The Effect of Concordancing on Iranian High School Students' Learning of Phrasal verbs across Proficiency Levels

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the highly beneficial applications of corpus linguistics in language pedagogy, it has not found its way into mainstream EFL. The major reasons seem to be the teachers' lack of training and the unavailability of resources, especially computers in language classes. Phrasal verbs have been shown to be a problematic area of learning English as a foreign language due to their semantic opacity and structural differences between English and learners' first languages. The present study aimed at investigating the difference between the performances of learners who studied phrasal verbs by an English teaching method that uses concordance methods and those who studied phrasal verbs by traditional method. In addition, the difference between high and low proficiency learners in the concordance group was investigated. Fifty pre-intermediate learners from Farzanegan Highschool in Khoy participated in this study. They were divided into controlled and experimental groups randomly. To ensure the homogeneity of two groups the proficiency test of Ket was administered.

Then, they were given a pre-test. After receiving 6 sessions of instruction, the participants first took the first post-test and after four weeks, they were given a delayed-posttest. Findings showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups.

Also, there was a significant difference between high and low proficiency learners using concordance approach, with the high proficiency learners outperforming the low group.

The results of the current study can be employed by policy makers, curriculum designers, educational organizations, academic specialists, administrators, course developers, and teachers and at the same time learners.

Keywords: corpus; concordance approach; phrasal verb; traditional approach

1. INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition researchers believe that vocabulary learning is the most important aspect of second language learning (kinght, 1994) and "an essential part of mastering a second language" (schmitt, 2008; p.329). "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (wilkins, 1972, p.1111). In a broader area of language teaching, the lexical approach has received substantial attention in recent years which emphasizes developing learner's proficiency with lexis or words and word combinations.

According to this approach, an essential part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical patterns and phrases as chunks and these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive pattern of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993).

Phrasal verb is the very specific trait of the English language. The ability to use phrasal verbs is something intrinsic for native speakers of English but pose a great deal of difficulty for nonnative speakers of English. In addition, since its significance has been highlighted in many books, it seems necessary to be taught to second language learners, Kawaguchi, Minegishi, and Durand(2009) in the book Corpus Analysis and variation in Linguistic explained the reason for its significance. Among the reasons was the widespread use of phrasal verbs in the conversation and in fiction. According to them "it is difficult to define a word without the use of phrasal verbs" (p. 122). Also, phrasal verbs are common in everyday formal and informal speech and writing (Hart, 2009), therefore, learners should know how to use them appropriately in the context.

No doubt, mastering English phrasal verbs is a great challenge for L_2 learner. Several reasons have been mentioned for the difficulty of learning phrasal verb among which the ones mentioned frequently are their ubiquity in all registers, productivity, and syntactic and semantic complexity. Mary recent studies have shown that these difficulties often lead to participants' avoidance of phrasal verbs in writing and speaking(Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004).

A number of factors are assumed to contribute to this avoidance among which we can refer to the effect of context of language learning, interference from the participants' L_1, Participants' proficiency and problems with interpreting their meanings (ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012).

Another difficulty lies in the form of the particle which resembles that of prepositions and hard to distinguish from one another. Also, the construction is very productive. the above mentioned difficulties in the nature of phrasal verbs lead to the error or avoidance strategy on the part of the learners(Azzaro, 2012). Despite the significance of the phrasal verb, it has been the neglected part of language instruction.

Previously, traditional methods were used in the teaching of phrasal verbs. The students were presented with a long list of phrasal verbs to deal with and used them in new utterances, The students had to memorize them and the teacher provided the equivalent of the phrasal verbs in the modern language for them (Larsen - freeman, 2000).

Due to the advancements in computer technology, innovative changes in English Language Teaching (ELT) have appeared. Learners are no longer confined to classroom language, but can now have access to language corpora or vast databases of authentic texts stored on computers or on the Internet. Concordancing is a tool of accessing a corpus of text to show how any given word or phrase in the text is used in the immediate contexts in which it appears. By grouping the uses of a special word or phrase on the computer screen or in printed form, the concordance shows the patterns in which the given word in phrase is typically used (Penning ton & Richards, 1997). Concordancing has made changes in L_2 teaching and learning. It has also changed the way of language teaching and learning (Cheng et al., 2004).

