Research Paper

Effect of Using Cooperative and Non-Cooperative Receptive and Productive Pedagogical Tasks on Iranian EFL Learners' Idiom Learning

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Abstract

Idioms are an intrinsic characteristic of every natural language and they are frequently used in spoken and written language; however, there has been insufficient research exploring the best strategies for teaching idioms to EFL learners. This study aimed to investigate the effect of cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive-based activities on Iranian EFL learners' idiom learning. To this purpose, 166 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were randomly assigned to five groups: a cooperative receptive group (CR), a non-cooperative receptive group (NCR), a cooperative productive group (CP), a non-cooperative productive group (NCP), and a control group. Results from the receptive and productive vocabulary tests showed that all four experimental groups outperformed the control group in both immediate and delayed post-tests. However, the CP and NCP instructions were more effective than the CR and NCR ones bringing about enhanced idiom learning. Furthermore, CR under the cooperative condition led to better learning compared to its non-cooperative type; however, the CP proved effective irrespective of the cooperative condition. Given the challenging nature of L2 idiom learning and its significance in developing language learners' knowledge of English, the implications of this study were presented and discussed for teachers, students, and syllabus designers.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Idiom Learning, Individual learning, non-cooperative learning, productive tasks, receptive tasks

INTRODUCTION

Formulaic sequences are considered as the continuous sequence of words which have a semantically and syntactically well-formed structure (Qi & Ding, 2011). They are the key components of the languages and they are important in the way language is processed, used and acquired (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012; Zhang, 2017). Idioms and other types of lexical units form one aspect of formulaic sequences (Wray, 2002). Idiomatic expressions are usually defined as the sequences of words which convey figurative meanings (Titone, Columbus, Whitford, Mercier, & Libben, 2015). Idioms are regularly used in everyday conversation because they enable speakers to speak clearly and they improve the quality of their speech (Thyab, 2016).

Use of idioms is important for EFL learners since they enable them to gain higher expressive levels of English and to achieve fluency needed for their daily conversation (Wu, Lin, Marek, & Ou Yang, 2021; Xie, 2017). For years, teachers have used different kinds of strategies for the effective instruction of English idioms to EFL learners ranging from lexical inferencing (Ahour & Ranjbar Mohammady, 2016) to semantic analysis (Caillies & Le Sourn-Bissaoui, 2006) and associative learning (Johnson & Rosano, 1993). However, none of these strategies have been found to be effective in optimal learning of idioms by EFL learners.

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Their ineffectiveness refers to the learners' inability in retaining form and meanings of the idioms simultaneously for a long time (Ahmadi, Sahragard, & Babaie Shalmani, 2017).

Many studies have found that foreign language learners prefer the literal meaning of idioms over the figurative meaning, i.e., they first activate the literal meanings of the idioms even when they are familiar with their figurative meaning (Cieślicka, 2006; Cieślicka & Heredia, 2011). Meanwhile, the widespread use of idioms in the ordinary language, the problems associated with the figurative meanings of idioms, the scarce exposure of EFL learners to idioms and their lack of historical and cultural knowledge have made the explicit teaching of idioms indispensable (Vasiljevic, 2015). Despite the research findings that the use of idioms in written and spoken discourse is a main predictor of high proficiency in language (Shirazi & Talebinezhad, 2013), little attention has been paid to the explicit teaching of idioms in the schools and the universities in Iran (Abolfazli Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017). Hence, teachers need to focus on idioms in EFL classes (Liontas, 2017). Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive instruction of idioms on Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge.

Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge has been considered as one of the most important components of reading (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). According to the Lexical Quality Hypothesis proposed by Perfetti (2007), acquiring lexical knowledge is very important and the best way for improving the reading comprehension ability is through gaining high quality vocabulary knowledge. This hypothesis describes the course of developing word knowledge as the one in which the meaning of the word is completely unknown and then with continued experience by reading extensively becomes more fully specified. On the other hand, Laufer (2003) believes on explicit learning of vocabulary knowledge in EFL context because intentional learning of

vocabulary leads to better gains in vocabulary knowledge than the incidental learning. Hence, the explicit instruction of formulaic sequences like idioms may be necessary or even desirable (Webb & Kagimoto, 2009; Zhang, 2017).

Vocabulary knowledge is multidimensional and involves a number of interrelated parts. One of the simpler conceptualization of vocabulary knowledge is the distinction between receptive and productive knowledge (sometimes referred interchangeably to as passive and active knowledge) (Schmitt, 2010). When these terms are applied to vocabulary, they cover all the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word (Nation, 2003). According to Laufer and Goldstein (2004), knowledge of form-meaning relationship is the main component of vocabulary knowledge and can be tested as a hierarchy of four degrees of strength: active recall (which is the strongest), passive recall, active recognition and passive recognition (which is the weakest). Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) point out that form recall and meaning recall can be related to productive knowledge and receptive knowledge respectively.

