

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



Effectiveness of Isolated vs. Integrated Form-Focused Instruction in Iranian EFL Classrooms

[PP: 137-149]

Samira Iraj
Urmia University
Iran

Javad Gholami
(Corresponding Author)
Urmia University
Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effectiveness of integrated form-focused instruction (FFI) vs. isolated FFI on certain target structures, namely passives and condition type two. Three experienced female teachers taught 60 EFL learners in two experimental groups receiving isolated and integrated FFI treatment packages and in one control group for 12 sessions. The treatment in the integrated group included the use of videos, games, free discussions, essay writing, and readings with follow-up questions. After homogenizing the participants through a proficiency test, all of them were briefed on the concept of integrated and isolated FFIs and experienced this type of instruction through some concrete tasks on one grammatical structure. Similarly, the teachers were briefed on these two types of FFIs and practiced micro-teaching of one grammatical structure. Parallel pre- and post-tests in the form of recognition and production types were administered to all three groups in order to measure the effectiveness of the two treatments. The findings manifested the learners in both treatment groups outperformed their counterparts in the control group. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups, and integrated group learners achieved the highest scores in both production and recognition tests. This study advocates more incorporation of integrated FFI and supports the notion that it could lead to a higher rate of meaning-oriented learner-generated output along with effective internalization of grammatical structures in EFL classes.

Keywords: *Form-Focused Instruction (FFI), Isolated FFI, Integrated FFI, EFL Classes, Iranian*

ARTICLE	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
INFO	23/05/2018	24/06/2018	04/09/2018

Suggested citation:

Iraji, S. & Gholami, J. (2018). Effectiveness of Isolated vs. Integrated Form-Focused Instruction in Iranian EFL Classrooms. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 6(3). 137-149.

1. Introduction

Following the pendulum shifts from focus on forms (FonFs) to focus on meaning and then integration of these two with the emergence of focus on form (FonF), strong theories have supported this notion with robust justifications for the emergence and the practice of FonF. Therefore, the general basis of focus on form instruction is based on four hypotheses. The first hypothesis refers to Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1983) in which the oral communication promotes L2 comprehension and production, and ultimately facilitates language development, but the condition for these processes is the negotiation of meaning between participants to repair communication problems. The second hypothesis is based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1981) which is like first language acquisition. Then, Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) has been taken into

account. She showed that not only is comprehensible input needed, but also comprehensible output equally is crucial (Swain, 1985). Finally, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990; 1995) defined that input, by its own, cannot lead to learning if it is not noticed. (Schmidt, 1990, 2001).

Nowadays, FonF has been accepted as a legitimate option in EFL/ESL classes and the challenge in ESL/EFL is to find diverse options to operationalize and implement alternative ways of drawing attention to language in primarily meaning oriented activities. Therefore, there have been a good number of classifications and dichotomies on FonF. Among these dichotomies, isolated versus integrated focus on form is still a point of controversy (Spada, Jessop, Tomita, Suzuki, & Valeo, 2014).

Isolated FFI has been sometimes mistakenly understood as Focus on Forms,



and also because of the limited amount of studies, the effectiveness of these two instructions are under question by some teachers and instructors. Therefore, there is a place to do studies to investigate the effectiveness of isolated FonF versus integrated FonF in EFL classes. In Iran, there are weaknesses due to how to teach or how to learn English effectively based on these two instructions. There are also numerous doubts on the way of creating a suitable context to maximize the learner's achievements. Therefore, a clear gap is still available: How to teach grammatical structures according to integrated FFI as well as isolated FFI in EFL classes?

FFI is a vast area of inquiry that is of considerable interest to both second language pedagogy and second language acquisition. FonF, as defined by Long (1991, pp. 45-46), "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication". Plenty of research studies on second language acquisition (SLA) research have demonstrated that FFI builds up learners' awareness about target language (Spada, 2006).

Some researchers pointed out that the more the learners are provided with communicative activities without noticing grammatical structures, the less output will be explored (Parviz & Gorjian, 2013, Laufer & Girsai, 2008, Celce-Murcia, 2001).

In another distinction based on the nature of FonF, Spada and Lightbown (2008) added another option to Long (1991) and Ellis' (2001) adaptations of FonF and proposed isolated and integrated FFIs. It is worth mentioning that isolated and integrated FFIs can be put at the two endpoints of a continuum with varying degrees along that continuum (Parviz & Gorjian, 2013).

Isolated FFI includes attracting learners' attention to form before a communicative exercise or after a communicative exercise in which learners have experienced problems utilizing a specific language form. Isolated FFI happens as a major aspect of a communicative language program and contrasts from Long's (1991) focus on forms, which includes precise educating and rehearsing of pre-decided language forms taking into account a structural syllabus that is not connected with genuine communicative practice (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

Integrated FFI is similar to what Ellis (2001) refers to as planned and incidental FonF. Therefore, the studies carried out to investigate incidental and planned FonF can be considered as studies investigating Integrated FFI. Regarding the effectiveness of isolated and integrated FFI, to our best knowledge, only two studies have been done. One of them was carried out by Spada, Jessop, Tomita, Suzuki, and Valeo (2014) on learning the passive construction. The results indicated that both integrated and isolated FFI had a positive effect on learning the target instruction. However, it was revealed that learners whose treatment was in the form of integrated FFI outperformed the ones who received isolated FFI in the speaking activities. It was also indicated that the isolated FFI group had a better performance compared with the Integrated FFI group in the written task (a measure of explicit knowledge). Although this difference was not significant, a large effect size was found for it.