The use of concordancing is a way to show that L_2 learners can have access to authentic language through corpus and they can discover language patterns (Bernardini, 2002, Johns, 1991). The corpora can, for instance, be used for developing learning activities, According to Granath(2000, Cited in Bernardini, 2002), corpora can be used in grammer and some other aspects of language, Tribble and Jones(1990) argued that concordancing shows anthentic examples of different parts of a language and helps L2 learners to discover different meanings, usages and collocations of different words.

The corpus approach is the use of concorducing (Gilquin & Granger, 2000). There are some studies on the advantage of concordaninge in L_2 teaching and learning. Supatranont (2005) used concordancing in comparison to the traditional approach to teach vocabulary to engineering L_2 learners. The main findings of her study were that the L_2 learners' average scores in the experimental group who were exposed to vocabulary through concordances were significantly higher than those in the comparison group. So the use of corpora or corpus-based activities in language classes is very beneficial for EFL Learners to get familiar with real authentic language. Language teachers also benefit from corpora to increase the meaningful input that is provided to learners. It is also to the advantage of textbook writers to exploit corpora in order to gain an accurate reflection of the language actually used by speakers and writers in natural situations, rather than relying on their beliefs and intuition while preparing materials in the field (Biber and Reppen, 2002).

The role of Corpora in EFL teaching is not 'to tell us what we should teach, but to help us make better-informed decisions, and motivate those decisions more carefully' (Gavioli & Aston, 2001, p.239). Some scholars claim that a corpus approach provides meaningful and contextual input into the language side of L_2 instruction (Chambers, 2007; Tao,2001), and a corpus has its own 'potential to make explicit the more common patterns of language use'(Tao, 2001, p.116). According to Yoon and Hirvela (2004), in order to promote teachers' and learner's' pedagogical use of corpora, it is important to examine how and in what ways a corpus component is beneficial to the development of the L2 knowledge of EFL Learners.

Some studies which have been conducted in the context of using corpus based sources in L_2 have targeted EFL learners' attitudes towards these sources in writing/reading instruction or in vocabulary instruction. The findings of some of these studies suggest that students have positive attitudes towards vocabulary learning through using corpus-based activities (Cobb, 1997; Thurstun & Candlin 1998).

Thurstun and Candlin (1998), for example, found that learners reacted positively towards using corpus-based sources in vocabulary learning However, they also reported that some students reacted negatively because of the difficulty of the authentic academic texts. Sun's (2000) study aimed to explore how EFL students reacted to a lesson in which corpus-based activities were used. In the study, Taiwanese college EFL students' feedback towards web-based concordance was investigated via a questionnaire. He found that the majority of students felt positively towards web-based concordancing, generally because it allowed them to experience authentic language use. The students also indicated that the approach was mostly helpful in learning about the real usage of individual words as well as phrases, and in reading comprehension. Yoon and Hirvela(2004) examined the use of corpora in an ESL setting by studying intermediate and advanced proficiency level ESL students' attitudes towards using corpora in L_2 writing instruction. The researchers also investigated how ESL learners perceived the use of corpora in second language writing instruction by asking the students what they thought the strengths and weaknesses of using corpora were. They found that corpus instruction was regarded as advantageous to the students' improvement of L_2 writing, thereby increasing their confidence in this skill.

Studies that have been conducted in the context of phrasal verbs through corpus-bused sources are relatively rare. There are very few studies which have attempted to examine EFL learners' attitudes towards using corpus-based sources in phrasal verbs instruction. Thus, the present study aims at exploring the effect of concordancing on Iranian High school students' learning of phrasal verbs across proficiency levels.

This study tried to answer two research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in the performance of Iranian students taught phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach and that of students taught by a traditional approach?

2. Is there any significant difference between the performances of high and low proficiency level students on phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach in immediate/delayed-posttest?

1.1 Methodology

1.1.1. Participants

Participants of this study included 50 high school students in Iranian EFL context from a high school in Khoy who were studying in the third grade. All the participants were female with Turkish as their L_1 and they had learned Persian at school. They all consented to take part in the treatment sessions. The researcher ensured participants that their personal information will be kept confidential. Two intact classes were chosen to conduct the study. Intact classes were homogenous in terms of their knowledge of English at the beginning of the treatment.

