The Impact of Noticing and Output Tasks on the Mastery of English Phrasal Verbs among Iranian Pre-intermediate EFL Learners

Neda Mohammadi[*]

Graduate in TEFL Islamic Azad University at Karaj Branch, Faculty of Foreign Languages, English Department, Alborz, Iran

Farid Ghaemi

Assistant Professor of ELT Islamic Azad University- Karaj Branch, Ghaemi@Kiau.ac.ir

Abstract

The present convergent parallel mixed methods design study aimed at examining the effects of noticing and output tasks on the mastery of English phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. To do so, a sample of 90 EFL students, male and female, was selected out of 120 initial participants through a PET test who were then assigned into three experimental groups of noticing, output and noticing and output tasks. From among the same learners, ten were asked to answer eight interview questions, too. At the start, a pretest of 40-item phrasal verbs was administered with the three groups. After receiving their special treatments, the three groups took a posttest. Running a repeated-measures two-way ANOVA, the first three research questions' answers were positive, but the third question's answer was negative. That is, no difference whether noticing, output, or noticing and output tasks are used, they all caused significant improvements from the pretest to posttest. Moreover, utilizing both noticing and output tasks together had a greater positive effect, which led to a negative answer to the fourth research question. The results of the qualitative data analysis also show that majority of the participants believed in the effectiveness of the strategies.

Keywords: Language acquisition, Noticing tasks, Output tasks, Phrasal verbs, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTON

Vocabulary is believed to be one of the most important components of any language to teach and learn since as Wilkins (1972) proposed, without grammar little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. Vocabulary learning has many facets one of whose challenging aspects is that of phrasal verbs, and its correct use is reported to be difficult for learners (Ahmed et al., 2020). A phrasal verb is a type of verb

consisting of a sequence of a lexical element in combination with a particle, the meaning of which is different from the meaning of its separate parts (Koprowski, 2005).

Perdek (2010) views phrasal verbs as a stumbling block and also among the toughest English structures to teach and to learn (DeCapua, 2017) for those learning English, especially for non-native learners of English in a foreign language setting, as postulated in the present study. They are so arbitrary that no one has yet been able to offer a truly satisfactory way of teaching (Schmitt, 2001). Moreover, understanding and using phrasal verbs seem the strange and vague parts of the language (Condon, 2008). This unfamiliarity is because learners in a foreign language context do not share the longlife socio-cultural experiences of the native speaker to arrive at the metaphoric extension that a certain phrasal verb might have (Tyler & Evans, 2001). Knowing phrasal verbs in Larsen-Freeman's (2001) word includes knowing whether it is followed by a particle or by a preposition, whether it is transitive or intransitive, whether it is separable or not, and what stress or juncture patterns are used. He also declared that students do not tend to use phrasal verbs by themselves and the techniques utilized by their teachers do not usually encourage them to do so.

Furthermore, De Cock (2005) commented that "native speakers of English use approximately half as many phrasal verbs in formal writing as in informal speech" (p.17). Regarding the formal discourse then, phrasal verbs are not completely absent in this domain, and there are many instances in formal situations in which the use of phrasal verbs is more appropriate and sounds more natural in expressing certain ideas (Fletcher, 2005). The importance of multiword expressions to gain fluency in language learning has also been asserted by many researchers such as Folse (2004), Jacobsen (2013), and Wood (2004).

To make the students more interested in using phrasal verbs, it is necessary to find out some influential techniques one of which was supposed to be noticing, which is a cognitive construct in second language acquisition and believed to play a significant role in language acquisition (Schmidt, 2001). According to Schmidt (1994), noticing is a necessary and sufficient condition for subsequent acquisition, and conversion of input to intake without noticing is believed to be impossible. It refers to the conscious knowledge of the target language that needs the learners' knowledge and attendance regarding the input (Ünlü, 2015). The result of such attendance, in his word, is to learn the input, that is, the input turns into the intake.

The other probable effective technique through which phrasal verbs could be acquired more easily was output tasks whose active role in L2 learning was previously confirmed by Swain (1985). Following Schmidt's 'noticing the gap principle', Swain (2005) proposed the output hypothesis in which output is considered as a process and not a product of learning. The output hypothesis indicates that when language is produced, either in the form of spoken or written, usually language learning occurs (Russell, 2014; Zaccaron, 2018). Therefore, encouraging learners to produce language can lead them to consciously notice some of their linguistic problems (Izumi, 2003; Swain, 2005).

As a result, because of their prevalence in everyday spoken and written language, phrasal verbs are very important for EFL/ESL learners to comprehend and communicate with native speakers. They are not only used in spoken and informal English but are also a common part of written and even formal English. Not only do the learners need to understand the more common phrasal verbs, but they also need to use them appropriately. If they do not and use a more formal synonym, they may sound ridiculous to native speakers. Besides, teaching phrasal verbs has been difficult for teachers, and therefore boring for learners both in terms of their grammatical form and their lexical meaning. Thus, it is necessary to develop our students' skills in understanding and using them. Hence, in an attempt to find out some useful ways in teaching phrasal verbs, this study set out to investigate the impact of noticing and output tasks on learning phrasal verbs with the hope that the results shed light on problems of learning phrasal verbs. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed:

1. Does the noticing task have any significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners?

2. Does the output task have any significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners?

3. Do the noticing and output tasks have any significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners?

4. Is there any statistically significant difference between the effects of the noticing, output, and noticing and output tasks on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners?

