves their homogeneity in terms of the students' simple present and past background knowledge.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for pre-test score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TI(control)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to show any significant differences among the groups at the beginning of the treatments, a one way analysis of variance was carried out on the pre-test scores. Table 2 demonstrates, there were no significant differences among the groups before the treatments administered (F (2, 134) = .01, p > .05 = .98).

Table 2. One-way ANOVA for pre-test score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1495.39</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1495.76</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1. Findings Related to Hypothesis One and Two

In order to answer the first and second research questions which deal with the short and long term effects of treatments on the learners' grammatical knowledge development, paired-samples T-Test was used for each teaching method. The results of the within experimental group comparison from pre-test to post-tests revealed that the differences between the pre-test and the immediate and delayed post-test scores were statistically significant in both TE and IP methods (p= .000 <.05); however, it was not significant in control group. In other words, the participants in the experimental groups significantly outperformed the ones in the control group (p=.000<.05) in both immediate and delayed post-tests. Hence, the short and long term effects of both experimental teaching methods on the learners' present and past knowledge development were proved significantly positive.

Table 3 contains the output of the 3 paired-samples t-tests run to compare the control group's performance on the pre-test, the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test. As shown by the results, the control group's mean score
on none of the three tests differs significantly from the other two since the level of significance in all three cases far exceeds 0.05 which is the p level set for the present study. This indicates that these participants' performance neither improved nor declined as the result of the Traditional instruction. In other words; as table 3 demonstrates there was not a statistically significant increase in grammar scores from pre-test (M=4.88, SD=3.06) to Immediate post-test (M=5.90, SD=3.60), t(42)= -2.05, p<.0005 (two-tailed) and to Delayed post-test (M=5.40, SD=4.23), t(42)= -0.90, p<.0005 (two-tailed) and the same as from Immediate to Delayed post-tests.

Table 3. Paired Samples Test for the TI Group (Control)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TI Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Immediate</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Delayed</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>- .90</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate - Delayed</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the experimental groups showed significant gains in its performance on the structure in question as indicated in Table 4 and Table 5. The differences between the pre-tests and the immediate post-tests and also pre-tests and delayed post-tests means, in both cases TE and IP, are significant at 0.000 level (p<.0005) and this findings may be attributed to the experimental treatments. In other words; as table 4 presents, there was a significant increase in grammar scores of TE group from pre-test (M=4/97, SD=3/40) to immediate post-test (M=9/81, SD=5/61), t(42)= - 8/51, p< .0005 (two-tailed) and to delayed post-test (M=8/90, SD=4/71), t(42)= - 6/37, p< .0005 (two-tailed).

Table 4. Paired Samples Test for the TE Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TE Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Immediate</td>
<td>-6.42</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-8.51</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Delayed</td>
<td>-5.81</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-6.37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate - Delayed</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5, there was also a significant increase in grammar scores of IP group from pre-test (M=4/85, SD=3/48) to immediate post-test (M=10/16, SD=6/36), t(47)= - 6/55, p< .0005 (two-tailed) and to delayed post-test (M=9/90, SD=4/95), t(47)= - 5/37.

Table 5. Paired Samples Test for the IP Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Immediate</td>
<td>-5.10</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>-6.55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest - Delayed</td>
<td>-5.02</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>-5.37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate - Delayed</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the other hand insignificant difference between Immediate and Delayed post-tests at 0.278 (Table 4) and 0.868 (Table 5) levels for TE and IP cases, respectively demonstrates the long term effect of these treatments after two weeks after final presentation of them. Although the learners forgot some grammatical points they had learned in two-week time between the immediate post-test and delayed post-test, the statistically significant difference between their pre-test scores and delayed post-test scores proved that both experimental treatments had durable effects.

4.2. Findings Related to Hypothesis Three

As it was mentioned before, the main concern of the present study was to compare TE and IP as two experimental treatments to find out which one can result in more significant improvement in terms of teaching grammar in contrast to TI. Hence, the possible differences between these two approaches were dealt with in the third
research question. In this part, in order to answer the third research question, one way ANOVA was used and its results on the immediate and delayed post-test scores are represented in tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA for immediate post-test scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>329.38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>164.69</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>4374.72</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>33.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4704.10</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6 reveals, there was a significant difference between the immediate post-test scores of the groups (F (2, 132) = 4.969, p < .05). Hence, Turkey's HSD post hoc was performed and the results indicated that the subjects' scores in both experimental groups were significantly higher than the scores of the subjects in the control group. But, a significant difference was not observed between the TE and IP groups. More precisely, the statistical results were not able to prove the superiority of one approach over the other in improving learners' knowledge of grammar in short term.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA for Delayed post-test scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>261.32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130.66</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2746.43</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>20.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3007.75</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the results of one-way ANOVA on the learners' delayed post-test scores (Table 7) showed a statistically significant difference between the groups' performance (F (2, 135) = 6.42, p < .05), and Turkey's HSD post hoc multiple comparison reveals the same results observed for the immediate post-test.