Students can learn word pairs productively or receptively. Receptive vocabulary use involves recognizing the form of a word while listening or reading and getting its meaning. Productive vocabulary use involves producing an appropriate spoken or written form (Nation, 2003). In receptive vocabulary tests, participants are usually given the L2 form of a target word and have to supply its L1 meaning. In productive tests, L1 meaning of the target words is given and the participants have to provide their L2 forms (Webb, 2009). The results of a deliberate learning of vocabulary done by Tahmasbi and Farvardin (2017) and Waring (1997) show that productive task is more effective than the receptive ones and leads to long-lasting retention of the vocabulary in the mind. Nevertheless, Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012) found out that receptive and productive word knowledge gains can take place incidentally through reading, and that incidental word learning and retention can be contingent upon both word exposure frequency, and elaboration of word processing.

To be more effective, teachers of English in many foreign language contexts combine explicit and incidental approaches to vocabulary learning and research has shown that this combination is more beneficial and leads to a durable retention of vocabulary in long term memory (Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010). The incidental and explicit approaches to vocabulary learning are complementary and are usually combined together in an efficient teaching program (Schmitt, 2008). In an experimental study, Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) compared the effectiveness of direct instruction of new words in reading passages (explicit learning) to learning under a reading only condition (incidental learning). They assessed three levels of vocabulary knowledge (form recall, meaning recall and meaning recognition) using three tests. They found that direct instruction is more efficient in the learning process and results in greater learning. They concluded that the direct teaching of vocabulary items combined with reading provides a suitable condition for building a large repertoire of L2 vocabulary. Moreover, the results of their study showed that form recall is the most difficult aspect of vocabulary learning and direct instruction facilitates this deepest level of vocabulary knowledge.

Faraj (2015) points out that receptive knowledge of a word comes before the productive and it is essentially a requirement for productive knowledge. In other words, one meets a word receptively before using it productively. Many studies have been done to compare the students' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in learning settings (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Zhou, 2010). In most of these studies, there is a gap between students' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. In a study, Zhou (2010) compared receptive and productive academic vocabulary knowledge of Chinese EFL learners and found that Chinese college students has a larger receptive vocabulary knowledge than productive one and their knowledge of receptive and productive vocabulary was highly correlated. He asserts that words that learners recognize are more than the words that they can produce. According to Webb and Kagimoto

(2009), this gap between the size of receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary can be narrowed down by incorporating more productive learning tasks into the classroom. In another study by Webb (2009), English as a foreign language students in Japan memorized word pairs receptively (L2→L1) and productively (L1→L2). Then multiple aspects of vocabulary knowledge including orthography, association, syntax, grammatical function and form were measured by both receptive and productive tests. The results of his study showed that productive learning of word pairs was more effective than receptive learning. It enabled learners to get a greater gain in both productive and receptive aspects of orthography and productive knowledge of meaning, syntax and grammar. According to Webb (2009), if the aim of the teacher is to develop both receptive and productive knowledge of the students, he should encourage productive learning of the vocabulary. He mentions that receptive tasks may be more effective for improving comprehension while productive learning might be better suited to improving speaking and writing skills.

Explicit teaching of the components of formulaic sequences like idioms, collocations and phrasal verbs leads to the gains in the learners' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in various aspects (Hinkel, 2018). In a study, Zhang (2017) investigated the impact of receptive and productive task based learning on the Chinese EFL learners' collocational knowledge. To this end, four intact classes were randomly divided into four groups: receptive group, productive group, an integrated receptive-productive group and a control group. The results of the study showed that the integration group outperformed the receptive and productive group in both immediate and delayed post-tests. In another study, Omidian, Akbary, and Shahriari (2019) tried to determine the extent to which the phrasal verbs' receptive and productive knowledge of EFL learners have correlations with factors that are identified as facilitators of learning of phrasal verbs. 100 Iranian EFL learners participated in a test that measured their ability to comprehend and produce phrasal verbs.

Meanwhile, the participants filled a questionnaire in which they explained the number of hours they spent on watching TV, reading and listening. A correlation analysis showed that the learners who spent much time on reading and watching English movies had a better receptive and productive knowledge of phrasal verbs.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a structured and interactive method of learning through which students with different characteristics and skills work together in order to achieve a common learning goal (Baudrit, 2005; Kagan, 2014). Cooperative learning is an approach within the field of education and it has its roots in the insight of Vygotsky (Tamimy, 2019). Hence, a main body of research have examined its effects on language learning, social behaviours and learning outcomes (Chen & Yang, 2019; Leung & Nakagawa, 2021). Research reviews conducted on primary and secondary schools show that cooperative learning promoting the individual accountability and group work increases the achievement of the students (Bromley & Modlo, 1997; Gull & Shehzad, 2015; Jacobs, Power, & Inn, 2002). According to Stepanovienė (2013), cooperative learning improves the comprehension and the communication skills of the learners and promotes their interaction quality with other learners involved in the learning processes.