Another study on the effectiveness of isolated and integrated FFI was conducted by Elgun-Gunduz, Akcan, and Bayyurt (2012). They carried out their study with primary level school-aged learners. Their study indicated that the learners in integrated group outperformed the learners in isolated group regarding grammatical targets, and vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, it was found that the learners who received integrated FFI were more satisfied with the type of their instruction than the ones whose instruction was in the form of isolated FFI.

From this brief overview of the literature, it is clear that studies on comparing the effectiveness of isolated FFI with integrated FFI are quite rare. Therefore, our knowledge of the effectiveness of these types of FFI is premature. Furthermore, based on an interview with a number of EFL teachers in Iran, it was found that they did not have enough knowledge of the benefits of isolated and integrated FFI on learners. Therefore, in order to collect more information about the effectiveness of isolated and integrated FFI and to contribute to EFL teachers' understanding of the potential differential effects of isolated and integrated FFI on learners' grammatical gains, the present study investigated the effectiveness of these two approaches in an EFL context. To this end, two different measures (namely, recognition-type tests and production-type tests) were used to provide us with more fruitful findings.

In this regard, to the best of our knowledge, there is not still a clear study to compare isolated FFI versus integrated FFI regarding teaching and learning specific grammatical structures in EFL classes in Iran. Moreover, there are very few studies delving into the effectiveness of integrated FFI versus isolated FFI mostly in EFL contexts including Iran. Thus, this research attempts to explore any possible impacts of these two instructions and their effectiveness on learners' achievements in the context of Iran. No studies have directly compared the intermediate level EFL learners' outcomes via isolated or integrated FFIs.

According to the literature, the researchers noticed that still Iranian teachers are highly preoccupied with explicit ways of teaching grammar or teaching grammar in isolation, and there have been very few attempts on the parts of the teachers as well as researchers to examine the contextualize grammar teaching, which is the basic premise of integrated FFI. Therefore, this study explored the effectiveness of integrated FFI versus isolated FFI on certain grammatical structures. The rate of the learners' achievement based on these two instructions is another goal of the present research. The following research questions were formulated as part of the present study.

1. Is there any significant difference between isolated FFI and integrated FFI classes in their relative effects on EFL students' recognition accuracy of grammatical structures?
2. Is there any significant difference between isolated FFI and integrated FFI classes in their relative effects on EFL students' production accuracy of grammatical structures?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

The present study explored any possible effects of isolated FFI as well as integrated FFI on learners' achievements in EFL classes towards specific grammatical structures in EFL context. To this end, 60 learners with an intermediate level of proficiency studying at a private language school in the North-West of Iran were randomly selected as the participants of the study. The participants were female learners ranging in age from 16 to 26.

In order to investigate any possible impacts of the two FFI options, the learners were divided into three groups randomly. Accordingly, there were two experimental groups and one control group. These three groups of learners were instructed by three

female teachers. The teacher participants were all experienced teachers who were selected through consultation with the board of the language school where they worked. Teachers with at least five years of teaching experience are experienced ones (Gatbonton, 1999; Tsui, 2005).

2.2 Procedure

As part of a larger study, at first, three groups of intermediate EFL learners at a private language institute in Iran were randomly selected and were assigned to integrate FFI, isolated FFI and control groups. The participants were homogenized through Preliminary English Test (PET). Within PET, the scores range from 80 (A1) to 230 (C2). We considered score range of 140 (B1) - 180 (B2) as intermediate language learners.

The experimental groups received either isolated FFI or integrated FFI in teaching the specified grammatical target structures. The participants in the control group, however, received no instruction on how to teach the target features in any form. The instructor for this group was to follow the commonly practiced methodology in the language institute in line with the institute's policy and teachers guide of the used materials.

All groups studied *World English* course book, which includes all four basic language skills that comprise interesting and challenging contents, images, and videos. The series emerge regarding the communicative goals containing the real and authentic topics, conversations within different cultures in order to motivate learners fully, and also to connect all learners to each other.

Within the present study the researchers tried to teach and make research on three grammatical structures, namely as present perfect, present perfect passive, and second conditional sentences, throughout 12 sessions for both experimental groups via different FonF instructions to investigate any possible effects of isolated versus integrated FFI on learners' accuracy achievements. The treatment of this study was based on two forms of FFIs namely as integrated and isolated instructions. Each type of instruction depended on different ways and strategies of teaching. It is worth mentioning that all groups were in communicative-based contexts, and they were different only in applying the different methodologies of teaching.

In order to explore the effectiveness of the FFIs, all participants were oriented



towards instructions of this very study prior to the administration of the instructions. The reason for such an activity was that we could not expect isolated group members to have a general idea about integrated FFI, and vice versa.

Therefore, all experienced EFL teachers were first trained through two orientation workshops regarding the implementation of treatment packages in EFL classes on how to operationalize integrated FFIs implicitly through videos, games, free discussions, and prompt-based essay writing. The teachers were also briefed on how to provide some basic definitions and examples taking into account the FFIs. Moreover, definitions of some related instructions provided by Spada (2008), some related lectures, as well as a number of reading comprehension activities were run. The teachers were given some explanation accompanied with some materials to read on the topic and became more familiar with some specific tasks related to the two mentioned FFIs. Additionally, the researchers asked the teachers to prepare small samples of micro-teaching in groups of one or two for practicing the materials which were first introduced by Spada (2008). The researchers provided feedback to the teachers to produce exact insights on the instructions. After being briefed on the way of implementing integrated FFI, they received instruction on how to realize isolated FFI explicitly prior to and following communicatively driven activities. Similarly, the experimental groups of learners were briefed on isolated FFI and experienced learning a limited number of target structures through isolated approaches, respectively. Likewise, the learners were oriented to isolated and integrated FFIs through some explanation and illustration.