After taking a proficiency test, KET, about their language level at the beginning of the term, it was determined that participants were on the pre-intermediate level. Based on their scores, among 60 participants, 10 were excluded from the study since six of them answered most of the questions and four none of them so they were not comparable with groups:

experimental and control, 50 were selected to participate in the study. The reason for choosing those participants among was their low knowledge of English phrasal verbs. The participants were in the age range of 15 to 17.

Their familiarity with English was typical of most Iranian high school students, 4 years of compulsory 2 to 3 hours a week at secondary schools with didactic English language curriculum. The study was designed to have one experimental group and one control group. Randomly, one of the intact classes was assigned as the experimental group and the other was assigned as the control group for the study. The experimental group was made up of 25 participants and the control group was also 25 participants. Both groups were under the same period of instruction and the teacher was the same for two groups.

1.1.2 Instruments

For the purpose of the present study, the following instruments were used:

Proficiency test: proficiency test, Ket, was used in the first session in order to ensure the homogeneity of experimental and control groups. In addition, this test was used to categorize the high and low proficiency learners in the experimental group. This test was published in 2004 from Cambridge University. It contained 56 questions on different aspects of language like vocabulary, grammatical features, propositions, cloze tests and composition. The participants had enough time to answer the questions, the time allotted to this test was 1 hour and 10 minutes. There was no penalty for false responses.

Phrasal verb test (as pre-test, post- test and delayed – test):The main instrument used for collecting the data was the pretest, post-test and delayed-test. They are the same test but arranged differently. In order to test the phrasal verb knowledge of participants in the second session, the phrasal verb test was designed by the researcher herself and was administered as the pretest before the treatment. The researcher made test was 60 multiple choice items on thirty phrasal verbs that were going to be taught. It contained three types such as to find the meaning of the underlined phrasal verbs, to choose the correct phrasal verbs for the underlined verbs or phrases, to choose the phrasal verbs to complete the sentences.

Then, participants were under treatment and were given the same test as a post-test. Although both tests were identical in order to compare participants' phrasal verb learning before and after training between two groups, the items for these tests were re-arranged each time in a different order to minimize possible rote memorization(Levin,1986). Four weeks after the treatment, the same test(delayed-test) was administered again to see if the participants still knew the phrasal verbs or not.

In the sentences, phrasal verbs were highlighted to attract the attention of the participants.

By means of traditional activities, the participants were provided with five phrasal verbs each session. For each phrasal verb, the meaning and also two examples for each one was presented.

Concordance and traditional exercises:

The participants were provided with exercises after each session.

1.1.3 Procedure

An empirical method was used for investigating the research hypotheses. The data collection procedures took place during 9 weeks. Two intact classes were used to see the effectiveness of teaching phrasal verbs through concordance approach vs. traditional approach. To ensure the homogeneity of experimental and control groups, proficiency test, Ket was administered at the very early beginning. Moreover, this test was used to understand the proficiency level of participants in experimental group to categorize them in low and high proficiency levels.

Then, a brief training session (15-minute training class) was conducted for the participants to raise their awareness of the importance of phrasal verbs, to develop their ability to understand phrasal verbs. It was also emphasized that the exam results would be used for research purposes. The procedures for both groups lasted for 9 weeks.

The researcher decided which phrasal verbs would be appropriate to be taught via corpus-based activities and traditional ones. As a result, 30 phrasal verbs were selected as target items in this experimental investigation.

Before the experiment started, the pre-test(See appendix A) was developed by the researcher. In order to evaluate participants' knowledge of phrasal verbs, the pretest including 60 multiple choice items was given to the participants in both groups before commencing the treatment. Considering the results of this test, it became clear that few items were familiar to the participants and also the results convinced the researcher that the groups were homogenous with regard to their familiarity with the selected phrasal verbs. The time given for this test was 60 minutes.The correct answer to each item received one point and there was no penalty for false responses.

After the pre-test, the researcher taught to two groups. One group was taught through traditional approach and the other through concordance approach. Thirty phrasal verbs were taught in six sessions, each session five of them were taught. In the control group, they were provided with a list of five phrasal verbs in each session. The phrasal verbs were presented in isolation and participants were taught explicitly through dictionary meanings and exercises. The researcher read the phrasal verbs aloud and provided participants with their definitions, synonyms, antonyms and translations. Then, they made new sentences and they memorized the definitions for the post-test. After making sure that all of the participants clearly understood the phrasal verbs, the researcher asked the participants to do the exercises which were also presented to the participants.