It is believed that the cooperative learning can be applied to the teaching of idioms (Zarei, 2014). In a study, Zarei (2014) investigated the effect of three methods of cooperative learning (Group investigation, jigsaw and student teams achievement divisions) on the learning of idioms. 137 EFL learners were taught idioms through one of the cooperative methods. The results showed a statistically significant differences between the traditional instruction of idioms and the cooperative instruction. All three cooperative methods were effective in both comprehension and production of idioms than the individual learning. In another study, Güngör (2018) investigated the effect of cooperative teaching of idioms on improving the idiomatic knowledge of French EFL learners. Two experimental and control groups were involved in this study. The result showed that the participants who were taught idioms though jigsaw cooperative method were more successful than the participants in the control group who were taught idioms through traditional methods.

Using idioms greatly influences the teaching and the learning process of a foreign language because it helps EFL leaners to improve their communicative skills (De Caro, 2009). The teaching of idioms has been considered as one of the main pedagogical challenges in EFL learning in recent years (Zarei, 2014). Therefore, the teacher's task is to decrease the amount of the effort required to learn an idiom by making connections between the target language and the first language (Nation, 2001). Hence, cooperative teaching techniques can be used in the learning of idioms because they provide opportunities for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) and comprehensible output (Swain, 2005) by utilizing group work in an environment which facilitates the process of language learning (Ghaith, 2003). Hence, the aim of this study was to examine the students' gains in idiomatic expressions after learning them through cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive instruction. It is an attempt to examine, through a pre-test, post-test classroom based study, the effectiveness of the receptive and productive learning of idioms in terms of their efficiency in promoting the longer retention of meaning, form and the use of the word in context. As to the best knowledge of the researchers, no comparison has been made about the effectiveness of learning idioms through these methods. In these methods, rote learning of idiomatic pairs is associated with other exercises which require deeper processing of the idioms such as sentence reading and sentence production. The aim is to consider which method is more effective in long term retention of idioms and to find out whether list learning successfully leads to the idiom recall in more natural situations. Thus, in order to achieve the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: Does cooperative receptive instruction (CR) significantly affect the gains in Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge?

RQ2: Does non-cooperative receptive instruction (NCR) significantly affect the gains in Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge?

RQ3: Does cooperative productive instruction (CP) significantly affect the gains in Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge?

RQ4: Does non-cooperative productive instruction (NCP) significantly affect the gains in Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge?

RQ5: Do CR, NCR, CP, NCP and traditional instructions affect the gains in Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge differently?

METHOD
Design of the Study
The present study followed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, treatment, immediate post-test and delayed post-test adopting a quantitative approach. There were four experimental groups (CR, NCR, CP and NCP) and one control group. The independent variables were cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive instruction of idioms and the dependent variable was EFL learners' idiom learning. Different statistical analyses such as Shapiro-Wilk test statistic, paired samples t-test, ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc test were conducted to answer the research questions.

Participants
A total of 166 Iranian EFL learners aged between 15 and 23 were randomly assigned to four experimental groups and one control group: CR (N=34), CP (N=35), NCR (N=33), and NCP (N=32) and a control group (N = 32). It should be noted that these participants were selected out of 179 samples of learners whose level of proficiency was intermediate according to a PBT TOEFL test. The participants included both female (N = 91) and male (N =75) intermediate EFL learners chosen from language institutes of Goldis and Jahad

Daneshgahi in Tabriz. They were the native speakers of Turkish and they were speaking Persian as their second language. They were at the high level of socioeconomic background and they had started learning English in secondary school. They reported that they had never been to an English-speaking country and they all learned English in instructed settings.

Instruments
The first instrument used in this study was TOEFL PBT test which was used in order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their proficiency levels. This test measures reading (50 multiple-choice questions), listening (50 questions) and writing and grammar skills (40 questions). It should be mentioned that the listening section of this test was omitted in this study because of the administrative problems. Each correct answer in this test was given 1 and the maximum score possible was 90. The participants answered this question in an hour and twenty minutes.