5. What is the learners' opinions regarding the noticing and output tasks?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Noticing

Noticing as a phenomenon, that arises while paying attention to language input and output in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), has been widely examined and discussed by researchers (Ellis, 1991; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1995). It is a mediating system between the two processes of communication and acquisition and is considered to involve a degree of awareness which refers to private experience brought about by drawing learners' selective attention to a certain linguistic form (Kim, 2019).

The minimum requirement of noticing, according to Schmidt (2001), is that of paying attention to key grammatical element(s) in input with greater than a threshold level of subjective awareness. What Schmidt calls noticing is also called "focal awareness" (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968), "episodic awareness" (Allport, 1979), and "apperceived input" (Gass, 1988) by other scholars. Such terms are sometimes used interchangeably due to their interface.

Schmidt's definition of noticing

Schmidt (2001) attached great importance to noticing and referred to it as necessary for learning and it is a process of attending consciously to linguistic features in the input. Some scholars like Sharwood-Smith (1993) and McLaughlin (1987) also advocated that noticing a feature in the input is an essential first step in language processing whereas they differ from Schmidt in that they consider that noticing a feature in input may be a conscious or an unconscious process.

Noticing and language acquisition

Schmidt (1990) considered the three aspects of consciousness that are involved in learning as being awareness, intention, and knowledge. Jin (2011) stated that awareness, also called perception, is the mental reflection of people on the exoteric accidents happening around them while the intention is usually considered the active intent of people. That is, people often become aware of the things they do not intend to notice while in the case of intention they usually intend the thing. Knowledge, on the other hand, is a concept that is frequently divided based on whether it is implicit or explicit. The following model proposed by Ellis (2001) is used to clarify his hypothesis of knowledge.
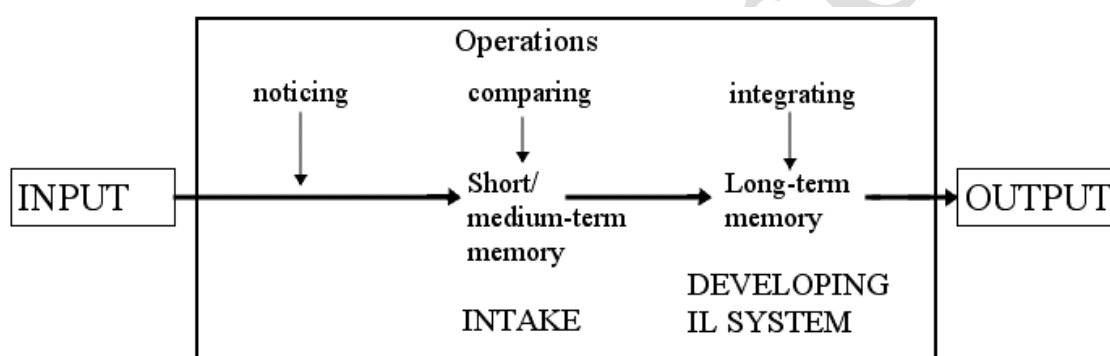

Figure. 2-1. The process of learning implicit knowledge (p. 119)

Ellis (2001) believed that two main stages involve the process of input to become implicit knowledge. The first stage, in which input becomes intake, involves learners' noticing language features in the input, absorbing them into their short-term memories, and comparing them to features produced as output. The second stage is one in which intake is absorbed into the learner's interlanguage system and changes to this system only occur when language features become part of long-term memory.

As another influencing factor in language acquisition, Dolgunsöz (2015) referred to the attention which, according to the noticing hypothesis, includes the fact that what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning. He also talked of a simple rule that stated only things people pay attention to can be learned and otherwise, the possibility of their learning decreases to a large extent.

Tasks to promote noticing

Thornbury (1997) believed that tasks that provide opportunities for noticing are those that allow learners to pay attention to forms of language and provide both the data and the encouragement for the learner to make a comparison between language output and

target language model. Moreover, as Cross (2002) stated, just exposure to language is not sufficient and learners need to be pushed to produce extended oral/written discourse. That is to say, learners become aware of the gap in their knowledge between what they want to say and what they can say when they attempt to produce discourse in the second language.

Thornbury (1997) also suggested that through reformulation and reconstruction tasks, these criteria could be met. Such tasks help learners notice the target language items, and since noticing is a conscious cognitive process, it is theoretically accessible to training and development. Therefore, teachers' role is to develop noticing strategies that the student applies independently and autonomously.

