

## **The Effect of Consciousness-Raising Activities on Learning Grammatical Structures by Iranian Guidance School EFL Learners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The first purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of consciousness-raising (C-R) activities and tasks on learning grammatical structures by Iranian guidance school EFL learners (the simple present tense in this case). The second one was to investigate the effect of gender on learning the simple present tense through C-R activities and tasks. The design of the study was experimental and the participants were one hundred and five male and female students selected from two guidance schools in Zahedan city, Iran. A proficiency test was administered to ensure the homogeneity of the two groups at the outset of the experiment. Based on the results of the proficiency test, the participants were divided into two groups, functioning as the experimental and control groups. Then, a pre-test of the simple present tense was given to the participants and its results showed that the participants didn't know the simple present tense before applying the treatment (C-R activities and tasks for experimental group). The classes were held two times per week. During the total span of ten sessions the two groups were taught the simple present tense based on different approaches; the experimental group was taught based on C-R activities and tasks while the control group was instructed using pattern drills and practice. At the end, the same pre-test was used as the post-test. Data analysis through an independent *t*-test indicated that using C-R activities in grammar teaching is significantly more effective than the traditional approaches (such as Grammar Translation Method and pattern practice). The results also indicated that the male learners outperformed females in learning grammatical structures through C-R tasks. Therefore, it is recommended that other teachers consider C-R activities as useful options in teaching grammar and other language aspects in their classes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching grammatical structures of a foreign language, especially the English language, has been a hot topic among researchers and it has been inquired from different perspectives. Several methods and approaches for teaching grammar have come and gone and none of them have gained public acceptance among different experts. Whether the teachers should present and explain the grammatical features or should they rely on the zero grammar method, has caused a great debate among researchers and linguists.

The term *grammar* has been interpreted in different ways, most of the times causing confusion in the language-teaching field. These misconceptions lie mostly in the view that grammar is regularly seen just as a set of arbitrary rules about fixed structures in language learning such as verb paradigms and rules about linguistic forms. Grammar is unmistakably much more than this (Crivos & Luchini, 2012). According to Batstone (1994), grammar is an immensely vast and diverse phenomenon which includes three interdependent aspects: form, meaning (content) and use. This viewpoint, in which forms are presented in a direct association with meaning, views grammar as an essential part of the language. Through grammar, the meaning and pragmatic aspects of the language can be constructed and conveyed properly and thus an effective interaction and communication becomes possible.

Based on White (1987), it is obligatory to teach grammar, because mere exposure to grammatical features cannot be considered as a successful strategy for learners to acquire the grammatical items. According to Larsen-Freeman (1995), although some grammatical features can be internalized naturally, it does not refuse the fact the grammar instruction should be ignored on the part of the teachers. Teaching grammatical points can make the process of internalization of language forms more feasible. Prabhu (1987) also argued that through process of practicing meaning-based activities, grammatical features can be acquired naturally. According to Ur (1999), in the case of the learners, structural rules enable them to know and use appropriate patterns related to how sentences can be combined together. The process of grammar teaching should also ultimately centre its focus on the ways grammatical items or sentence patterns are correctly used. In other words, grammar teaching should include language structure or sentence patterns, content and application of those features in different contexts.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *What is C-R?*

Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined C-R as those techniques that encourage learners to pay attention to language forms in the belief that an awareness of these forms will contribute indirectly to language acquisition. Techniques include having students infer grammatical rules from examples, compare differences between

two or more different ways of saying something, and observe differences between learners' use of a grammar item and its use by native speakers. Based on this definition, the C-R approach is contrasted with traditional approaches to teaching grammar (e.g. drilling, sentence practice, sentence combining), in which the goal is to establish a rule or instill a grammatical pattern directly. In fact, in C-R activities heuristic and discovery-based activities are encouraged. According to Rezaei and Hosseinpour (2011), C-R constitutes an approach to grammar presentation which is harmonious with the current trend of thinking about how learners internalize the grammatical features of the second language through attention. This approach also supports those views that are compatible with the process of problem- solving and discovery learning tasks and activities.