An idiom test was administered as a pre-test to the five groups in order to measure their preliminary knowledge of the idioms and as immediate and delayed post-tests to investigate the effect of cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive instruction of the idioms on Iranian EFL learners' idiom learning and retention. The idioms in this test were chosen from the source book of English Idioms in Use written by McCarthy and O'Dell (2002). The test was a 30 items test which included both receptive and productive tests. The receptive tests had two parts: a translation test in which the participants required to provide the L1 translation of the idiom (L2→L1) (eight items) and a multiple-choice test in which the first words of each idiom were given and the students were required to circle the correct collocate from the four choices (seven items). The productive test was also composed of two parts: a translation test in which the L1 equivalent of the idioms were given and the participants were to provide the L2 equivalent (L1→L2) (eight items) and a completion test in which some words of the idioms were left blank in a sentence and the participants were required to fill it (seven

items). This test was administered to the participants immediately and after two weeks in order to measure the participant's idiomatic knowledge of form-meaning link.

Procedure

This study was a pre-test-post-test quasi experimental study of the effectiveness of using co-operative and non-cooperative receptive and productive tasks on the improvement of idiomatic knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. In this study, firstly, TOEFL PBT test was administered to all the participants in order to ensure their homogeneity in terms of their language proficiency. As a result of this test, 166 participants were chosen out of 179 based on two standard deviations (11.7) above and below the mean (51.3). Then, the translation and the completion pre-test of idiomatic expressions were conducted before the treatment in order to measure the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of idioms. The idioms in this test were taken from the idioms in the book of English Idioms in Use.

One week later, the teacher conducted the study. The instructional session for each group lasted for 90 minutes and all the five groups were instructed by the same teacher who was the researcher of this study. Four experimental groups and one control group were used in this study. The participants were not told about the post-tests in order to prevent any deliberate learning of idioms. For the CR group, the teacher gave the participants the copies of idioms in English along with the sentences in which the idioms were used. In this group, the participants learnt the idioms cooperatively through the group investigation in which they found the meanings of idioms within groups of five members. All the members of the group were required to bring an English-Persian dictionary to the class. Group investigation is a cooperative learning technique which is helpful in assisting the learners to achieve group learning goals (Slavin, 2011). The participants in CR group were supposed to read each idiom along with the sentence in which it was used and find the meaning of each idiom in Persian (L2→L1). Groups were to present their findings to the class. In case they could

not find the correct meaning of the idioms, the teacher gave them the right answer. Then, the teacher asked the participants to read the text chosen from the English Idioms in Use cooperatively and to find the meanings of idioms and fixed sequences within their groups.

For the NCR group, the teacher gave the copies of idioms along with the sentence examples to the participants. In these copies, the target words were presented on the left side of the paper and their translations were given on the right side. The students were required to read the target words on the left and then memorize their translation on the right (L2→L1). Then, the teacher read the sentence examples for each idioms and the students were asked to tell their meanings individually. An example is given below:

Under the weather   ناخوش احوال
Nick's head is aching, and he feels a little under the weather.

After the memorization of each idiom and reading the example sentences, the participants were asked to preread the text chosen from the English Idioms in Use individually and to write the meaning of each idiom they were reading in Persian.

Like the CR group, the instruction in CP group occurred cooperatively through the group investigation. For this group, the participants were required to learn the idioms in a L1→L2 order in a way that the teacher gave them the idioms' translation. All group members were required to bring a Persian-English dictionary to the class in order to find the L1 equivalents of the idioms and to produce a sentence. Then, the groups presented their findings to the class. In case they could not find the correct meaning of the idioms, the teacher gave them the right answer. Afterwards, the teacher asked the participants to preread the text chosen from the English Idioms in Use and to cooperatively produce the summary of the text using the learned idioms.

For the NCP group, the idioms were given on the left side of the paper and the target idioms were presented on the right side. After memorizing the idioms in a L1→L2 order, they were required to produce a sentence out of each idiom. In the CP group, the participants were

required to produce the sentences together in a group while in a NCP group, participants were required to produce the sentences individually. Then some of them read their own sentences out loud. Meanwhile, the participants were asked to pre-read the text and tell the summary of what they were reading using the idioms they had learnt. In the CP group, the participants produced the summary of the text cooperatively while in the NCP group, the participants produced the summary of the text individually. The participants in the control group were not presented with pairs of idioms. The students in this group were taught traditionally with the teacher reading the text and translating it.

Two post-tests were administered to the participants in an immediate and delayed one in order to measure the effect of CR, NCR, CP, NCP instructions on the participants' knowledge and retention of idiomatic expressions. The immediate post-test was administered immediately after the treatment and the delayed post-test was administered after two weeks. These tests were designed to measure two aspects of vocabulary knowledge including meaning recall (receptive test) and form recall (productive test).