For teaching to the participants who served as the experimental group, first, they were familiarized with the concept of concordance based approach and key terms such as corpus, concordance and concordancing (See appendix B). The experimental group was taught through the concordance-based approach. (In order to administer the treatment in the experimental group, a concordancer was searched. Among the concordancers; Web corp was chosen due to the easiest and accessibility of this program in the context of Iran and for EFL learners in particular. Webcorp is a ware concordance program that can be run simply by double-clicking and it doesn't need to be installed.) All the 30 phrasal verbs were taught by the help of corpus-based activities. By means of concordance activities, the learners were provided with a hand-in concordance of samples of real use of phrasal verbs taken from

Webcorp or some other sources. Since the participants in the study were at lower levels of EFL proficiency, it was decided that preparing concordance lines beforehand and taking them to class would be more appropriate than expecting the participants to use corpora themselves. They examined these online concordances, highlighting word groups surrounding the key word to discover how they are used and then answered the questions on their use in context and then the researcher gave sometime to the participants to analyze the concordance lines. The researcher asked the participants to work on the concordance exercises. The researcher elaborated and helped the participants to notice the features of phrasal verbs in the sentence. Then, the researcher elicited the meaning of each phrasal verb from the participants if it was correct, the researcher confirmed it. Otherwise, the researcher provided more examples and if they couldn't guess, the researcher herself provided them with the meaning. Then,they were provided with exercises after session.

Immediately after the thirty phrasal verbs were covered in both conditions in 6 sessions, all participants took part in the immediate post-test at the same time (See appendix A). It was administered to determine the effect of instruction. The pre-test and post-test were the same in number and content, but the place of the items on the pre-test was different from the post-test. It should be mentioned that the test comprised all the items(phrasal verbs) which were instructed during the treatment. Again, the participants were given 60 minutes to choose the correct answers.

Because the study was to assess the two methods in terms of immediate as well as delayed comprehension of phrasal verbs, it was necessary to have a delayed post-test. Nearly four weeks after the immediate post-test, the delayed-post-test (See appendix A) was administered to both groups. The purpose was to measure the degree of participants' development in both experimental group and control group and to investigate in which group the participants gained more achievement in learning phrasal verbs and also to investigate the differences between the performances of high and low proficiency learners taught phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach. After the tests were scored, the data were entered into SPSS for analysis.

1.1.4 Design

According to Hatch and Farhady(1982),because" in our field[i.e.,language teaching]….we are dealing with the most complicated human behaviors, language learning and language behaviors"(p.23), constructing a true experimental design may be difficult if not impossible in most studies. Therefore, the quasi-experimental design is the best alternative available to researchers. There is no randomized assignment of participants in this kind of design and it is often used in classroom experiments when experimental group and control group are being taught in intact classes.

A quantitative research was selected due to the nature of this research. Besides, the appropriate design for this study is the equivalent materials pretest/post-test one which is a quasi-experimental design. The schematic representation of this design is:

G=Group   T1=pretest   T2=post-test T3=delayed posttest X=treatment

      G1(random)   T1 X T2 T3

      G2(random)   T1 X T2 T3

The independent variable in this study is concordance-based approach and the dependent variable is the Iranian EFL learners' learning of phrasal verbs.

After the tests were collected, they were scored on a 60 point scale with each correct answer carrying one point. Then, the data was submitted to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to be analyzed. In order to answer the first research question, after calculating the descriptive statistics for both pre and post-test, independent-sample t-test was used after the means of gain scores for both experimental and control groups were calculated. To answer the second research question Independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of the gain scores for high and low proficiency learners' group.

1.2 Results

1.2.1 Proficiency test (KET)

The participants in the current study were 50 students, divided into two groups randomly. There were 25 participants in each group. The proficiency (KET) test was given in order to ensure their homogeneity. Table 2.1 presents the descriptive statistics of proficiency (KET) test:

Table2.1.

Descriptive statistics of proficiency (KET) test

ket			
experimental	N	Valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		56.0800
	Std. Deviation		3.12143
	Skewness		-.608
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		-.650
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		49.00
	Maximum		60.00
control	N	Valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		56.2800
	Std. Deviation		2.74651
	Skewness		-1.000
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		.703
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		49.00
	Maximum		60.00

According to the table 2.1. the mean score of experimental group is 56.08, with a standard deviation of 3.12. The mean score of control group is 56.28, with a standard deviation of 2.74. The mean scores of both groups were approximately the same. So there was no significant difference between two groups.