*The Consciousness-Raising Theory (C-R-T)*

Sharwood Smith (1981) rejects the view of the 'zero-position', the Direct Method. He proposes that, a C-R activity of form, or explicit instruction plays an important role in increasing the acquisition of

unanalysed knowledge. His Interface Hypothesis (Fig.1) suggests that explicit instruction through formal practice can result in much comprehensible input and this process contributes to the internalization of grammatical features and as a result, implicit knowledge will be gained. As he puts it explicit knowledge may aid acquisition via practice, and in this way often learning precedes acquisition. He recognizes that this approach to implicit knowledge may not be as direct, but may be equally as fast since the input created from practice is more focused.

*Traditional Approach*

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002):

*It is an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language. They then, apply these rules when they use the language. Language teaching methods which emphasize the study of grammatical rules of a language for example the GTM makes use of the principle of deductive learning (p.146).*

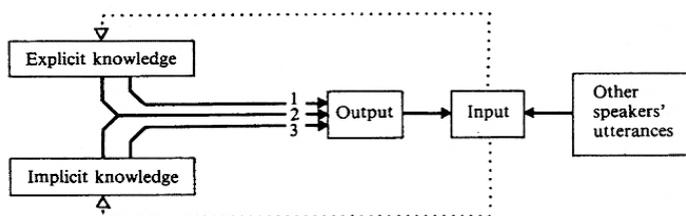


Fig.1: Sharwood Smith's Interface Hypothesis, Sharwood Smith (1981 p. 83).

Noting the influence of grammar in the language, Batstone (1994, p.3) suggests “language without grammar would certainly leave a seriously handicapped”. He continues that, grammar plays the main role in curriculum design, the ax of all the classroom activities and most of the students have experienced its influence more or less. According to Swan (1985), it is not always easy for language teachers to decide about the method of presentation of linguistic features in the classroom, and a large number of different conflicting issues and preferences must be taken into consideration. It is because no approach has gained a full support by the experts constantly, even eclectic approaches sometimes fail to create a complete and well-designed lesson plan to be aspired by those educators, who wish to get sure, and gain short term objectives and that can be useful for different learners with different genders, wants and needs (Nunan, 1995). It should be noted that as far as the previous studies mainly investigated only one gender, the researchers wanted to compare the two genders with each other. Consequently, the participants were selected from two genders.

A number of studies have been undertaken to investigate the efficacy of grammar consciousness-raising activities and tasks. Fotos and Ellis (1991) compared the effects of direct consciousness-raising by means of grammar explanation and of indirect consciousness-raising by means of C-R tasks on Japanese learner’s ability to judge the grammaticality of sentences involving dative alteration. They found

that both methods of consciousness-raising resulted in significant gains in understanding the target structure. Sharwood Smith (1981) rejects the view of the zero-position or the Direct Method, and proposed that a consciousness-raising of form or explicit instruction plays an important role in increasing the acquisition of unanalyzed knowledge. As he puts it, explicit knowledge may aid acquisition via practice, and in this way often learning precedes acquisition. He recognizes that this approach to implicit knowledge may not be as direct, but may be equally as fast since the input created from practice is more focused. Sheen (1992) compared direct and indirect consciousness-raising in a six-week beginner’s French course for Japanese, finding that students in the two groups did equally well in a written post-test of the structure taught. Mohamed (2004) found that indirect consciousness-raising was more effective than direct consciousness-raising when applied to high intermediate ESL learners from mixed L1 background but not to low intermediate learners, suggesting that the proficiency of learners can determine the effectiveness of consciousness-raising.

Fotos (1993) conducted an experimental research to investigate the amount of learner noticing produced by two types of grammar consciousness-raising treatments: teacher-fronted grammar lessons and interactive, grammar problem-solving tasks. Involving 160 Japanese college students of English, Fotos designed her research by dividing the subjects into three different treatment groups, which were taught indirect object

placement, adverb placement, and relative clause usage in communicative input. The findings revealed that the two types of grammar consciousness-raising are effective in promoting significant level of noticing the target language structures in subsequent communicative input.