RESULTS
SPSS software was used to analyse the data. Table 1 below summarizes the results of the descriptive statistics across the five groups in pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the four groups in the pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CP	35	9.00	18.00	12.2857	1.93378
CR	34	6.00	21.00	12.8235	3.20483
NCP	32	7.00	20.00	12.4375	3.29161
NCR	33	5.00	22.00	13.1818	3.25437
CON	32	8.00	21.00	13.3438	2.96876
CPIM	35	14.00	25.00	19.9143	2.88374
CRIM	34	10.00	23.00	16.5882	2.69812
NCPIM	32	11.00	24.00	17.8438	3.10161
NCRIM	33	11.00	23.00	16.2424	2.90506
CONIM	32	9.00	18.00	13.2188	2.16623
CPDE	35	13.00	24.00	18.8000	2.85739
CRDE	34	9.00	18.00	14.2647	2.26045
NCPDE	32	11.00	21.00	16.1875	2.77590
NCRDE	33	10.00	20.00	14.1818	2.35126
CONDE	32	8.00	16.00	12.2188	1.86192

As it is clear from Table 1, the idiomatic knowledge of EFL learners in the four instructional groups have been improved both in the immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests.

In order to determine the effectiveness of CR, NCR, CP, NCP and the traditional instruction in terms of idiomatic expression learning, paired samples t-tests were used in which the means of the scores in the prestests were compared with the means of the scores in the immediate post-tests. For investigating the retention of the idioms in each five groups, paired samples t-tests were used for comparing the means of the scores in the immediate and delayed post-tests. Meanwhile, ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc test were used to compare the performance of the students in the five groups.

In order to check the normality of distribution for scores, Shapiro-Wilk tests statistic was conducted which revealed non-significant results for all tests ($p > .05$). Table 2 provides the results of this tests.

Table 2
Shapiro-Wilk tests for normality of scores' distribution

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
CP	.950	32	.144
CR	.954	32	.193
NCP	.958	32	.241
NCR	.965	32	.370
CON	.963	32	.333
CPIM	.954	32	.187
CRIM	.980	32	.809
NCPIM	.966	32	.401
NCRIM	.971	32	.531
CONIM	.969	32	.471
CPDE	.974	32	.626
CRDE	.956	32	.210
NCPDE	.953	32	.175
NCRDE	.964	32	.348
CONDE	.953	32	.173

Because the p-value of all the data were higher than 0.05, the normality of the scores' distribution is proved. Hence, paired samples t-test was used for the comparison of the data. The result of this test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Paired Samples T-test for Comparing Pre-test, Immediate Post-test and Delayed Post-test Scores

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CP - CPIM	-7.62857	3.14442	.53150	-8.70872	-6.54842	-14.353	34	.000
Pair 2	CR - CRIM	-3.76471	3.44708	.59117	-4.96745	-2.56196	-6.368	33	.000
Pair 3	NCP - NCPIM	-5.40625	4.39838	.77753	-6.99204	-3.82046	-6.953	31	.000
Pair 4	NCR - NCRIM	-3.06061	4.01512	.69894	-4.48431	-1.63691	-4.379	32	.000
Pair 5	CON - CONIM	.12500	3.63451	.64250	-1.18538	1.43538	.195	31	.847
Pair 6	CPIM - CPDE	1.11429	3.64427	.61599	-.13756	2.36613	1.809	34	.079
Pair 7	CRIM - CRDE	2.32353	3.39983	.58307	1.13727	3.50979	3.985	33	.000
Pair 8	NCPIM - NCPDE	1.65625	4.15513	.73453	.15817	3.15433	2.255	31	.031
Pair 9	NCRIM - NCRDE	2.06061	3.51727	.61228	.81344	3.30778	3.365	32	.002
Pair 10	CONIM - CONDE	1.00000	3.22290	.56973	-.16198	2.16198	1.755	31	.089

According to Table 3, the p-values of pre-tests-immediate post-tests in CP, CR, NCP and NCP were lower than 0.05 and the p-value of the control group equaled 0.847. This shows that the learners' knowledge of L2 idioms in four instructional methods enhanced from the pre-test to the immediate post-test. However, there were no significant differences among the pre-test and the post-test scores of the participants in the control group. Meanwhile, the p-value of immediate post-test-delayed post-test in CP (P=0.079) shows that the differences in the scores of these two tests were not significant. Hence, CP was more effective in enhancing the EFL learners' vocabulary retention than the other groups. Moreover, the p-values of immediate post-tests-delayed post-tests in CR, NCP, NCR were lower than 0.05 indicating that the idiomatic knowledge of EFL learners in these three groups has been decreased in the delayed post-tests. With these explanations, the answers to questions 1 to 4 gets clear.