Regarding reformulation activities, they refer to the techniques in the development of students' writing skills rather than simply correcting a student's composition which involves attention to the surface features of the text (Yamada, 2018). Such activities, in Willis' (1990) words, are then considered as a move from fluency to accuracy. Hence, it is consistent with the task-based model of instruction, that is, one that "encourages learners to make the best use of whatever language they have" (Willis 1990, p. 128). It assumes that learners will find ways of encoding the meanings they have to achieve the outcome.

The starting point for reconstruction activities, on the other hand, is the teacher's text (unlike reformulation activities in which the learner's text is reformulated by the teacher) which the learner reads or listens to and then constructs. Then, the reconstructed version is available for "matching" with the original one (Rauf & Saeed, 2019). Pawlak (2011) explained that in reconstructing a text, learners will use their available linguistic competence. This process helps to force attention on form and activates bottom-up processes that are not necessarily engaged. Copying, memorization, and recitation of the text, dictation, rhetorical transformation, translation, and retranslation are activities that fall within this type.

Output

Studies on output typically based their research on Swain's output hypothesis (1985, 1993) who proposed that through output, either spoken or written, language acquisition might occur.

Swain's output hypothesis

Research on the roles of output in SLA has been largely built upon swain's proposal in 1985, which was arguably the first attempt to address the active roles of output in L2 learning process. This hypothesis was in opposition to Krashen's position. He proposed a 'monitor model' of second language learning including five hypotheses: the input hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. The hypothesis related to this study is the input hypothesis which is put forth.

The input hypothesis, according to Qing (2018), strongly claims that for SLA to take place, language learners should have exposure to a type of second language data that they can comprehend. Krashen identified comprehensible language input as "the only causative

variable in SLA" (Krashen, 1981, p. 57). According to Krashen, for SLA to occur, language learners have to have exposure to comprehensible language input that includes language structures that are beyond their current level (i+1). He also claimed that when output occurs, the acquisition has already taken place. On the other hand, Swain (1985, 1995) postulated that output plays a role in *fostering* acquisition, and it is not only the result but also the cause of L2 acquisition.

Peker and Arslan (2020) stated that Swain (1985) proposed a 'comprehensible output hypothesis' relating to the second language learners' production comparable to Krashen's comprehensible input. Swain's studies of French immersion programs in Canada revealed that in the settings where L2 learners are exposed to a large and continuous amount of target language input, they may ultimately reach native-like comprehension and fluency in the target language, and speak fluently (Swain, 1991).

Based on Output Hypothesis, Swain (1995) declared, language production allows second language learners to modify their performances and produce comprehensible output; it also prompts learners to stretch their existing interlanguage capacity to fill the gap in their existing interlanguage, that is to say, the gap between what they want to say and what they can say. Swain believes that when learners are pushed to produce language, they are forced to think about syntax.

Basic functions of output

The function of output in the sense of practicing the language may enhance fluency (Swain, 1985), but not necessarily lead to accuracy (Schmidt, 1992). Hence, besides this more general function of output in the sense of practicing, Mahmoudabadi et al. (2015) proposed the following functions based on Swain's (1995) work all of which are related to accuracy:

Noticing/Triggering Function which was also referred to as the consciousness-raising role, Alsulami (2016) expressed, is related to the fact that in producing the language, learners might notice there is a gap between what they *desire* to say and what they *can* say. Such a process then could lead them to understand what they do not know or partially know. Consequently, they consciously identify their linguistic errors and lack of knowledge.

Metalinguistic Function refers to the time when learners are reflecting upon their target language use and then their output serves a meta-linguistic function that enables them to control and internalize linguistic knowledge (Izumi & Bigelow 2000). In other words, output processes enable learners not only to reveal their hypotheses but also to reflect on them using language. Reflection on language may deepen the learners' awareness of forms, rules, and form-function relationships in the context of production are communicative.

Finally, as stated by Carpi et al. (2021), *Hypothesis-testing Function* proposes that language production may represent learners' hypotheses about how the target language functions. In other words, learners can judge the comprehensibility and linguistic well-formedness of their interlanguage utterances against feedback obtained from their interlocutors.

Phrasal verb

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1992) defines a phrasal verb as "a group of words that acts like a verb and consists usually of a verb with an adverb and/or a preposition." (p. 771). Traditional grammarians define a phrasal verb as a verb followed by a particle. Saari (2018) defined the 'phrasal' verb as a multi-word verb consisting of a verb plus one or more particles and operating syntactically as a single unit. In other words, the constituent of the phrasal verb acts as a single syntactic unit and plays the role of the verb (Also called compound verb, verb-particle construction, verb-adverb combination, two-word verbs, and multi-word verbs).

A phrasal verb may have more than one meaning, e.g. 'put out" has fourteen meanings in the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* which are not the same. Its meanings may be idiomatic or non-idiomatic. If it is idiomatic, it has a special meaning which is not deducible from the meanings of its separate parts. Furthermore, the non-idiomatic meaning of 'fall through' is clear.

Alexander (1988) asserted the most common phrasal verbs are constructed from the shortest and the most lucid verbs like *do, go, come, put,* and their combination to the words that often indicate position or direction such as *along, down, in,* and *over.* He also added that not only the single verb like '*bring'* can blend a large number of prepositions or particles but also every single combination can convey different meanings.