Table 2.2.

Descriptive statistics of experimental and control groups for pre-test.

Experimental	N	Valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		15.2800
	Std. Deviation		6.41950
	Skewness		−.971
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		−.257
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		2.00
	maximum		23.00
Control	N	valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		15.4400
	Std. Deviation		5.62050
	Skewness		−.406
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		−1.271
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		5.00
	Maximum		23.00

As Table 2.2. indicates, the mean scores of two groups(experimental and control) in the pretest were approximately the same.

Table 2.3 .
Descriptive statistics for post-test scores of the exponential and control groups

Experimental	N	Valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		52.5200
	Std. Deviation		5.02593
	Skewness		-.400
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		-1.142
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		42.00
	maximum		58.00
Control	N	valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		47.8800
	Std. Deviation		5.66657
	Skewness		-.088
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		-.264
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		37.00
	Maximum		60.00

As Table 2.3 shows, the mean score of control group is 47.88 and experimental group is 52.52.

Table 4.4

Descriptive statistics for delayed-posttest scores of the experimental and control groups.

Experimental	N	Valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		51.6800
	Std. Deviation		5.35195
	Skewness		-.413
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		-.959
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		42.00
	maximum		59.00
Control	N	valid	25
		Missing	0
	Mean		39.7200
	Std. Deviation		9.92270
	Skewness		-.187
	Std. Error of Skewness		.464
	Kurtosis		-.735
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.902
	Minimum		19.00
	Maximum		56.00

Based on Table 4.4, the mean score of experimental group in delayed-posttest is 51.68 and there is a little decrease in comparison to the mean score of the same group in post-test; however, the mean score of control group in delayed-post test is 39.72 and there is more decrease in comparison to the mean score of the same group in posttest.

1.2.2 Testing the first null hypothesis

Ho_1: there is statistically no significant difference in the performance of Iranian learners taught phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach and that of learners taught by a traditional approach.

In order to test whether there was a significant difference in the performance of Iranian learners taught phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach and that of learners taught by a traditional approach, the researcher carried out an Independent – samples t-test. Table 4.6 shows the descriptive statistics for both groups in posttest.

Table 2.5

Descriptive statistics of experimental and control groups in posttest

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest experimental	25	52.5200	5.02593	1.00519
control	25	47.8800	5.66657	1.13331

As table 2.5 shows, the mean score for the experimental group is 52.52, with a standard deviation of 5.02, while mean score for the control group is 47.88, and standard deviation is 5.66. But in order to see whether the mean difference is statistically significant or not, the results of independent-samples t-test are presented (see table 2.6)

Table 2.6

Results of Independent-samples t-test for experimental and control groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Posttest Equal variances Assumed	.002	.965	3.063	48	.004	4.64000	1.51486	1.59417	7.68583
Equal variances no assumed			3.063	47.325	.004	4.64000	1.51486	1.59305	7.68695

According to the above table, there was a significant difference, t(48)=3.06, p=0.004 <0.05, between the performances of experimental and control groups when the variances are assumed equal. (p=0.96>0.05) so the research hypothesis is supported. Since the mean score

of experimental group (52.52) is more than the mean score of control group (47.88) , the experimental group indicated the better performance of the control group. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In order to test whether there was a significant difference in the performance of two groups after four weeks, the researcher carried out an independent samples t-test for delayed-posttest. Table 4.8 presets the descriptive statistics for both groups in delayed-posttest.

Table 2.7
Descriptive statistics of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
delaytest experimental	25	51.6800	5.35195	1.07039
control	25	39.7200	9.92270	1.98454

Table 2.8
Results of independent-samples t-test for experimental and control groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Deayed-posttesEqual variancesAssumed	9.040	.004	5.304	48	.000	11.96000	2.25480	7.42642	16.49358
Equal variances not assumed			5.304	36.874	.000	11.96000	2.25480	7.39081	16.52919

Based on Table 2.8, there was a significant difference, t(36)=5.30, p=0.00<0.05, between the performances of   experimental and control groups after four weeks when the variances are not assumed equal. (p=0.004<0.05). This difference is more than the one between two groups in posttest. The mean score of control group after four weeks has decreased a lot.(from 47.88 to 39.72)

1.2.3 Testing the second Null hypothesis

Ho$_2$: there is statistically no significant difference between the performances of high and low proficiency learners taught phrasal verbs by a concordance-based approach.