In order to collect the data, all participants participated in pre-test and post-test. The researchers aim was to examine the specific grammatical instructions which were the focus of integrated and isolated FFIs in both pre- and post-tests. All learners were assessed toward specific treatments that teachers applied in their classes. Recognition and production tasks were provided as pre and posttests.

According to recognition tasks, all students were evaluated by specific tests (appendix I) to evaluate specific grammatical structures which were emphasized in classes based on particular instructions in the experimental groups. The

tests were parallel to mid-term and final exams (See Appendix I). The tests were in the format of true/false and filling the blanks. In the production task, learners were supposed to compose a 150-word essay to articulate their learning by the writing task according to the target grammatical points. In the prompt-based writing, all learners were required to use the covered grammatical structures. All written essays were scored based on T-units (See Appendix II) which has been recommended by Wolfe-Quintero (1998), as a syntactic scaling method, for the accuracy of using the target grammatical points, in order to identify the exact level of learners' ability. Regarding the T-unit scale, the researchers measured the length of production at the clausal, sentential, or a sentence complexity, and accuracy.

Twenty five items according to the target structures were included in recognition tests (See Appendix I in which 10 of the item have been given). The scoring was from zero to 100. Scores from pre-test and post-test were analyzed to explore the effectiveness of the FFIs in EFL classes.

Sample items on passive voice:

1. Channel Islanders English and French.

- a) speak
- b) is spoken
- c) is speaking

2. Your life will by this book.

- a) change
- b) be changed
- c) be changing

Sample items on conditional Type II

1. If Henry.....(drive) his car to work, he.....(spend) some petrol.

2. She wouldn't have had two laptops if she.....one to her friend.

- a) Dose not lent
- b) Did not lend
- c) Had not lent

Additionally, prompt-based writings were also used to gauge the learners' production knowledge of the target structures. Therefore, some related topics were provided for both integrated and isolated groups. The scores were between zero and 100. The learners were supposed to write 150 words in their essays as shown in the following sample writing prompt. The written essays were analyzed based on T-unit scale as already explained.

What would you do if you were a president? (Conditionals)

Describe the earthquake in Kermanshah. What happened to people, buildings, and cars? (Passive)

2.3 Treatments

2.3.1 Treatment Package for Integrated FFI Group

In the integrated FFI group, the instruction on the target structures embedded into communicative tasks. The learners were engaged in communicating with each other, and the teacher carefully observed them and provided them with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target structures, as noted by Spada and Lightbown (2008). All learners performed meaning-focused tasks, which required them to use the target structures. There were numerous tasks for each target structure. These tasks included the use of videos, games, free discussion/meaning-oriented questions, reading texts with follow-up comprehension questions, and essay writing.

The following is a brief explanation on how each of the above-mentioned tasks are put into practice.

Videos

The learners watched an episode (in the form of songs, cartoons, etc.) and then asked comprehension questions about it. If possible, they were also asked questions in order to relate their own experience to the content of the video. The questions were in a form that required using the target structures. The teacher provided the learners with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, if the learners failed to use the target structures correctly.

Games

In these tasks, the learners were engaged in playing a game whose aim is to necessitate the learners to use the target structures in order to be able to successfully communicate. The learners were carefully observed by the teacher while they were playing the game. The teacher provided the learners with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target structures.

Free discussion / meaning-oriented questions

The learners were provided with a set of questions and supposed to ask them of each other. The questions were in a form that their responses were requiring using the target structures. This task can be practiced in groups, pairs, and whole-class. In this task, too, the teacher observed the learners carefully and gave them corrective feedback if they do not use the target structures correctly.

Reading texts with follow-up comprehension questions

The learners were provided with some reading texts in which there were ample exemplars of the target structures. They were asked to read the reading and make up a summary of it. They also asked to answer the comprehension questions which were required them to use the target structures. They may also ask to pose their own views about the reading and to discuss it with each other. The discussion managed in a way that required the learners to use the target structures. Similar to the other tasks, the learners provided with corrective feedback on their errors in using the target structures.

Essay writing

The learners were asked to write a paragraph on the given topic. The topic was in a form that was required the learners to use the target structures. In addition, the instructions were indicate how many sentences the learners have to write. This was done in order to elicit more instances of the target structures from the learners. Similar to the previous tasks, the teacher observed the learners and provided them with corrective feedback on their errors in using the target structures. Once the learners have finished the writing, they were asked to read their writings in class or shared them with their partners. Again, corrective feedback provided to the learners if they commit errors in using the target structures.

To concretely illustrate how the instruction was carried out, detailed explanation for teaching the present unreal conditional through integrated FFI is provided as an example:

The treatment of the first session started with a warm-up. The warm-up included a short conversation among all learners. The topic of the discussion was relevant to the theme of the activity. Then, the teacher played a song in the form of a video clip and asked the students to listen to it and note what the singer says she would do if she were a boy. Having listened to the song, the learners were asked comprehension questions about what the singer said she would do and to say if they would do the same. Here, the learners were provided with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target structure (i.e., present unreal conditionals).