Moreover, Quirk et al. (1985) considered multi-word verbs comprising of such amalgamations as *drink up, dispose of,* and *get away with* which are being dealt with under the headings of 'phrasal verb', 'prepositional verb', and 'phrasal-prepositional verb' respectively. However, these connected elements are contemplated as multi-word verbs if and only if they convey a single unit of meaning.

Types of phrasal verbs

Celce-Murcia (1991) classified phrasal verbs into two general categories: transitive and intransitive. The transitive phrasal verbs' distinctive feature in Chang's (2020) opinion is that the phrasal verbs' particles can be separated from their verbs by an object. They also have distinctive stress and juncture patterns that distinguish them from a verb plus a preposition. Intransitive verbs, on the other hand, are the kinds of verbs that cannot be separated by any kind of words in English (Yulianto et al., 2019).

Alexander (1988) also considered the notion of phrasal verbs, and not only deals with the aspect of transitive and intransitive but also contemplates the multi-word verbs as:

- ✓ Transitive prepositional verbs: e.g., *listen to (s.b);*
- ✓ Transitive phrasal verbs: e.g., *bring up[educate];*
- ✓ Intransitive phrasal verbs: e.g., *give in [surrender];* and
- ✓ Transitive phrasal prepositional verbs: e.g., *put up with [tolerate]*

Difficulties involved in teaching and learning phrasal verbs

There are explanations for the fact that phrasal verbs are difficult to learn in a second language. Some of them have been mentioned by Side (1990) who explored the difficulties as:

1) There are a confusing number of combinations of verb and particle such as make up, take up, take out, make out, etc.

2) Many phrasal verbs have more than one meaning (e.g. make up).

3) The meaning of idiomatic phrasal verbs does not appear to be the sum of the meanings of their parts.

4) Since teachers and/or course books usually define phrasal verbs, structure will stick to and use the Latinate definition rather than the Anglo-Saxon phrasal verb, especially if it is a one-word definition (e.g., pick up = receive)

5) The particles seem random and not based on any special rule.

6) Despite the examples given, there is often some confusion as to whether the particle can be separated from the verb or not.

7) Register and appropriacy create some problems which may lead to the avoidance strategy.

8) Few non-Germanic languages have phrasal verbs. Thus most ESL/EFL students will find such verbs strange and difficult to master.

9) Lack of suitable materials for teaching phrasal verbs can be considered as another problem in teaching as well as mastering phrasal verbs.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants of the present study were 90 pre-intermediate students out of 120 learners who all took a Preliminary English Test (PET), and those whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the participants. They were both male and female learners ranging from 18-30 years old. Gender and age, however, were not considered as controlled variables in this study. The subjects were aware that they were participating in a research study, and they were informed about the purpose and the procedures of the research. They also knew that their test scores would neither disclose nor affect their grades. Since the number of students in each class should not exceed 15, the participants were assigned to six classes of 15 (two classes in each experimental group).

The second group of the participants was ten learners chosen from among the same students to answer the eight semi-structured interview questions.

Instrumentation

Three different instruments were used in this research. A PET test, a multiple-choice test on phrasal verbs, and a set of eight interview questions.

The PET test was administered to select as homogeneous a sample as possible at the outset of the study. It consisted of 2 sections- reading with 35 questions and writing with seven questions. The time allocated for the test was about 90 minutes.

A pretest of multiple-choice on phrasal verbs was administered before the treatment sessions to ensure that the knowledge of chosen phrasal verbs was not significantly different between the groups and the participants were not familiar with the phrasal verbs planned to be taught during the treatment period. The test was administered following the assignment of the participants to three groups. The test is designed and piloted by Kamarudin (2013), and it includes 40 items of phrasal verbs. To assess the learners' knowledge of phrasal verbs after the treatment, the same test was administered as the post-test. The time allocated for the tests was about 20 minutes.

The ten students taking part in this phase of the study took part in a semi-structured interviewee within which the same eight questions were asked from all of them and they were free to talk about the questions as much as they wanted.

Procedure

According to Creswell's (2014) description, the current study was a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design using both quantitative and qualitative ways of gathering and analyzing data. That is, the researcher gathers both qualitative and qualitative kinds of data, analyzes them discretely, and then compares the results derived to see whether the findings confirm or disconfirm each other.

To start, a sample of 120 intermediate students who were studying English as a foreign language was selected at an Institute. To ensure that the participants were homogeneous in terms of their general language proficiency, a PET test was used to measure their proficiency and to choose as homogeneous students as possible. Next, 90 participants whose scores were within 2 standard deviations above or below the mean were selected while the others were disregarded and their results were not recorded to be further analyzed. It should be also noted that the test's writing parts were scored by two raters based on PET writing band descriptor.