In order to test this hypothesis, first the participants of the experimental group were divided into two groups: high proficiency group (their scores above 54.5) and low proficiency group (their scores below 54.5).

Then the researcher carried out an independent-samples t-test so as to test whether there was a significant difference between the performances of high and low proficiency learners in the experimental group. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 2.9
Descriptive statistics of high (2) and low (1) groups

	Rket	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	1.00	8	10.7500	7.44024	2.63052
	2.00	17	17.4118	4.74419	1.15064
Posttest	1.00	8	48.1250	3.60307	1.27388
	2.00	17	54.5882	4.24351	1.02920
Delay test	1.00	8	48.3750	4.80885	1.70018
	2.00	17	53.2353	4.98158	1.20821

Table 2.10
Results of independent samples t-test for high and low proficiency groups.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
pretest Equal variances Assumed	7.525	0.012	-2.725	23	.012	-6.66176	2.44442	-11.71844	-1.60509
Equal variances not assumed			-2.320	9.778	.043	-6.66176	2.87117	-13.7884	-.24469
Posttest Equal variances Assumed	1.060	.314	-3.714	23	.001	-6.46324	1.74041	-10.06355	-2.86292
Equal variances not assumed			-3.947	16.117	.001	-6.46324	1.63769	-9.93294	-2.99353
Delayed-posttest Equal variances Assumed	.002	.883	-2.300	23	.031	-4.86029	2.11357	-9.23255	-.48804
Equal variances not assumed			-2.330	14.264	.035	-4.86029	2.08576	-9.32606	-.39453

According to Table 2.10, there was a significant difference between the performances of high (n=17) and low (n=8) proficiency learners in the pretest, post-test and delayed-posttest,In the pretest,(sig =0.012<0.05), so the variances are not assumed equal, t (9.77) = -2.32, sig = 0.043<0.05, so null hypothesis was rejected and there was significant difference between high and low groups in the pretest.

p.13

In posttest, sig =0.31>0.05, so the variances are assumed equal, t(23)=-3.71, sig =001<0.05, so null hypothesis was rejected and there was a significant difference between high and low groups in posttest.

In delayed -posttest, sig=0.88>0.05, so the variances are assumed equal, t (23) =-2.30, p=0.031<0.05, so null hypothesis was rejected and there was a significant difference between high and low groups in delayed-posttest.

1.3. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to see if there is any significant difference between the performance of Iranian learners taught phrasal verbs by a concordance approach and the traditional one. Also, this question was investigated on the basis of the performance of high and low proficiency learners who were taught through the concordance-based approach.

The results are interesting since they provide evidence for the effectiveness of concordance approach in helping learners improve their knowledge and understanding of phrasal verbs. The language items for treatment were decidedly selected from among the problematic aspects of language consistent with the common assumption among researchers in this area that problematic aspects are more in need of new techniques than the less problematic items which are adequately presented and practiced trough traditional methods and techniques (see Boulton, 2009, 2010).The fact that the participants, who had almost no familiarity with concordance lines, managed to glean the meaning of phrasal verbs from concordance lines much better than traditional approach suggests that concordance-based approach can be a better approach.

This finding further indicates that for concordancing to be effective, longer periods of treatments are required since in most studies conducted with very few sessions of treatment no difference has been reported between concordance and traditional type of activities. As an example of these studies, Boulton (2009) analyzed the ability of the research participants to extract the meaning of linking adverbials. The results showed gain for both concordance and traditional reference material group between the pretest and posttest though no significant difference was found between the two groups at the posttest. In a subsequent study, Boulton (2010) found that both traditional and concordance treatment groups improved between the pretest and posttest; however, the posttest difference of the two groups was not significant. In both studies, the treatment lasted for one session.

The reasons for superiority of concordance-based approach may be manifold. One reason for the superiority of concordance approach may be that, in concordance activities, participants are flooded with enormous amount of data that promote the likelihood of incidental learning which by nature might include a small percentage of the total learning. Cobb (1997) found that consulting words in concordance lines led to small but consistent out comes in participants' knowledge of vocabulary.