Another study investigating the effectiveness of consciousness raising was carried out by Yip (1994). In an attempt to probe the benefit of C-R, Yip conducted a study on English ergative verbs, which she observed, posed a logical problem of acquisition that cannot be resolved by positive evidence. Using a judgment task which contains such ergative verbs as *shatter, break, melt, and happen*, Yip found that many of her students, even the advanced students, rejected good ergative as acceptable constructions such as *The mirror shattered during the last earthquake and My car has broken down*, as they judged these constructions to be ungrammatical. Alternatively, the students corrected the constructions using their own version, and thus resulting in the following sentences: *The mirror was shattered during the last earthquake and my car has been / was broken down*. What is interesting in Yip's study is that his students accepted the incorrect ergative construction 'What was happened here?' as an acceptable construction in English, and as such, judged it as grammatical. However, after undergoing the C-R session class, her students showed dramatic improvement in that they were sensitive to the misapprehensions about the ergative construction in English. Based

on this finding, Yip concludes that C-R can be effective, at least in the short term, in directing learner's attention to the ill-formedness of the grammatical features of the target language. As for the C-R tasks, (which can be deductive and inductive), Mohamed (2004) examines learners' perspectives of the effectiveness of such tasks. The findings indicate that learners have no strong preference for a particular type of task over the other. They view the tasks to be useful in assisting them to learn new knowledge about language. The finding suggests that C-R tasks (both deductive and inductive) are effective learning tools and can therefore be used to raise learners' awareness of linguistic forms.

Finally, Sugiharto (2006) investigated Indonesian students' ability in understanding the simple present tense rules, which often pose a problem for the students especially in the case of the third person singular. Using a grammatical judgment test, Sugiharto compared the results from students' pre- and post-tests, and found that students' performance was significantly better on the post-test. This study indicated that C-R activities and tasks are more effective in helping students develop their explicit knowledge of the simple present tense.

#### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

The purpose of the present research is to answer the following questions:

**Question 1:** *Is there any significant difference between Iranian guidance school EFL Learners, learning*

*grammatical structures through C-R and traditional methods?*

**Question 2:** *Is there any significant difference between Iranian male and female guidance school EFL learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities?*

The following null hypotheses were proposed in line with the aforementioned questions:

**H0 (Question 1):** *There is no significant difference between Iranian guidance school EFL Learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and traditional methods.*

**H0 (Question 2):** *There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female guidance school EFL learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and tasks.*

#### *Statement of the Problem, Objectives and Significance of the Study*

Since learning English as an international language is a must for every person, learning grammar is one of the most important aspects of any language and it has been the subject of many studies in the past. Teaching grammar through different methods has a long history, and many investigations have been done in this area. The reason for conducting a study like this is to investigate the effectiveness of the C-R activities and

tasks and provide learners with opportunities for discovery learning on one hand, and teaching grammatical structures through a new design and appealing way on the other hand to test a new technique in teaching grammatical points and generalizing its results to other language aspects. In this method, the teacher raises the awareness of the learners through different interesting activities. In this paper, two prominent, but often conflicting approaches were tested for teaching grammar. The first is the Consciousness-Raising, (C-R) [akin to discovery inductive approach] in comparison to the 'Presentation-Practice-Production, (P-P-P) [akin to rule-driven deductive approaches]. The purpose is not to prioritize one approach over the other, but to experimentalise the two approaches to check their learning impact in terms of efficacy and appropriacy. The teacher (researcher) doesn't explain the grammar as in the case of the traditional methods, but he will try to equip the learners with critical thinking and discovery learning techniques to try the rules out by themselves. The lesson will be presented to learners by utilizing different media such as computer, video projector, and colorful pictures and so on. The students are not forced to produce the rules immediately, but the aim of the researcher is to involve the learners in learning activities to control the process of learning the grammatical points.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Participants*

105 male and female students from two different guidance schools in Zahedan, Iran,

participated in the study. The participants were all native speakers of the Persian language whose age ranged between 12 and 13. The sampling process is based on convenience, due to availability reasons. They were divided into two groups, 54 students in the control group and 51 in the experimental one. The experimental group was taught by the researcher using C-R activities and tasks and the control group was taught based on practice and traditional approaches such as the grammar translation method and the p-p-p approach.