After that, the participants were assigned into three equal groups. Then, the researcher began the treatment process. The treatment took place within 6 weeks, 3 sessions per week, each session 20 minutes. The teacher, the coursebook, the pamphlet, and the language content were all the same in the three groups, but the method of teaching was different. That is, the teacher taught 150 phrasal verbs to the students of the three groups throughout the 15 sessions of the course. The three groups, however, underwent different treatments. The treatment conditions differed in terms of whether or not participants were asked to produce output.

The first experimental group (EG1) was instructed based on some attention-raising techniques and they received only input enhancement and attention-drawing treatment. The teacher used extra stress, exaggerated intonation, and colored presentation for teaching each phrasal verb since using a saliency technique can help to prompt noticing of language elements. Moreover, the participants were involved in the text-editing task, which is a kind of activity in which wrong phrasal verbs are used in a context and the

learners should recognize and replace the acceptable phrasal verbs instead. Phrasal verbs in the pamphlet given to the members of this group were also typographically enhanced through enlargement and different combinations of underlining, bolding, italics, and changing the font. The participants were directed to underline or highlight all new phrasal verbs in their coursebook.

In the second experimental group (EG2), there was no highlighting or underlining of the phrasal verbs and no attention-raising. This group received the same set of phrasal verbs, but they were not enhanced. The subjects received only the output treatment and they had to embed learned phrasal verbs in their writing. It is worth noting that the output task for this group was a paragraph-writing task. The researcher checked participants' writing to control the correct usage of phrasal verbs in the context.

The third experimental group (EG3) was instructed based on both noticing and output tasks. The teacher used attention-drawing strategies and asked participants to do so. Moreover, participants had to make use of phrasal verbs in their writing.

At the end of the 16th secession, the same multiple-choice test on phrasal verbs was administered to the three experimental groups as the post-test and provided the participants with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in answering questions after going through the treatment period. After administering the post-test, the results were recorded and further analyzed by a repeated-measures two-way ANOVA to figure out whether any of the three groups could outperform other ones.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the ten participants who were selected from among the same participant taking part in the quantitative phase were interviewed and their responses were qualitatively analyzed.

RESULTS

Preliminary quantitative investigation

To begin, the data gathered on the PET as well as the pretest and posttest of phrasal verbs from the three groups were checked for normality and to see whether parametric or non-parametric analyses were the appropriate formulae to be used. The point was checked through one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the results are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the PET of the Three Groups

		Noticing Group (NG)	Output Group (OG)	Noticing Output Group (NOG)
N		30	30	30
Normal Parameters	Mean	37.63	37.83	39.13
	SD	7.79	7.74	9.30
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.10	.44	.74

Table 2. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the Pretest and Posttest of the Three Groups

		Pretest of NG	Posttest of NG	Pretest of OG	Posttest of OG	Pretest of NOG	Posttest of NOG
N		30	30	30	30	30	30
Normal Parameters	M	19.93	28.00	19.27	28.76	18.30	29.03
	SD	7.26	6.30	6.00	4.55	6.10	5.61
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.44	.22	.98	.66	.98	.62

According to what is reported in Table 1, the significance value of the PET test of the first (i.e. the noticing group, referred to as NG), the second (i.e. the output group, referred to as OG), and the third (i.e. the noticing and output group, referred to as NOG) groups are .10, .44, and .74 respectively. Therefore, they are all considered to bear normal distribution as they are all above the standard .05 level of significance (α =.05; $p>\alpha$). Furthermore, Table 2 illustrates that the pretest scores of the three groups are all normal because all their p values are higher than the critical value (i.e. p of NG=.44, p of OG=.98, and p of NOG=.98; α =.05; $p>\alpha$). The posttest scores of the three groups are also considered normal for their significance values are above the standard level (i.e. p of NG=.22, p of OG=.66, and p of NOG=.62; α =.05; $p>\alpha$). Therefore, parametric analyses were used throughout this study.

Next, the participants' homogeneity in terms of their knowledge of phrasal verbs was checked at the beginning of the study. This was done through a one-way ANOVA to compare the mean scores of the three groups on the pretest. The results of the so-called analysis are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest of the Phrasal Verbs of the Three Groups

Group membership	N	Mean	SD
NG	30	19.93	7.26
OG	30	19.27	6.00
NOG	30	18.30	6.10

Table 4. One-way ANOVA on the Pretest of the Phrasal Verbs of the Three Groups

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest	Between Groups	40.46	2	20.23	.48	.62
	Within Groups	3660.03	87	42.06		
	Total	3700.500	90			

As Table 3 displays, the mean scores of the three groups (i.e. 19.93 for the NG, 19.27 for the OG, and 18.30 for the NOG) on the pretest are subtly different from each other. However, to check the significance of such a difference, running a one-way ANOVA was necessary. As reported in Table 4, there was not a considerable difference between the performance of the three groups on the pretest at the beginning of the study as the

significance value reported in this case is .62, which is above the standard .05 level of significance (F=.48; p=.62; α=.05; $p>\alpha$). It means, participants of the three groups had similar knowledge of phrasal verbs at the start of the study; and therefore, the possible better performance of the groups at the end of the study will be due to the treatment they received.