The advantages of concordance-based approach mentioned above shouldn't distract us from considering the results gained for the control group. Comparing the results of the pretest with the results of the immediate and delayed posttests of this group, we can observe that control group achieved a lot although not as much as that of experimental group. The participants in the control group started the activities with more confidence because they had

the correct answer at hand, and they were not forced to work out the meaning. The only thing they had to do was to work with that meaning in all phases of the activity. After reading the definitions and the two example sentences, they were able to answer the questions with greater confidence and ease, and most of their answers, as the researcher checked, were correct. So learners have confidence in what they are doing, and this helps them mitigate their anxiety and frustration and in effect increase their motivation. Comparing the two methods of treatment in the present study, we can conclude that both of them are useful. However, the group working with concordance-based approach had the advantage of coping with language in its natural complexity. The considerable length of treatment period might have helped them gain more confidence in dealing with the meaning of phrasal verbs and as a result exceeding the other group in immediate and delayed posttests.

The result of this study was in line with Carmen Barrera Cubism (2012) study who tried to see how effective the use of corpus listing in the L_2 classroom is. They were given a concordance list to be analyzed, interpreted and described. The results showed that this methodology was significant and the learners felt comfortable analyzing concordance listing.

Also, the findings of this study support Agnes Huang's (2010) study who investigated whether a corpus-based instruction could deepen EFL learners' knowledge of periphrastic causative: make, cause, and let. The analysis of their data revealed that the experimental group improved and outperformed the control group significantly in the posttest. Also, the result of this study is in line with Bahns (1993) which suggests, excessive exposures to huge amounts of linguistic data can enhance learners' sense of discovery learning and problem solving activities. The use of concordancing material as a basis for developing models and descriptions of language showed to be among the most far-reaching achievements made in the realm of second/foreign language instruction. The result of this study is also in line with Koosha and Jafarpours' claim (2006) that students who use a concordance as a tool for learning collocations will outperform the students who learn collocations through conventional tasks.

The findings of the present study is also compatible with the results of Fatemi's (2010) study which aimed at identifying the difference between the performance of high and low proficiency learners taught through the concordance approach. The analysis of pre-test and post-test results showed that learners with higher levels of collocation knowledge benefited more from concordance-based instruction. There might be some reasons with regard to the present study. High proficiency learners may be more motivated to learn the new phrasal verbs and may be they are more active in the classroom. As a result, they respond more positively to the concordance-based approach. In addition, each learner has different methods for learning the language. The high proficiency learners might have the learning strategy like the concordance method. As a result, the performance is better than the performance of the low proficiency learners. Moreover, according to Azzaro (2012, p.5), phrasal verbs have always been difficult for non-native speakers and are often the target for error or avoidance strategies. This Azzaro's sentence may be another reason for the result of concordance methodology regarding the performance of the low ones. In another word, because phrasal verbs are difficult for non-native speakers of English, they avoid using them.so; these phrasal verbs don not stick in mind for a long time.

However, the findings of the present study is not compatible with the results of Fatemi's (2010) study which aimed at identifying the types of English collocations that are best learned and retained by Iranian EFL learners using concordance-based instruction. The analysis of pre-test and post-test results showed no significant difference in the learning of each type of collocation. These might be some reasons for this study's results. One reason might relate to the new teaching method used in the classroom. Because the learners are not much familiar with the concordance methodology, it takes time to respond positively to this technique. May be if the study is repeated again, the concordance methodology seems to be better than the traditional one. In addition, since in this methodology learners are presented with a large number of real and authentic data for one single word (in here phrasal verb), it may be to some extent boring for them to make direct discoveries about language themselves. Also, concordance-based approach needs cooperation among participants in the classroom. In fact, the concordance needs students' involvement and it promotes the friendly competitions in the classroom. Therefore, the result of this study may be due to the lack of participation and cooperation among the learners in the classroom.

With regard to the learners' learning style, the proven positive effects of concordancing in this study show that the learners can be suited to inducing phrasal verb patterns from concordances by themselves. The improvement in the learners' test scores suggests that this type of 'discovery learning' or inductive approach can be especially effective for learning phrasal verbs. It is contrary to the deductive approach in which teachers have to introduce phrasal verbs first and then give students sentences later.

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