For the next stage, the teacher provided the learners with a set of questions and wanted them to ask these questions from each other in groups of 3-4. They were asked to give complete answers to the questions. The questions were in the form of present



unreal questions, and each learner's questions were different from her group mates'. To concretely illustrate how they should do the task, the teacher performed the task herself for 2-3 questions. While the learners were performing the task, the teacher observed them carefully and provided them with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target structure.

As another task, the learners were provided with a set of ideas and were asked to make questions about them in order to ask or share questions by their partners. In order to encourage them to use the present unreal conditional in their questions, the response clause plus "if" (i.e., what would you do if ...) was written on their sheets, and they were asked to complete the questions using each given idea. Here again the teacher made 1-2 questions herself and asked them from a few learners in order to clearly illustrate how the task should be performed. Having composed questions, the learners asked them from their partners, and their partners were asked to give complete answers. While the learners were performing the task, the teacher carefully observed them and gave corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, to them on their errors in using the target structure.

The treatment of the second session was very similar to the first session. The second session started with a warm-up in the form of a short-whole class discussion. The discussion was relevant to the theme of the following activity, which was a song in the form of a video clip. Then, the song was played and the learners were asked to note what the singer says he would do if he had a million dollars. Having listened to the song, the learners were asked comprehension questions about what the singer says he would do. They were asked if they would do the same.

Next, similar to the first session, the learners were provided with a set of questions and were asked to ask the questions from each other in groups of 3-4, and they were asked to give complete answers to the questions. The teacher provided a model for the task in order to make the learners aware of how they are supposed to perform the task. While the learners were performing the task, they were observed carefully by the teacher and were provided with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target structure.

For another task, the learners were provided with some sheets asking the learners what they would do in different situations and what they think their partner would do in those situations. They were asked to write down answers in complete sentences. Similar to the previous tasks, the teacher provided a model for the task in order to make the learners aware of the way they should perform the task. After completing the task, they read them out to their partners and checked if they have made correct guesses about them. While the learners were performing the task, the teacher observed them carefully and provided them with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target feature.

2.3.2 Treatment package for isolated FFI group

In isolated group, although all learners were in a communicative context, in order to get the effectiveness of isolated FFI, the teacher tried to teach all specific grammatical structures in a separate format. Thus, the teacher highlighted target structures at the beginning of the session, and then provided some background information related to those structures. The teacher tried to direct learners' attention directly to certain topics and explained the forms and their functions. After that, the isolated groups' teacher asked the learners to do the exercises and assignments of the specific grammatical structure that were mentioned in their course books. After doing these activities and tasks, learners were supposed to create short dialogues based on the discussed content. In order to obviously explore isolated FFI, the detailed steps in isolated FFI classes that were implemented, are summarized in the following.

In this group, the teacher explicitly informed the learners that they were going to study a specific structure at the beginning of the class. She, then, started teaching the target structures explicitly. Having taught the structures, she provided the learners with some form-based activities such as fill-in-the-blanks, multiple-choice questions, unscrambling sentences, etc. The learners were provided with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, if they failed to use the target structures correctly.

Once the form-based activities were finished, the teacher provided the learners with some meaning-oriented focused tasks in order to give the learners some opportunities to practice the target structures in

communicative tasks. These tasks were the same as the ones in the integrated FFI group. However, no corrective feedback was given to the learners on their errors in using the target structures while they were performing the tasks. Rather, the teacher noted the errors on using the target features and addressed them once the tasks were ended.

To concretely illustrate how the instruction was carried out in this group, detailed explanation for teaching the present unreal conditional is provided here: The treatment of the first session started with a brief overview of the present real conditional, which the learners have already studied. This was done to activate the learners' background knowledge and to build the new structure on the already known one. Next, the teacher explicitly informed the learners about the target instruction. That is, she told the learners that they were going to study the present unreal conditional. Then, the teacher started to teach the target structure explicitly. Having finished the explicit instruction, she asked the learners to give examples. She provided the learners with explicit corrective feedback on their errors in using the target structure in their examples. After that, the learners were provided with three form-based activities. The first one was a set of sentences with some options for the learners to choose from, in order to complete the sentences correctly. These options were addressed the verb forms in both the "if clause" and the "response clause". The second form-based activity was a set of sentences with some blanks followed by the base form of the verbs in both clauses. The learners were asked to write the correct form of the given verbs in the blanks. The third form-based activity was a set of scrambled present unreal conditional sentences. The learners were asked to unscramble the sentences in order to make correct present unreal conditional sentences. In all of the three form-based activities the teacher observed the learners and provided them with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, on their errors in using the target feature. The learners also read out the sentences and were corrected explicitly for their errors in using the target structure.

As the next phase of isolated FFI, the learners were provided with some meaning-oriented tasks which made them use the target structure in their communication. These tasks were the same as the ones used in integrated FFI in the first session. However, unlike the integrated FFI, they

were not provided with any corrective feedback on their errors in using the target structure while they were performing the tasks. Rather, the teacher noted their errors in using the target structure and addressed them after the tasks were ended.

The second session started with a brief overview of the present unreal conditional. After that, the learners were provided with three form-based activities. These activities were parallel to (but not the same as) the ones in the first session. Similar to the first session, the teacher carefully observed the learners while they were doing the activities and provided them with explicit feedback on their errors in using the target structure. The learners also read out the sentences once they have done the activities. At this stage, the learners were also provided with corrective feedback, mostly of the explicit type, if they had any errors in using the target structure.