One way ANOVA was used to determine whether these were any significant differences between the means of the five groups in the pre-test and to identify the differences between the means in the immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests. Moreover, Tukey post-hoc test was

used to do a pairwise comparison of the means in order to find out which group's means were significantly different. Meanwhile, the homogeneity of the variances in the pre-tests and immediate post-tests were calcuted by Leven's test (Table 4).

Table 4

Levene's test for homogeneity of variances in the pre-test and immediate post-tests

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre	1.815	4	161	.128
IM	1.089	4	161	.364
DE	1.676	4	161	.158

According to Levene's test, the p-values in the pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests equalled 0.128, 0.364 and 0.158, respectively. Thus, no violations were found for the homogeneity of variances as measured by this test ($p > .05$). Hence, the assumption of equal variances were met at 95% confidence level.

One way ANOVA was used to compare the significant differences of means among the groups in the pre-test, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests (Table 5).

Table 5

ANOVA Results for Pre-test, Immediate Post-tests and Delayed Post-tests

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre	Between Groups	27.744	4	6.936	.790	.533
	Within Groups	1414.087	161	8.783		
	Total	1441.831	165			
IM	Between Groups	796.485	4	199.121	25.922	.000
	Within Groups	1236.726	161	7.682		
	Total	2033.211	165			
DE	Between Groups	833.108	4	208.277	34.589	.000
	Within Groups	969.470	161	6.022		
	Total	1802.578	165			

As it is clear from Table 5, the one-way analysis of variance for the pre-test scores did not demonstrate any statistically significant differences among the groups ($F_{(4, 161)} = 0.790$, $P = 0.533 > 0.05$). Hence, all the participants were homogeneous in terms of their knowledge of idioms in the pre-test.

Meanwhile, the means of the scores in CP, NCP, CR, NCR and control group were significantly different at 95% confidence level in the immediate post-tests ($F_{(4,161)} = 25.922$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). Tukey post-hoc test was used to investigate which group significantly differed from the others (Table 6).

Table 6

Tukey Post-hoc Test Results for Immediate Post-tests

(I) T	(J) T	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	2.07054*	.67788	.022	.2003	3.9408
	3.00	3.32605*	.66738	.000	1.4848	5.1673
	4.00	3.67186*	.67249	.000	1.8165	5.5272
	5.00	6.69554*	.67788	.000	4.8253	8.5658
2.00	1.00	-2.07054*	.67788	.022	-3.9408	-.2003
	3.00	1.25551	.68262	.355	-.6278	3.1388
	4.00	1.60133	.68762	.141	-.2958	3.4984
	5.00	4.62500*	.69289	.000	2.7134	6.5366
3.00	1.00	-3.32605*	.66738	.000	-5.1673	-1.4848
	2.00	-1.25551	.68262	.355	-3.1388	.6278
	4.00	.34581	.67727	.986	-1.5227	2.2144
	5.00	3.36949*	.68262	.000	1.4862	5.2528
4.00	1.00	-3.67186*	.67249	.000	-5.5272	-1.8165
	2.00	-1.60133	.68762	.141	-3.4984	.2958

(I) T	(J) T	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	3.00	-.34581	.67727	.986	-2.2144	1.5227
	5.00	3.02367*	.68762	.000	1.1266	4.9208
5.00	1.00	-6.69554*	.67788	.000	-8.5658	-4.8253
	2.00	-4.62500*	.69289	.000	-6.5366	-2.7134
	3.00	-3.36949*	.68262	.000	-5.2528	-1.4862
	4.00	-3.02367*	.68762	.000	-4.9208	-1.1266

. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Tukey post-hoc test displayed the CP participants' superiority with considerably large effect sizes over the CR, NCP, NCR and control group. Considering the means of the scores in Table 1, CP was significantly effective in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' knowledge of idiomatic expressions. Meanwhile, NCP group performed better than CR and NCR groups with a non-significant difference between CR and NCR (Table 6).

By Table 5, the one-way ANOVA for delayed post-tests demonstrated statistically significant differences among the CP, CR, NCP, NCR and control groups at 95% confidence level (F $(4,161)$=34.589, P=0.000<0.05). Tukey post-hoc test was used to investigate which group significantly differed from the others (Table 7).