#### *Instrumentation*

##### **English Test - Beginner (proficiency test)**

In order to make certain that all the learners were at the same level of language proficiency, the English Beginner Proficiency Test was administered at the very beginning of the experiment. The test contains 100 multiple choice items related to different aspects of English language such as prepositions, regular and irregular verbs, vocabulary, English simple present and past tenses and reading comprehension. The participants were given enough time to answer the questions.

##### **Teacher-made Grammar Test**

A teacher-made grammar test with the index of reliability of 0.71 was used as a pre-test which aimed to determine the subjects' grammar knowledge of the simple present tense. The test consisted of 33 multiple choice items mainly constructed on the basis

of the grammar points of students' English textbooks administered by the Ministry of Education. The grammatical structure of the book included: the simple tense, its negative form and the question form of this tense. The main source used for both the control and experimental groups was lesson six and seven of English book two of guidance school. A post-test with the reliability index of 0.87 was used to measure the students' achievements after the treatment.

#### *Procedure*

The first step in conducting this research was dividing students into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. After the pre-test, students in both groups were exposed to an instructional program. The experimental group was instructed through the use of grammatical C-R activities and tasks and the control group was instructed through the use of pattern drill practice (traditional approaches). After applying the treatment, both groups took a grammar post-test. Then, a *t*-test was run to detect differences between the means of the two groups. To illustrate how the instruction of grammar points was carried out, one of the grammar points, using the different forms of the simple present tense that was taught based on the C-R task is explained here. The students were given some examples in which the main verbs were highlighted while the third person singular verbs were underlined. The students were asked to read the examples and discover the grammar points. It must be noted that the content and the materials were the same for all groups

but the methods of teaching and presentation were different. All the participants were taught by the same instructor.

1. She **goes** to school by bus every morning.
2. We **study** English every Sunday.
3. Alice **gets up** at 5 every morning.
4. Jack **plays** football at school on Mondays.

**FINDINGS**

The following research hypotheses were tested:

*(H<sub>1</sub>): There is no significant difference between Iranian guidanceschool EFL Learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and traditional methods.*

*Testing of instruments for pre-test and post-test*

In order to test the first null hypothesis, a series of independent samples *t*- tests were run. Before testing the first null hypothesis, normal distribution and internal reliability of both tests were investigated as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

As can be seen in Tables1 and 2, both pretest and post- test have a normal distribution, as the kurtosis and skewedness statistics are between -1 and +1 which is an indicator of normal distribution. The following figures make this point clear:

*Normality Tests*

To examine the reliability of the pre-test and post-test, the Kuder-Richardson Formula (KR-21) was used as shown in Table 3. It is used to show the internal consistency of the items. In order to have a reliable test,

TABLE 1  
Descriptive Statistics for pre test

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-test	105	3.00	24.00	10.1905	4.46804	.808	.236	.395	.467
Valid N	105								

TABLE 2  
Descriptive Statistics for post test

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
posttest	105	7.00	33.00	18.6667	7.10318	.170	.236	-.9087	.467
Valid N (listwise)	105								

(KR-21) should be above .70. According to Table 3, both tests had acceptable reliability.

TABLE 3  
The Reliability Index for pretest and posttest

	Mean	Variance	KR-21
Pre-test	10.19	19.90	0.71
Post-test	18.66	50.41	0.87

*Comparing the Results*

Returning to the first research hypothesis, first an independent sample *t*-test was run in to examine whether the two groups were homogeneous before treatment. The results show that both control and experimental groups are at the same level of grammatical achievement, and if there is any significant improvement in the performance of the