Investigation of the quantitative research questions

To decide about the null hypotheses of the study and in order to check whether or not the developments in the performance of the participants of the three groups on phrasal verbs were significant or not, it was necessary to run a repeated-measures two-way ANOVA. Before going into the main phase of the analyses, descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores of the three groups on their mastery of phrasal verbs are reported in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest and Posttest of the Three Groups

		Pretest	Posttest
NG (N=30)	Mean	19.93	28.00
	SD	7.26	6.30
OG (N=30)	Mean	19.27	28.77
	SD	6.00	4.55
NOG (N=30)	Mean	18.30	29.03
	SD	6.10	5.61

Table 5 shows that in the noticing group, the mean score changed from 19.93 in the pretest to 28.00 in the posttest, in the output group, the mean score changed from 19.27 in the pretest to 28.77 in the posttest, and in the noticing-output group, the mean score changed from 18.30 in the pretest to 29.30 in the posttest. Therefore, participants of all the three groups improved from pretest to posttest. The significance of their improvements are also checked and reported in the following Tables and figure.

Since there were three groups presented in the current study whose performances were repeatedly measured on their test of phrasal verbs, the most appropriate data analysis technique to be run was repeated-measures two-way ANOVA (Hinton et al., 2008), which was run and the results are reported in Tables 6, 7, and Figure 1.

Table 6. Repeated-Measures Two-way ANOVA of the Pretest and Posttest of the Three Groups

Effect	Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	.91	979.67	.00*	.91
Group		.03	.96	.00
Time * Group	.13	6.53	.00*	.13

According to the values represented in Table 6, the amount of significance of the within-subject effect (i.e. time) is .00, which is less than the standard .05 level of significance (F=979.67; p=.00; α=.05; $p<\alpha$). Therefore, the three groups' performance was improved considerably from the pretest to the posttest. The amount of this improvement was large

as the value of the partial eta squared is .91, since Pallant (2011) categorized partial eta squared values as .01=small effect, .06=medium effect, and .14=large effect. The value reported in the second row of Table 6, within which the between-subject effect's information (i.e. group) is reported, is .96, which is a value larger than the critical value. That is to say, the participants of the three groups' mastery over the phrasal verbs in either the pretest or the posttest were not significantly different from each other (F=.03; p=.96; α=.05; $p>\alpha$). Finally, the significance level for the interaction of time and group is smaller than the critical level (F=6.53; p=.00; α=.05; $p<\alpha$). Therefore, it was included that although there was a significant difference in the progress of the three groups from the pretest to the posttest, the difference in their progress is not the same in the three groups. As it is shown by the Partial Eta Squared value (i.e. .13), the size of this effect is medium.

Next, Table 7 is provided to show the Scheffe post-hoc test of the three groups in their posttest.

Table 7. Scheffe Post-Hoc Test of the Three Groups in the Posttest

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
NG	OG	-.05	1.51	.99
	NOG	.30	1.51	.98
OG	NOG	.35	1.51	.97

According to Table 10, the significance value of the difference between the NG and OG is .99, which is bigger than the critical value (p=.99; α=.05; $p>\alpha$), meaning that the learners' performance in these two groups was not significantly different from each other. Looking back at their mean scores in Table 5, it becomes clear that the two groups had a slightly different performance in their posttest. Moreover, the difference between the posttest scores of the NG and NOG was not noteworthy due to the significant value which is .98 and again larger than the critical value (p=.98; α=.05; $p>\alpha$). The difference between the posttest scores of the OG and NOG was also significant (p=.97; α=.05; $p>\alpha$). Overall, the NOG performed the best on the posttest, followed by the OG group, and then the NG.

Putting the results obtained through Tables 5, 6, and 7 together, the conclusion is that participants' performance improved significantly from the pretest to the posttest in all the three groups and also in case they are compared two by two, but when all the three groups' improvement are compared, one of them (i.e. NOG) had a considerably better amount of improvement since their performance was the worst in the pretest but the best in the posttest. To better understand these outcomes, Figure 1 is presented.

As it is clear in Figure 1, the participants of the three groups had significant amounts of improvements from pretest to posttest. The point, however, is that although almost the same in both the pretest and the posttest, the noticing and output group performance was the worst in the pretest while they had the best performance in their posttest, which caused their significantly better extent of development from the pretest to the posttest.
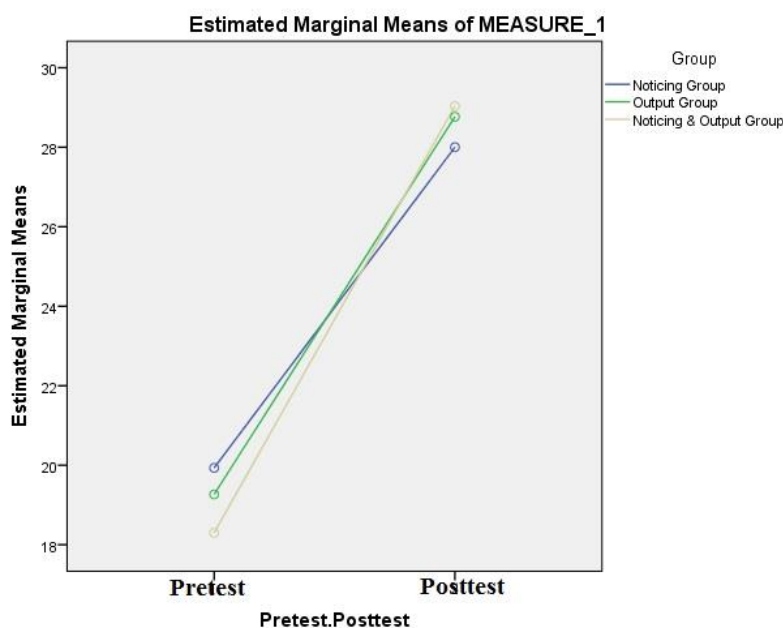
Figure 1. Differences between the Pretest and Posttest of the Three Groups