Table 7
Tukey Post-hoc Test Results for Delayed Post-tests

(I) T	(J) T	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	2.61250*	.60018	.000	.9566	4.2684
	3.00	4.53529*	.59089	.000	2.9051	6.1655
	4.00	4.61818*	.59541	.000	2.9755	6.2609
	5.00	6.58125*	.60018	.000	4.9254	8.2371
2.00	1.00	-2.61250*	.60018	.000	-4.2684	-.9566
	3.00	1.92279*	.60438	.015	.2553	3.5902
	4.00	2.00568*	.60881	.011	.3260	3.6853
	5.00	3.96875*	.61347	.000	2.2762	5.6613
3.00	1.00	-4.53529*	.59089	.000	-6.1655	-2.9051
	2.00	-1.92279*	.60438	.015	-3.5902	-.2553
	4.00	.08289	.59965	1.000	-1.5715	1.7373
	5.00	2.04596*	.60438	.008	.3785	3.7134
4.00	1.00	-4.61818*	.59541	.000	-6.2609	-2.9755
	2.00	-2.00568*	.60881	.011	-3.6853	-.3260
	3.00	-.08289	.59965	1.000	-1.7373	1.5715
	5.00	1.96307*	.60881	.013	.2834	3.6427
5.00	1.00	-6.58125*	.60018	.000	-8.2371	-4.9254
	2.00	-3.96875*	.61347	.000	-5.6613	-2.2762
	3.00	-2.04596*	.60438	.008	-3.7134	-.3785
	4.00	-1.96307*	.60881	.013	-3.6427	-.2834

. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

By Table 7, the means of the scores in the CP group were significantly different with the means of the scores in the other groups. This shows that the CP instruction was more effective than the other instructions at improving the idiomatic knowledge of EFL learners over time. Considering the descriptive statistics in Table 1 and within group Tukey Post-hoc Test Results in Tables 6 and 7, it is clear that CP and NCP instructions were more successful than CR and NCR in improving the idiomatic knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. By these explanations, the answer to question 5 gets clear.

DISCUSSION
The present study was conducted to compare the effect of cooperative and non-cooperative

receptive and productive tasks on improving Iranian EFL learners' idiom learning in a long run. The results indicated that except for the control group, other groups could increase and maintain the students' knowledge of L2 idioms in immediate and delayed post-tests. Furthermore, the comparison of groups demonstrated the superiority of CP instruction over CR one and the NCP instruction over NCR. Hence, the direct instruction of idioms, both receptively and productively along with cooperative and non-cooperative exercises, resulted in more idiomatic gains. This shows that the explicit teaching of formulaic sequences like idioms leads to the gains in the learners' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in various aspects (Hinkel, 2018). Meanwhile, cooperative learning is considered as the main source of learning idioms, specifically in a non-native context (Gupta & Ahuja, 2014; Zarei, 2014). Hence, any activity that raises learners' awareness of the figurative meanings of idioms can be effective on idiom comprehension and production (Liu, 2017). According to Harmer (2007), receptive and productive skills interact. Thus, some positive changes in the learners' receptive vocabulary knowledge would be associated with the development in the productive vocabulary knowledge (Zhong, 2018).

In the receptive method, idioms were learnt in a L2→L1 order and in the productive method, they were learnt in a L1→L2 order by means of rehearsal and then they were processed more by sentence writing and summary making, respectively. However, the productive method was an effective method of vocabulary learning and it resulted in a long term retention of the vocabulary in the mind. This shows that the word form and the word meaning learned through semantic elaboration leads to longer retention of the vocabulary in the long term memory (Baddeley, 1997). These results indicate that the combination of productive learning of idiom pairs in decontextualized contexts with productive tasks such as sentence production and summary making in a cooperative condition serves as a means to prevent lexical attrition for both receptive and productive vocabulary. Therefore, EFL learners cannot understand and use idioms without explicit instruction. Hence, deliberate paired-associate learning of idioms through different receptive and productive tasks is an efficient method of idioms learning for EFL learners because they improve both the declarative and nondeclarative knowledge (Obermeier & Elgort, 2021; Zhang, 2017). These findings are in keeping with some studies showing that learners cannot communicate effectively using idioms without accessing the whole idiom's figurative meaning (Obermeier & Elgort, 2021; Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015).

With respect to the type of effective instruction, the results of the present study provided supportive evidence that productive instruction either in cooperative or non-cooperative forms was more effective than the receptive instruction. The production of idioms particularly when learners cooperated to generate them possibly differed from the comprehension of the idioms regarding the depth of the knowledge required. In other words, production might demand deeper understanding of L2 idioms than comprehension (Kim & Nam, 2017). Meanwhile, learning vocabulary productively is more difficult than learning them receptively (Schmitt, 2008). In receptive instruction, the learners needed to comprehend idioms in their appropriate contexts. Even if they did not remember the whole idiom accurately, a partial memory of one or two content words could result in the appropriate use of it. In case of producing the idioms, however, the learners were asked to provide the idioms. They were instructed to come up with the suitable idioms and provide all the content words appropriately without any support. Because of the nature of the idioms, the production task inevitably directs learners toward a full understanding of L2 idioms but also other main components of L2 lexical knowledge such as accurate use of forms, morphology, and grammatical features may be acquired by producing language (Park & Chon, 2019; Zyzik, 2011). Thus, when these processes were carried out cooperatively, they led to more efficient L2 idiom learning. The results of this study supports output hypothesis in which language learning takes place through language