In sum, the between group comparison indicated that although both experimental groups outperformed the control group in both short and long term, their performance on the immediate and delayed post-tests was not significantly different. More precisely, the results revealed that both TE and IP treatments had similar effect on grammar in both short and long term.

4.3. Discussion of the Results Related to Hypotheses One and Two

Based on the findings related to hypotheses one and two, there were statistically significant differences between the pre-tests and post-tests results of the experimental groups whereas the difference between pre-test and post-tests of the control group was not significant. So the short term effects of TE and IP treatment were proved. Furthermore, descriptive statistics of experimental and control groups represented that the decrease in learners' scores from immediate post-test to delayed post-test in control group was more significant than ones in experimental groups. So this presented the long term effects of TE and IP treatments. The findings showed that the experimental groups largely benefited from TE and IP treatments in learning grammar.

The findings of this part collaborate with a number of studies (long, 1991; shook, 1994; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Rutherford & Smith, 1985; Ellis et al, 2001; Sarkhosh & Sarboland, 2012) which proved the effectiveness of both TE and IP methods of teaching Grammar in ESL/EFL learning settings. Similarly, Nassaji and Fotos examined
TE as a technique to draw learners' attention to grammatical forms in the input and proved its effectiveness to teach grammar (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

4.4. Discussion of the Results Related to Hypothesis Three

After testing hypothesis three, the results showed that there were significant differences between the immediate and delayed post-test scores of experimental groups and control group. That is the subjects' scores in both experimental groups were significantly higher than the scores of the subjects in the control group. So in order to reveal the differences between TE and IP treatments as the main concern of this study, Turkey's HSD post hoc tests were run. But, a significant difference was not observed between the TE and IP groups. More precisely, the results revealed that both TE and IP treatments had similar effect on grammar in both short and long terms.

It is worth mentioning that the results of the present study are in line with Schmidt's (2001) claim that noticing is necessary and effective in language learning. The finding also supports other input enhancement studies that have reported the ability of the learners in recognizing and producing forms correctly when their attention is focused on a particular linguistic item while doing meaningful activities (White, 1998).

5. Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of Textual Enhancement approach and Input Processing treatment on the learning of both simple present and past tenses. The results of the study demonstrated that learning tenses in short term memory and especially fossilizing in long term memory could not be easily performed through the normal course of teaching sessions without any instructional techniques. In other words, the superiority of the learners' performance in both experimental groups over the control group proved the necessity of teaching grammar via input enhancement in EFL classes. Furthermore, the statistically insignificant difference between the performances of the two experimental groups demonstrated that both TE and IP treatments had similar effect on grammar effectively at the same manner. The results of the data rejected the first and second null hypotheses whereas they supported the third hypothesis of the study. It was found that Textual Enhancement and Input Processing had significant effects on the acquisition and also intake of simple present and past tenses which were the samples for grammar.

The final findings of the present study can be enumerated as: a) TE and IP as two types of Input Enhancement are much more useful than TI in inducing the noticing of the target form and its subsequent intake, b) Teachers can involve the learners with grammar via meaningful activities through TE or IP, c) Future research with large-size samples may lead to the better study of TE and IP effects on grammar instruction. The findings of this study also indicate that enhancing a particular feature in a text by the teacher or learner is effective in triggering the noticing of that feature and its subsequent intake. Several researchers such as Jourdenaise et al., (1995), Shook (1994), and Simard (2009) also came up with similar findings.

The results of this study may help teachers and practitioners in teaching grammatical structures to English language learners. Input enhancement is a technique which can be used for drawing students' attention to certain grammatical features of input and increase the perceptual salience of the structure. This, also, would help students to focus on certain structures in order to learn them. Paying attention to language forms through input enhancement would be facilitative and can assist learners in improving their language accuracy in a short period of time and their fluency in a long period of time. The findings of the present study bring about pedagogical implications for EFL curriculum developers and syllabus designers. Given the benefits that TE and IP as two subdivisions of input enhancement in this study, the instruction type might be incorporated into a curriculum. In curriculum development based on TE or IP, it is certain that they require a structural syllabus taught by means of relevant activities.
Although the researchers of the study have done their best to complement a faultless study, as far as possible, this study has its own limitations. First, individual differences and their possible effects on L2 learners' performance was not taken into account in this study. Second, since IP treatment is novel, there was no relevant literature to be investigated by the researchers. A third limitation is the fact that the participants are all male. And the last but not the least was close relationship between TE and IP treatments which leads the study towards further research. In other words, further research is required to examine the Superiority of these teaching approaches (TE vs. IP) on learning grammar by EFL learners with different levels of language proficiency and learning styles.

References