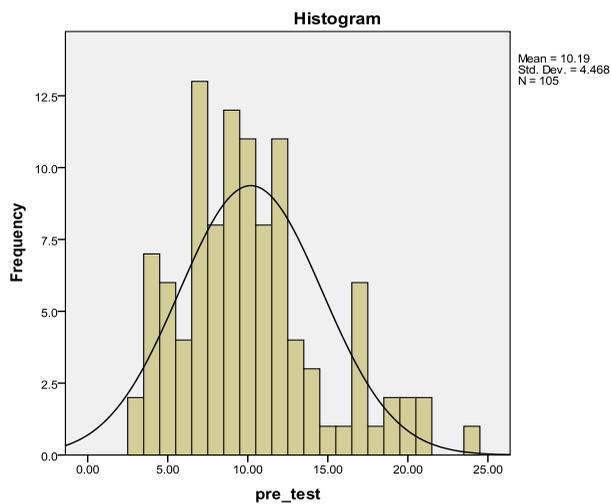


Fig.1: Normal distribution curve of the pretest

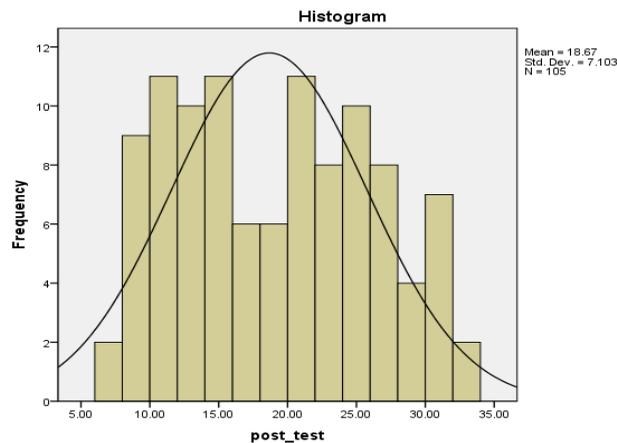


Fig.2: Normal distribution curve of the post-test

experimental group, it is due to treatment not other outside factors. For this purpose, an independent sample *t*-test was run on the pretest to check the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups before treatment.

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean of the control group is 10.25 and SD is 4.47 and that of the experimental group is 10.11 with the SD of 4.28. Based on these results, there is only a slight difference between the two groups.

However, to examine it statistically an independent samples, *t*-test was used as shown in Table 5. First, based on the Levene's test of equality of variances, appropriate *t* was selected. As can be seen

in Table 5, there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups prior to treatment ( $t=.16, p>.05, df= 103$ ). This proves the homogeneity of our two groups.

Now, to examine whether treatment affected the grammatical achievement of the Iranian guidance school EFL learners, another independent sample *t*-test was used. The mean scores of the control and experimental groups are shown in Table 6.

As shown in Table 6, the mean of the experimental group  $M=20.82$  is higher than that of the control group  $M=16.62$ . To check whether this difference is statistically significant, independent sample *t*-test was run. After selecting appropriate *t* based on

TABLE 4  
Group Statistics for pre-test

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	control	54	10.25	4.67	.63
	experimeal	51	10.11	4.28	.59

TABLE 5  
Independent Sample T-test for Equality of Means

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
pretest	Equal variances assumed	.312	.578	.162	103	.872	.14161
	Equal variances not assumed			.162	102.909	.872	.14161

TABLE 6  
Group Statistics for post-test

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	control	54	16.62	6.01	.81
	experimental	51	20.82	7.57	1.06

Levene’s test for equality of variances, results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups ( $t= -3.13, p<.05, df= 103$ ). As the mean of the experimental group  $M=20.82$  and its SD is  $7.57$  is higher than that of the control group  $M=16.62$  with the SD of  $6.01$ , it can be said that the experimental group outperformed the control group regarding their grammar scores. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

**(H<sub>2</sub>):** *There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female guidance school EFL Learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities.*

In order to test the second research hypothesis, an independent sample  $t$ -test was run. Like the previous section, first

we should be aware of the homogeneity of the male and female students in the experimental group. Homogeneity shows that both males and females are at the same level of grammatical achievement, and if there is any significant improvement in the performance of the experimental groups, it is due to treatment not other outside factors. For this purpose, an independent sample  $t$ -test was run on the pre-test to check the homogeneity of the males and females before treatment.

As shown in Table 9, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean of the male  $M=9.67$  and female  $10.65$  Iranian guidance school EFL learners ( $t =-.80, p>.05, df=49$ ). This shows that males and females are at the same level of grammatical proficiency prior to treatment.