production, either spoken or written (Swain, 1993). The findings indicated that productive learning of idioms (L2→L1) was more effective than receptive learning (L2→L1). This is in line with the results of the studies done by Webb (2009) and Tahmasbi and Farvardin (2017) in which productive learning was more beneficial than receptive learning. According to Webb (2009), teachers should encourage productive learning of vocabulary if the purpose is to develop receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. If this productive learning of word pairs is associated with other productive tasks such as sentence production, the learning will be long-lasting and it will lead to a high retention of the vocabulary in the long run.

These results follow a general pattern that productive knowledge (form recall) is more difficult to acquire than receptive knowledge (meaning recall) (Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010). One aspect of knowledge that is so important in vocabulary learning is form recall. This knowledge was learnt best by productive group both in the immediate and delayed post-tests while the receptive group did not have a good grasp of this knowledge (especially in the delayed post-tests). This shows that the participants who learned idioms productively were more successful at the receptive test but participants who learned vocabulary receptively were less successful when they were tested productively (Webb, 2009). It indicates that productive learning aided by sentence production and summary making leads to a better knowledge of form-meaning link.

The productive instruction also required active versus passive use of idioms. Based on Laufer and Goldstein (2004) study, "knowledge of form-meaning link is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon but depends on what the learner is required to do with the knowledge" (p. 426). Previous studies on vocabulary learning have made a distinction between active and passive vocabulary knowledge (Harmer, 2007; Kremmel, Brunfaut, & Alderson, 2017), describing active vocabulary as the ability to use and call it orally and passive vocabulary as the words known by the reader through the recognition but not being able to

produce them in wring or speaking (Harmer, 2007). Likewise, Laufer and Goldstein (2004) reported that L2 learners were more successful on passive recall of the vocabulary rather than the active recall. This is because of the fact that the L2 learners' passive vocabulary is larger than their active vocabulary (Laufer & Paribakht, 1998; Webb and Kagimoto, 2009; Zhou, 2010). According to Crow (1986), this difference is because of the fact that a larger body of knowledge is required for the productive. Hence, language production is the best method for improving the receptive and the productive knowledge of vocabulary especially if it is associated with the productive (L1→L2) learning of word pairs.

CONCLUSION

The current study explored whether cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive instruction could benefit EFL learners' idiom learning. It was found that although all four experimental groups outperformed the control group in enhancing L2 learners' idiom learning, the use of productive instruction particularly was more effective for idiom learning. Regarding the semantic non-transparency of the idioms and the lack of interlingual transfer of L1 idiomatic expressions, the present study also examined whether the use of different treatment conditions could be adequate to result in L2 idiom learning in the long-run. In this case, the findings revealed that the treatment conditions which led to the immediate improvements in learners' L2 idiom learning could also bring about delayed gains in their knowledge. This finding underlined the necessity of engaging learners in effective cooperative activities which included not just receptive instruction but also allowed learners to actively engage in the production of the input they were exposed to. As VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) contended, "learners need to develop their abilities in accessing the developing system for fluent and accurate production" (p. 239) which should be achieved through providing them with the opportunities to use their knowledge.

The main implication of using cooperative and non-cooperative receptive and productive approaches to learning idioms for teachers is that they can pay close attention to the explicit instruction of idiomatic language in the classroom. In addition, they can make more informed methodological decisions in order to identify how idioms can be made more memorable and more accessible to language learners. Meanwhile, producing language gives learners a chance to get feedback from their teachers and peers and to adjust their understanding of the receptive input. Therefore, the productive and receptive approaches to language learning interact (Harmer, 2007). Hence, through productive approaches to idiom learning, students can increase their receptive and their lexical knowledge of three levels of mastery of form-meaning link (meaning recognition, meaning recall and form recall). Meanwhile, the results of this study can benefit syllabus designers to incorporate the explicit instruction of formulaic sequences in any educational program.

This study had some limitations which should be taken into consideration in future research. First, the participants were at the intermediate level of proficiency and therefore, there is a need to examine the effectiveness of the instructional methods on learners from different proficiency levels. The second limitation was that because the participants were merely Iranian EFL learners, the generalizability of the findings to the students with other L1 background awaits more research. Another limitation of this study was that it did not take the attitudes of teachers and learners toward the instructional methods into consideration. Hence, further investigations could be conducted in this case in future studies. Lastly, the instructional approaches used in this study examined their effectiveness on learning idioms. More studies could be conducted to investigate their effectiveness on learning other formulaic sequences like collocations and phrasal verbs.

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