Within the next stage, some focused meaning-oriented tasks were utilized in order to provide the learners with some opportunities to use the target feature in meaning-oriented communication. These tasks were the same as the ones in the integrated FFI in the second session. The instructions on how to perform the tasks were also the same. The only difference with the integrated FFI, however, was that the teacher did not give any corrective feedback to the learners on their errors in using the target feature while they were performing the tasks. The teacher simply noted the learners' errors on using the target feature and addressed them once the tasks were finished.

3. Results

The first research question of the present study focused on exploring the effectiveness of isolated and integrated FFIs on EFL students' recognition accuracy of grammatical structures. Based on the aims of this question, the results of all of the groups on the recognition accuracy posttest were compared in order to determine the differences among their performances on this test. The results of this comparison are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Recognition Accuracy post test



	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Isolated FFI	30	78.23	14.904	2.721	72.67	83.80	54	100
Integrated FFI	30	90.97	6.955	1.270	88.37	93.56	77	100
Control	30	62.00	15.360	2.804	56.26	67.74	34	100
Total	90	77.07	17.525	1.847	73.40	80.74	34	100

As Table 1 shows, the integrated FFI group had the best performance on the post test (M=90.97) in comparison to the isolated FFI group and control group. Moreover, the isolated FFI group members' performance (M=78.23) was better than the control group (62.00). However, in order to determine the statistical significance of the differences among these groups, a one-way between groups ANOVA test was employed. One of the requirements of the ANOVA test is the determination of the homogeneity of variances (Pallant, 2007). Table 2 shows the results of the Levene's test for homogeneity of variances.

Table 2: Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Recognition Accuracy post test

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
8.949	2	87	.702

According to Table 2, the result of the Levene's test of homogeneity of variances (.702) was higher than .05, and therefore the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Based on the results of this test, the assumptions of ANOVA were met; the results of which are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: The ANOVA Test of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Recognition Accuracy post test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12647.267	2	6323.633	37.460	.000
Within Groups	14686.333	87	168.808		
Total	27333.600	89			

As Table 3 shows, there was a significant difference among the groups since the p-value .000 (marked as Sig) was less than the level of significance .05. However, these results do not show which group is different from the other groups, therefore, the results of the post hoc test have to be determined. The results of the post hoc Tukey test are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Tukey Test of the Multiple Comparisons of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group,

Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Recognition Accuracy post test

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Isolated FFI Group	Integrated FFI Group	-12.733*	3.355	.001	-20.73	-4.73
Isolated FFI Group	Control	16.233*	3.355	.000	8.23	24.23
Integrated FFI Group	Isolated FFI Group	12.733*	3.355	.001	4.73	20.73
Integrated FFI Group	Control	28.967*	3.355	.000	20.97	36.97
Control	Isolated FFI Group	-16.233*	3.355	.000	-24.23	-8.23
Control	Integrated FFI Group	-28.967*	3.355	.000	-36.97	-20.97

According to Table 4, the results of all the groups on the recognition accuracy posttest are significantly different from each other. The asterisks in the results of the second column of this table (i.e., Mean Difference) show that, there were significant differences among the performances of all of the groups on the posttest. The examination of the p-values (marked as Sig) shows that all of them are less than the level of significance .05. Based on these results we can conclude that, integrated FFI was more effective than isolated FFI for the EFL learners' recognition accuracy. Moreover, although isolated FFI was less effective than the integrated FFI, it was more effective than the instruction provided for the control group. These significant differences among the performances of these groups are shown in Figure 1.

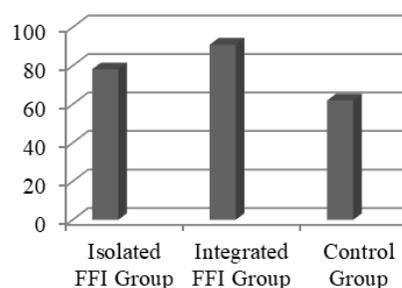


Figure 1: Comparison among the performances of the isolated FFI group, integrated FFI group, and control group on the recognition accuracy posttest.

Based on the results it was argued that, there was a significant difference between isolated FFI and integrated FFI classes in their relative effects on EFL students' recognition accuracy of grammatical structures.

The second research question investigated the relative effectiveness of isolated and integrated FFIs in EFL classes and their relative effects on EFL students' writing accuracy of grammatical structures. Based on the aims of this question, the results of all the groups on writing accuracy posttest were compared in order to determine the differences among their

performances on this test. The results of this comparison are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison among the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Writing Accuracy posttest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Isolated FFI Group	30	78.43	13.718	2.505	73.31	83.56	47	100
Integrated FFI Group	30	89.00	9.809	1.791	85.34	92.66	64	100
Control Group	30	66.50	13.818	2.523	61.34	71.66	41	100
Total	90	77.98	15.502	1.634	74.73	81.22	41	100

As Table 5 shows, the integrated FFI group had the best performance on the posttest (M=89.00) in comparison to the isolated FFI group and control group. Moreover, the isolated FFI group members' performance (M=78.43) was better than the control group (66.50). However, in order to determine the statistical significance of the differences among these groups, a one-way between groups test of ANOVA was employed. One of the requirements of ANOVA is the determination of the homogeneity of variances (Pallant, 2007); the results of which are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Writing Accuracy posttest