Consequently, the four quantitative research questions of the study could be answered as the following:

1. Noticing tasks have a significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.

2. Output tasks have a significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.

3. Noticing and output tasks have a significant impact on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.

4. There is a statistically significant difference between the effects of noticing, output, and noticing and output tasks on the mastery of phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.

Investigation of the qualitative research question

In order to find out the participants' ideas about the noticing and output tasks, ten learners were interviewed and asked to answer eight questions related to both the noticing and output tasks. To answer the first question the focus of which was on the actual use of noticing in the learners' idea and whether or not it has risen the amount of their learning, all the ten interviewees (i.e. 100% of the participants) agreed on their usefulness. Besides, they explained matters such as the following as the ways through which they experienced noticing in the class; "The emphasis the teacher places on the words, and the explanations and examples the teacher provides."

The other question asked the participants their ideas about whether or not output tasks promote awareness of second language learning. Eighty percent of the interviewees (i.e.

eight of them) believed in the effectiveness of the output tasks while 20 percent (i.e. two participants) announced it was effective only to some extent.

Whether output or input enhancement tasks were more beneficial for the learners was the other question. Only three interviewees (i.e. 30%) believed in the effectiveness of the output tasks, four participants (i.e. 40%) introduced input enhancement as being influential, and the other three learners (i.e. 30%) said that both are effective. Their reasons for such impacts were things like that when they use the topics taught in the class in their writing, for example, they learn them; when the teacher highlights the points through different intonation or colors, for instance, they cannot forget them; and first emphasizing the points and then having learners to use the points cause better learning.

The question of "Do output tasks develop the skill of noticing the gap through production?" received a positive answer by seven participants (i.e. 70%) and only one participant (i.e. 10%) gave a negative answer to this question while the other two participants (i.e. 20%) said it sometimes leads to noticing the gap through production. Most of the participants believed that making short sentences using the words or the grammatical points they have just learned can help them understand the parts they have difficulty in.

Considering the other question of the interview asking about the consciousness-raising techniques and if they are helpful or distracting, the majority of the interviewees (i.e. nine of them, 90%) believed they are helpful as they are the key points everybody needs when they produce the language and they can make the learners' weaknesses clear. However, there was a participant (i.e. 10%) who said although such techniques are helpful, they may sometimes distract the learners.

Participants were also asked about whether or not they feel any anxiety by fulfilling the output tasks in comparison with closed-ended questions and five (i.e. 50%) said no, two (i.e. 20%) said sometimes, and the other three (i.e. 30%) said yes. Moreover, all the interviewees (i.e. 100%) believed that in the course of language learning, the new language item needs subsequent practice to be learned.

Eventually, ninety percent (i.e. nine interviewees) believed that both comprehensible input and output are necessary if someone is going to learn a second language since they complete each other, that is, without good input, learners cannot produce good output, or even efficient input is useless if learners cannot put them into practice and produce the language. However, only ten percent (i..e one participant) said only comprehensible input would suffice for it is the only very important matter.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the effect of noticing tasks and output tasks on the mastery of English phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners was investigated. The results showed that all the three experimental groups of the inquiry improved their ability to use the phrasal verbs to a great extent and the amount of this improvement was even higher in the third group with whose participants both the noticing and output tasks were implemented. The interesting finding was that although all the three groups had almost

the same performance on the pretest and the posttest, the noticing output group, who had the worst performance on the pretest outperformed the other two groups on the posttest, and this could be the reason why this group had significantly better progress from the pretest to the posttest. However, each one of the two kinds of tasks (i.e. noticing and output tasks) helped learners to improve their use of phrasal verbs, which is a sign of the effectiveness of each of the two kinds of tasks. Besides, even though all the participants' performance changed considerably from the pretest to the posttest, in the noticing group, the improvement was the least followed by the output group, and the noticing output group's improvement was the highest. In other words, it could be said that the kind of tasks provided to the participants of the noticing and output groups were significantly effective, but providing them together had a far better influence on the learners' performance. The outcomes of the qualitative phase of the study also confirmed the results obtained in the quantitative phase since the interviewees were mostly in favor of the effectiveness of the strategies.