As can be seen in Table10, the mean of the male students  $M=24.50$  with the SD of  $6.86$  is higher than that of the female students  $M=16.34$  with the SD of  $5.86$ .

TABLE 7  
Independent Samples Test for Post –test of experimental and control groups

groups		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experimental	Equal variances assumed	5.254	.024	-3.151	103	.002	-4.19390
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.130	95.400	.002	-4.19390

TABLE 8  
Descriptive Statistics (Homogeneity of Males and Females in both Experimental Groups)

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	male	28	9.67	4.18	.79
	female	23	10.65	4.43	.92

Now, to consider whether gender affects the learning of grammatical structures through C-R activities, again, another independent sample *t*-test was run as shown in Table 11. It indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the grammatical achievement of the male and female learners ( $t=4.50, p<.05, df=49$ ). As the male students had a higher mean, it can be said that male students who learn grammatical structures through C-R activities had a better performance on grammar tests than female students who also learn grammatical structures through

the same activities. Therefore, the second research hypothesis was also rejected.

**DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

In the following, each research question will be presented and discussed thoroughly.

*Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between Iranian guidance school EFL learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and traditional methods?*

TABLE 9  
Equality of means for both experimental groups (Males and Females)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.035	.853	-.805	49	.425	-.97360
	Equal variances not assumed			-.800	45.900	.428	-.97360

TABLE 10  
Group Statistics for post-test of both Experimental Groups (Males and Females)

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	male	28	24.50	6.86	1.29
	female	23	16.34	5.86	1.22

TABLE 11  
Equality of means for both experimental groups (Males and Females)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.350	.557	4.503	49	.000	8.15217
	Equal variances not assumed			4.573	48.905	.000	8.15217

The present study was motivated by theoretical considerations concerning the effectiveness of C-R tasks in developing Iranian EFL learners' syntactic knowledge. Treatment group performance was compared to that of a control group on the pre-test and post-test. The data obtained from the pre-test proved that there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group at the outset of the experiment. Moreover, mean scores of both groups determined that both groups were equivalent in their command of the target structures. The results obtained from the post-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the post-test.

The related research question is answered on the basis of the students' performance on pre-test and post-test of the grammatical structures. As it was mentioned before, participants' performance in the experimental group did show a significant development in learning grammatical structures namely, the simple present tense. Therefore, this study supports the effectiveness of C-R activities and tasks in teaching grammar to EFL learners in Iranian guidance schools. This study also suggests that implementing C-R activities and tasks can help learners to improve their knowledge of grammar. The results of the study run counter to the zero position advocated by Krashen. Krashen (1992) who prescribed direct intervention and insisted that "the best way of increasing grammatical accuracy is comprehensible input and the

most effective kind of comprehensible input for grammatical development is reading" (p. 411). Accordingly, the null hypothesis of the study that consciousness-raising tasks do not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' syntax acquisition was rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that consciousness-raising tasks are effective learning tools that can be used in the language classroom to make learners aware of form where explicit instruction is necessary.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies by Yip (1994), Mohamed (2004), Mishan's (2005), Sugiharto (2006) and Moradkhan and Sohrabian (2009) who have all investigated the merits of promoting learners' consciousness of grammatical form. Their studies show that activities that promote conscious attention to the target structures of a foreign language foster students' acquisition of these structures. Also, it has been noted how learning can be more effective if learners are given the opportunity to reflect and analyze the structures before rushing to produce them. Moreover, Bourke (1996) points out that C-R tasks cater to the natural tendency of learners who want to try to work things out. They encourage learners to deal with uncertainty, and that promotes learner autonomy. Furthermore, learners find them enjoyable. In other words, learners are eager to do C-R tasks because these tasks constitute a kind of puzzle which when solved enable learners to discover how a linguistic feature works. They believe that the combination of explicit

and implicit learning can guide students towards language acquisition. The need for explicit rules can be more justified if it is embedded in a communicative task. This study is not going to reject the role of other techniques in teaching grammar. The present research merely aims to hold up the claim that the use of C-R activities and tasks in the classroom is a suitable technique in teaching grammar to EFL learners. It seems that it is better for the teacher to be aware of different techniques in teaching grammar and use them based on different circumstances. In Iran, learning grammar is so emphasized that it is considered one of the most important parts of learning English in the educational system. So, grammar teaching perspectives must be changed from traditional methods to innovative and communicative-based approaches based on the students' needs, wants and situations.

***Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between Iranian male and female guidance school EFL learners learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and tasks.*

The findings obtained in this research led to the conclusion that there was a significant difference between males and females scores. As seen before, a significant difference was detected between males and females in the experimental groups. It is worth mentioning that since the sample size was not large enough and the participants were not selected randomly, and also since

specialized raters were not available, the findings are not generalizable to all Iranian EFL learners. The results of this study are not compatible with Moradkhan and Sohrabian's (2009) study in which they reported that females performed better when learning grammatical structures through C-R activities and tasks than males. Their study also supported the idea that the use of C-R activities and tasks can be effective for the purpose of developing accuracy rates of certain grammatical structures of intermediate female students. The main reason for the weak performance of female students in this study may be the fact that they were not familiar with the teacher's methodology in teaching and presentation of grammatical structures. It is very important to point out that teachers should not be fanatical about using only one approach while denying the other ones since some grammar rules are not so easily discovered by students. As a result, regardless of the approach to be effectuated, it should be subservient to the teacher's own consideration and orientation to decide what material is to be introduced, to whom it should be given, and how it should be dealt with (Harmer, 1989). This, undoubtedly, is not an easy task, as it necessitates not only planning, but also a complete understanding of course aims and the psychology of learners' needs, wants and situations.

In addition, the results of this study suggest that because of their important role in extracting and even explaining the grammar points in front of the class, students were all motivated in learning the grammar points

which can lead to language acquisition. The result of this research also corroborates with other similar studies. Previous studies suggest that the combination of explicit and implicit learning can guide students toward language acquisition. The need for explicit rules can be more justified if it is embedded in communicative tasks. This study is not going to reject the role of other techniques in teaching grammar. The present research merely aimed to hold up the claim that the use of C-R activities in the classroom is a suitable technique in teaching grammar to EFL guidance school learners. It seems that it is better for Iranian teachers to be aware of different techniques in teaching grammar and use them based on different circumstances because learning grammar is one of the most important parts of learning English in the Iranian educational system.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of C-R grammar tasks and activities on Iranian EFL beginner learners in learning and internalizing the grammatical structures especially the simple present tense. This result implies that C-R activities and tasks are very interesting especially for beginners. We can attribute this attractiveness to the range of activities that be done through C-R tasks and reducing the amount of pressure on learners because as compared to different kinds of exercise, the C-R activities have delay production process.

However, as it is pointed out by Larsen-Freeman (2002) and Batstone (1994), grammar is best conceived as encompassing three dimensions: form, meaning (content) and use. While productive practice may be useful for working on form, associative learning may account more for meaning, and awareness of an item and sensitivity to context may be required for appropriate use of language communicatively and facilitates the process of language internalizing. Since grammar is complex, and students' learning styles vary from person to person, learning grammar is not likely to be accomplished through a single means of presentation and so, other methods and approaches are recommended besides new approaches such as C-R.

Although practice has a role to play in language learning, Ellis (2002) maintains that it has little value. He argues that the available evidence seems to suggest that practice, be it controlled, contextualized, or communicative, may not be as effective and useful as people claim it is. C-R, on the other hand, offers an attractive alternative to traditional grammar practice. Since C-R tasks for teaching grammar could be of various forms, future studies may investigate the effectiveness of various techniques that are available to language teachers for raising the consciousness of their students to grammar rules and other aspects of the language. Some techniques would be underlining, highlighting, using different colours and employing new technology such as computers and PowerPoint software. As

a result, language teachers are encouraged to consider C-R tasks and activities as an effective strategy in promoting learner's awareness of grammar knowledge or other aspects of the language they are supposed to learn. Finally, the findings of the study suggests the superiority and applicability of C-R grammar tasks and activities to pattern practice and Grammar Translation Method (Traditional Methods/Approaches) in promoting grammar knowledge in Iranian guidance school students.

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