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.000	2	87	.455

According to Table 6, the result of the Levene's test for homogeneity of variances (.455) was higher than .05, and therefore the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Based on the results of this test, the assumptions of ANOVA were met. The results of ANOVA are provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7: The ANOVA Test of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Writing Accuracy posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7603.089	2	3801.544	23.993	.000
Within Groups	13784.867	87	158.447		
Total	21387.956	89			

As Table 7 shows, there was a significant difference among the groups since the p-value .000 (marked as *Sig*) was less than the level of significance .05. However, these results do not show which group is different from the other groups,

therefore, the results of the post hoc test have to be determined. The results of the post hoc Tukey test are provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Tukey Test of the Multiple Comparisons of the Performances of the Isolated FFI Group, Integrated FFI Group, and Control Group on the Writing Accuracy posttest

(I) Group	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Isolated	Integrated	-10.567*	3.250	.005	-18.32	-2.82	
	Control	11.933*	3.250	.001	4.18	19.68	
Integrated	Isolated	10.567*	3.250	.005	2.82	18.32	
	Control	22.500*	3.250	.000	14.75	30.25	
Control	Isolated	-11.933*	3.250	.001	-19.68	-4.18	
	Integrated	-22.500*	3.250	.000	-30.25	-14.75	

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to Table 8, the results of all the groups on the writing accuracy posttest are significantly different from each other. The asterisks in the results of the second column of this table (i.e., *Mean Difference*) show that there were significant differences among the performances of all the groups on the posttest. The examination of the p-values (marked as *Sig*) shows that all of them are less than the level of significance .05. Based on these results we can conclude that, integrated FFI was more effective than isolated FFI for the EFL learners' writing accuracy. Moreover, although isolated FFI was less effective than the integrated FFI, it was more effective than the instruction provided for the control group. These significant differences among the performances of these groups are shown in Figure 2.

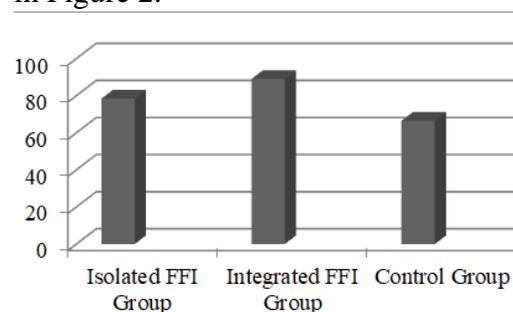


Figure 2: Performances of the isolated FFI group, integrated FFI group, and control group on the writing accuracy posttest.

4. Discussion

Based on the relative improvement shown between the pre-test and post-test, one can conclude that integrated FFI was more effective for teaching grammar than isolated FFI. We observed that motivation increased when the learners were involved in purposeful activities integrating content and language learning. The fact that the pre-test scores of the isolated group were lower than



those of the integrated group implied that the isolated group was not as effective as the integrated one as far as the learning of these two grammatical structures is concerned.

These findings support that learning occurs well and more optimally through integrated FFI instruction (Crandall, 1993; Krashen, 1985). When learners are exposed to purposeful and meaningful samples of the target language and when they are taught a subject matter and language simultaneously, their language learning improves (Brinton, 1989; Crandall, 1987; Krashen, 1985; Met, 1991). As the students purposefully tried to achieve a communicative objective, their increased motivation resulted in both language learning and sustained retention (Chapple & Curtis, 2000).

In the integrated FFI classrooms, the learners were expected to make connections between new knowledge and what they already know about the content and the language forms. As learners connect new learning with previous learning, learning becomes more meaningful (Flowerdew, 1993; Genesee, 1994; Kasper, 1995). When the learners in the integrated FFI group addressed topics that were related to previously studied topics, and when they could use similar language forms to communicate new ideas, their language use became more automatic. It is likely that repeated opportunities to make and repeat these connections contributed to better language use and better performance in the essay-writing tasks.

The results of the isolated FFI classrooms showed that although the students could use certain target language forms correctly during some structured and grammar-center activities, such as fill-in-the-gaps or true/false exercises, they had more difficulty in using the same target forms in contextualized communicative activities, including essay writing. The findings demonstrate that the students could learn certain rules about linguistic forms in the target language through isolated and explicit instruction. They could manage tasks that were structured and grammar-focused. However, they had to make an extra effort to transfer what they had learned through isolated instruction into their communicative activities.

This study found that the learners in the integrated group increased their scores from pretest to posttest. Integrated FFI made the most improvement, then isolated FFI, for learning target structures. According to

Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988), learners in the isolated group could notice the grammatical structures fully, which leads to explicit learning of grammatical targets, whereas in integrated treatment, the learners were taught how to apply the target structures in communication or in written form as well. As in Abdolmanafi (2010), Ammar and Lightbown (2004), Doughty (1991), and Yabuki-Soh (2007), in isolated group, learners were engaged to accomplish the task with explicit grammatical structures and they only received explicit correction for their grammatical errors. However, learners in the integrated group were motivated and supposed to use the grammatical point communicatively. Besides, in integrated group, tasks were explored to provide more communicative opportunities, and implicit help was also provided by teachers to enhance the general knowledge of the learners. Besides, learners participated in meaningful communications to gain the vocabulary meanings and be aware of using the target structures in conversations. To this end, the implicit and oral feedback was employed to explore the detailed points. The integrated FFI improved in posttest, that is, integrated treatments enabled learners to contextually comprehend target structures (Rutherford & Sharwood Smith, 1988).