The results of this study are relatively similar to other studies conducted in similar domains. Regarding the usefulness of noticing tasks, Wei et al. (2021) utilized the noticing hypothesis in an attempt to solve the problems raised at the time of improving the timeliness and also the interest to teach the language, as well as enriching and developing the English education system run on the basis of software on Artificial Intelligence. Damanhouri (2018) was the other researcher who tried to explore the role of noticing hypothesis as a strategy for teaching second languages. Carrying out such an investigation, he found out that the hypothesis is an effective strategy implementing which could enhance morphological, phonological, structural, and lexical information from the learners' memories. The hypothesis was also the basis of Dolgunsöz's (2015) inquiry who aimed at measuring attention and learning gains in the second language reading through the use of the eye-tracking methodology. The results showed the great positive effect of the noticing strategy used as the treatment on the participants' performance. In general, the results of most studies conducted on noticing hypothesis and noticing tasks, in addition to those of the present study, demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategy in question in EFL classes.

On the other hand, regarding output hypothesis and output tasks, Wei (2018) is among the most recent scholars working with the hypothesis and its influence on the writing ability of second language learners. The outcomes of his research led him to announce the effectiveness of the strategy. In the same year, Zaccaron (2018) examined the effect of the hypothesis and the kind of output tasks on the speaking ability of the beginner learners of English at the end of which they confirmed their positive effects. Moreover, the noticing function of the output hypothesis was the issue investigated by Alsulami (2016). He attempted to use the hypothesis to develop the writing skills of an EFL student. The upshots of this study were clear illustrations of the point that the hypothesis pushed the learner to present a modified output, which in turn, led to improvement of his writing skills in second-language. Such findings are all in line with what is stated about the effect of the output hypothesis on the basis of which the current research was initiated.

As the findings of this study and similar studies indicated, and also clearly stated by Ögeyik (2018), noticing and output hypotheses and the kinds of tasks derived from them are beneficial strategies using which in language learning classes would be greatly effective since they make cause learners focus more on the points they have to be aware of. The point which has not yet been focused on in the literature was comparing and contrasting these two types of tasks for instructional purposes and enhancing the learners' ability to use phrasal verbs. This study demonstrated that both kinds of tasks are advantageous ways of helping language learners develop their ability in utilizing phrasal verbs. More specifically, it was found that using the two kinds of tasks together is a more helpful strategy when the focus is on improving the learners' use of phrasal verbs.

The findings of this study have several pedagogical implications for SLA researchers, syllabus and task designers, EFL teachers, and materials developers.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study, which demonstrated the positive influences of noticing tasks and output tasks on the mastery of English phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners, have some implications for EFL teachers, students, textbook developers, and testers, and can help them do their job more efficiently.

First, the results can help teachers have a better view on using the noticing and output tasks in teaching phrasal verbs, especially for the teachers whose concern is not only the need for input and noticing but also the need for output in learning vocabulary. Therefore, teachers must be given intensive training on how to implement both noticing and output tasks in their teaching and the benefits of doing so. They can guide their students through noticing and output tasks and help them to improve their vocabulary learning. Teachers need to ensure that students' awareness is raised and their attention is drawn during teaching.

Moreover, students can have a better view of learning and using phrasal verbs rather than avoiding them. That is, if learners deliberately pay attention to the target vocabularies and if they have the opportunity to produce those vocabularies, they will learn more. Finally, textbook developers can take substantial benefits from this study. They can incorporate these techniques for phrasal verbs learning in syllabi and course books. The findings are also expected to have implications for the design of noticing and output tasks in educational settings and provide teachers and methodologists with new insights into designing varied task types in EFL classrooms.

Based on the present study, some subsequent investigations could be carried out on the effect of noticing and output tasks on specific types of phrasal verbs instead of all types of phrasal verbs that were investigated in the current study. Other task types, not the noticing and output tasks, can be the variables used in another research in the same domain. Besides, since this study investigated the acquisition of phrasal verbs, its findings cannot be generalized to other complex aspects of vocabulary learning such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, associations, etc. Therefore, other studies can be carried out to investigate the effect of noticing and output tasks on the other aspects of lexical knowledge. Participants at different proficiency levels or in different places could yield

different results. Therefore, investigating the effect of noticing and output tasks on learning phrasal verbs by different groups of learners at different proficiency levels (i.e. elementary, upper-intermediate and advanced) could also be considered as a further suggestion for further research.

Furthermore, like any other research, this study had some limitations which might hamper the process of generalization of its findings with utmost confidence. The major limitation was the subjects' gender. Since the researcher had no control over the institutional procedure of registration in the language school where she teaches, she could not divide males and females equally in groups. Therefore, gender might have acted as an intervening variable in this study. This study also suffered from the small number of participants of the study and limited period of data collection. A longer period of data collection might lead to a better description of changes in learners' acquisition. In addition, the only delimitation of this study was that the researcher purposefully chose the participants from among pre-intermediate adults since learning phrasal verbs is difficult for beginners (Boers & Lindastromberg, 2008).

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