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Elgun-Gunduz, et al. (2012) in that both studies found that learners in integrated group outperformed isolated group members. Their study concerned writing, vocabulary, and grammar learning, but the current study explored the meaningful differences among learning of specific grammatical targets in an EFL context.

Another study by Ansarina, Araste, Banan Khojaste (2014) was conducted with 454 Turkish low and high proficiency level learners taking into consideration their achievements of grammatical targets through the use of integrated and isolated FFIs. The results manifested that low-level students had no statistically significant achievement developments regarding these FFIs. On the other hand, for the advanced learners, integrated FFI help them gain more grammatical knowledge compared with isolated FFI. Our study shed more light on the results obtained from the study by Ansarina et al., (2014). In their study, they did not take into consideration the intermediate language learners, therefore

their study can be generalized to other proficiency levels (i.e., intermediate level).

Moreover, Taspikidion (2015) studied on the 5th year primary learners. The researcher divided learners into two groups, integrated group with 57 participants, isolated group 73 learners respectively. The past-tense structure was focused as the target structure. The results showed that isolated FFI had more significant long-term effect than integrated FFI on the acquisition of the English past-tense. As the findings of the above study are in line with our study, it can be articulated that integrated FFI was further supported in one more study.

Ustunbas (2016) conducted a study entitled EFL teachers and learners in the same camp with 651 learners with different language proficiency level and 42 instructors teaching English at a state university in Turkey. The study investigated the preferences of teachers and learners towards integrated and isolated FFIs. The findings indicated that both teacher and learners prefer integrated FFI, and proficiency level did not play a significant role in the results. Although our study was related to the effectiveness of FFIs in teaching grammar, the results obtained from Ustunbas's (2016) can add more credit to our results underscoring the benefits of integrated FFI in teaching grammatical points.

Moreover, Ahmadi, Sabourian Zade (2016) took into account 57 adult EFL learners in three groups of isolated, integrated and mixed group within the context of Iran. The results revealed no significant difference between isolated and integrated FFIs. This result was not in line with the obtained results from current study. The difference may lie on the fact that the grammatical instructions were different.

Although there are various studies that support the effectiveness of integrated FFI in different contexts based on some grammatical structures, there is a study by Spada (2008) whose findings are in contrast with our findings. She found that there is no evidence to support the suggestion that isolated grammar teaching is the dominant approach. Spade included that both integrated and isolated instructions are useful regarding the target goals of learning. That is, applying the specific instruction depends on various elements such as learning goals, learners' characteristics, and diriment physical and psychological conditions. In the classes which learners have permission to use the first language, the isolated FFI may be useful. In contrast, for

learners whose learning goals are accuracy and fluency in a target language, integrated FFI is a better suggestion.

The learners' superior performance could be attributed to the fact that, in integrated classrooms, learners can have more opportunity to be engaged in meaningful tasks and receive feedback as they communicate. In integrated classes, immediate help is available precisely when it is needed. Therefore, it is of more help for learners to master specific grammatical targets and also the tendency to social activities is drawn more in comparison to learning some grammatical rules in isolation. This effectiveness was found to be less in the isolated FFI group. This could be due to the fact that learners may find such type of instruction tedious and boring as they have to strictly obey the rules.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of integrated and isolated FFIs in terms of learning specific grammatical structures. Considering the results obtained from statistical analyses of the gained scores, it can be concluded that learners exposed to integrated FFI learned grammar more successfully than those exposed to isolated FFI in both recognition and production sections of the post-test. The comparison between the three groups of experimental and control manifested that integrated FFI group members outperformed both isolated FFI and control group members. Although there was a development in the isolation groups members' overall scores, the development was not so much remarkable compared to the integrated FFI. Generally speaking, the findings of the present study provide viable alternatives to the teaching of grammar in the context of Iran, which have always been a crucial challenge for most language teachers.

Additionally, according to the findings of the present study, some valuable implications can be proposed in EFL contexts. When learners are exposed to purposeful and meaningful samples of the target language and when they are taught a specific grammatical point and language simultaneously through integrated FFI, they can represent more language learning in general and more grammatical knowledge in particular (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Crandall, 1987; Krashen, 1985; Met, 1991). Since there is little or no authentic situations within the society in EFL contexts as is the case in Iran and many neighboring countries, formal structures take top priority, and the



learners use the learnt structures for pedagogical purposes only. According to the findings, it can be inferred that it is useful to allocate more time and energy of the classroom on integrated tasks in order to fill this very gap and make learners ready to participate within the real contexts where needed.

This study faced some limitations throughout its conduction. These limitations could affect the generalizability of the findings. The first limitation concerns the teachers' level. In this study, only experienced teachers were investigated. It could be more fruitful to have the novice teachers as well. Second, the present study elicited the effectiveness of FFIs only for intermediate language learners in an EFL context. Further studies are warranted to examine the effectiveness of the above mentioned structures for other proficiency levels. The same holds true regarding gender, as, only female learners took part in this study. It is a good idea to explore the same topic among male learners and carry out comparison between them.

References

- Abdolmanafi, S.J. (2010). *The effects of explicit grammar instruction on the acquisition of English relative clauses by Persian learners*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Mysore, India.
- Ammar, A. & Lightbown, P.M. (2004). Teaching marked linguistic structures - More about the acquisition of relative clauses by Arab learners of English. In A. Housen & M. Pierrard (Eds.), *Investigations in instructed second language learning* (pp.167-198). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Brinton, D.M., Snow, M.A., & Wesche, M.J. (1989). *Content-based second language instruction*. New York, NY: Newbury House.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Chan, A., & David, C. (2002). Form-focused remedial instruction: An empirical study. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12, 24-45.
- Chapple, L., & Curtis, A. (2000). Content-based instruction in Hong Kong: Student responses to film. *System*, 28(3), 419-433.
- Crandall, J. (1993). Content-centred learning in the United States. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 111-126.
- Doughty, C. (1991). Communicative focus on form. In C. Doughty, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 197-261). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doughty, C. (1991). Second language instruction does make a difference. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13(4), 431-469.
- Elgun-gunduz, Z., Akcan, S., & Bayyurt, Y. (2012). Isolated form-focused instruction and integrated form-focused instruction in primary school English classrooms in Turkey. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 25, 157-171.
- Flowerdew, J. (1993). Content-based language instruction in a tertiary setting. *English for Specific Purposes*, 12(2), 121-138.
- Genesee, F. (1994). *Language and content: Lessons from immersion (Educational Practice Report No. 11)*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics and National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning
- Kasper, L.F. (1995). Theory and practice in content-based ESL reading instruction. *English for Specific Purposes*, 14(3), 223-229.
- Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Krashen, S.D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.
- Larsen Freeman, D., & Long, M.H. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Laufer, B., & Girsai, N. (2008). Form-focused instruction in second language vocabulary learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 29, 694-716.
- Loewen, S. (2005). Incidental Focus on Form and Second Language Learning. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 27, 361-386.
- Long, M. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39-52). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Long, M. H. (1983). Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 126-141.
- Met, M. (1991). Learning language through content: Learning content through language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24(4), 281-295.
- Parviz, M.; Gorjian, B., (2013), "The Effect of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) on Teaching English Grammar to Iranian Learners at the Intermediate Level", *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 4 (4), 450-462.
- Rutherford, W. & Sharwood Smith, M. (1988). *Grammar and second language teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 17-46.
- Schmidt, R. (1995). Consciousness and foreign language learning: A tutorial on the role

of attention and awareness in learning. In R. Schmidt (Ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (pp. 1-63). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

Segalowitz, N., & Gatbonton, E. (1995). Automaticity and lexical skills in second language fluency: Implications for computer assisted language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 8, 129-149.

Spada, N. (1987). Relationships between instructional differences and learning outcomes: A process-product study of communicative language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 8, 137-155.

Spada, N. (1997). Form-focused instruction and second language acquisition: A review of classroom and laboratory research. *Language Teaching*, 30, 73-87.

Spada, N. (2011). Beyond form-focused instruction: Reflections on past, present, and future research. *Language Teaching*, 44, 225-236.

Spada, N., & Lightbown, P. M. (2008). Form-focused instruction: Isolated or integrated? *TESOL Quarterly*, 42, 181-207.

Spada, N., Barkaoui, K., Peters, C., So, M., & Valeo, A. (2009). Developing a questionnaire to measure learners' preferences for isolated and integrated form-focused instruction. *System*, 37, 70-81

Spada, N., Jessop, L., Tomita, Y., Suzuki, W., & Valeo, A. (2014). Isolated and integrated form-focused instruction: Effects on different types of L2 Knowledge. *Language Teaching Research*, 18, 453-473.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass and C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 16, 371-391.

Wolfe-Quintero, K., Inagaki, S., & Kim, H. Y. (1998). *Second language development in writing: measures of fluency, accuracy, and complexity*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Yabuki-S, N. (2007). Teaching relative clauses in Japanese: Exploring alternative types of instruction and the projection effect. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 29(2), 219-252.

Appendix: 1

- Name: _____ final exam
- 
- We a letter the day before yesterday. (*to send - Simple Past*)
 - This street because of snow. (*already/to close - Present Perfect*)
 - He to the party yesterday. (*to invite - Simple Past*)
 - I the book by my friend last Sunday. (*to give - Simple Past*)
 - I by Robert. (*not/to ask - will-future*)
 - The roof is by a friend of ours.
 - repairing
 - being repaired
 - been repaired
 - The furniture was up for firewood.
 - Broke
 - Broken
 - Breaking
 - He hates a fool of.
 - Be made
 - Being made
 - Being make
 - I by Mary wanting to tell everybody what to do.
 - Annoyed
 - Was annoyed
 - Have annoyed
 - Her attitude me.
 - Shocked
 - Was shocked
 - Was shocking
- Good Luck

Appendix: 2

- Name: _____ mid-term exam
- 
- The words by the teacher today. (*to explain - Simple Present*)
 - If Lorenzo (*help*) his mom, she (*be*) very grateful.
 - This car It's too old. (*not/to steal - will-future*)
 - A new restaurant next week. (*to open - will-future*)
 - If Natalie (*sing*) in the band, she (*get*) some money.
 - The blue box (*can/not/to see - Simple Present*)
 - The dishes by my little brother. (*not/to wash - Present Perfect*)
 - Channel Islanders English and French.
 - speak
 - is spoken
 - is speaking
 - Your life will by this book.
 - change
 - be changed
 - be changing
 - She needs to be care of.
 - take
 - taken
 - taking
- Good Luck

Appendix: 3

