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Particle Phrases as Metaphorical Concepts Retained in Online Speech: The Case of Spoken Accuracy

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Abstract

Particle phrases are defined as prefabricated "chunks" stored and retrieved as a whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of teaching particle-bound phrases on spoken accuracy of Iranian EEL learners. Having been homogenized, a sample of 51 Iranian EFL learners at a university in Karaj, Iran was assigned to three groups: two experimental and one control. Before the treatment, a pre-test of video-based narrative retelling was administered. The Experimental Group 1 (EG1) was presented with the target particle phrases and came up with drawings of their concepts. In Experimental Group 2 (EG2), the same procedure happened except for the hands-on drawing task. The Control Group (CG) was presented with the same particle phrases every session along with their L1 (Farsi) meanings. The results showed that EG2 (M = 5.16) significantly outperformed CG (M = 3.81) on the immediate posttest (Mean Difference = 1.34, p = .000). It was also found that EG1 (M = 4.82) significantly outperformed CG (M = 3.81) on the immediate posttest (Mean Difference = 1.01, p = .000). Plus, there was not any significant difference between EG1 (M = 5.16) and EG2'S (M = 4.82) means on the immediate posttest (Mean Difference = .334, p = .146). Regarding delayed post-test, it was shown that there was no significant difference between EG1 and EG2 on delayed posttest, but both groups outperformed CG in that regard.

Keywords: Formulaic sequences, memory, particle phrases, self-generated contexts, spoken accuracy

Introduction

Particle-bound sequences (referred to here as particle phrases) are so frequent particularly in spoken discourse owing to "the knack native speakers possess for coining new ones" (Bronshteyn & Gustafson, 2015, p. 92). Native speakers (NSs) are said to generate novel particle phrases regularly (White, 2012), which may well explain why particle phrases correspond to "an explosion of lexical creativeness that surpasses anything else in our language" (Bolinger, 1971, p. xi).

Particle phrases are the most frequently occurring idiomatic strings of language particularly in spoken English (Crutchley, 2007), ubiquitous in NSs' spoken discourse (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Gardner & Davies, 2007; Thom, 2017). NSs of English go on making them up *ad infinitum*. The superfluous flow of the ever increasingly generative elements of lexis that mushroom in the discourse of NSs on a regular basis is so intimidating for EFL learners, however, for the NS, they are an extremely convenient tool by which they communicate a lot with just a few words.

While NSs can "translate" among the levels of English with very little trouble, EFL learners often do not realize that the levels even exist, much less how to use them to adapt to different social situations. They tend to use bookish, multi-syllable, one-words to express the same idea (e.g., "investigate" for "look into"). They may use very formal academic words to speak to their classmates, for example, or conversely, they may use slang in an academic presentation, leaving their audience bewildered. Particle phrases are perennial sources of confusion constituting major

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obstacles on the path to proficiency in English (Boers, 2000; Kurtyka, 2001; Littlemore & Low, 2006). Accordingly, non-native speakers (NNSs) have always been at a disadvantage in acquiring, mastering, comprehending, not to mention using particle phrases.

That particle phrases notoriously challenging has been ascribed to various factors, including their semantic opacity (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993), their "idiomaticity or polysemy" (Sinclair, 1996, p. 78), EFL learners' preference for one-word synonyms (Sung, 2017), the quantity and quality of second /foreign language (L2) input (Sjöholm, 1995), and eventually non-universality of particle phrases (White, 2012).

All the above-mentioned problems lead to "an oral production that sounds quite far from nativelike" (Darwin & Gray, 1999, p. 67), characterized by contrived, "word-based invented language" (Mahmoudi, 2014, p. 242) due to lack of a ritualized language which makes them "talk like a book" (Jowett, 1951, as cited in Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014, p. 61). Considering the amount of time and energy EFL learners invest on the task of improving their spoken language, the resultant "failure is far from being justifiable" (Mahmoudi, 2014, p. 241).

The present study aimed to investigate whether retention of conceptual metaphors (Chitty, 2014; Thom, 2017; White, 2012) hidden all along to the EFL learners (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003) would help boost the participants' spoken accuracy. Unlike previous studies and instead of sufficing with scores gained from multiple-choice tests handed out before and after the treatment (Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Yasuda, 2010; Yoshitomi, 2006), this study examined whether those particle phrases would be used throughout the participants' narratives which were recorded, coded and finally scored in the pretest, post-test, and delayed post-test. Considering the study objectives and purpose, the following research questions and hypotheses were proposed:

1. Does teaching the conceptual meanings of particle phrases along with student-generated sketches have any statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' spoken accuracy?
2. Does teaching the conceptual meanings of particle phrases without student-generated sketches have any statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' spoken accuracy?
3. In terms of spoken accuracy, does the inclusion of student-generated sketches make any statistically significant difference compared to teaching them without student-generated sketches?
4. In terms of spoken accuracy, are the results gained from comparing the long-term effects of teaching particle phrases through student-generated sketches statistically significant from teaching them without student-generated sketches?

Review of the Related Literature

There are thousands of particle phrases in English, and so the question for practitioners is which ones to focus attention upon. Particle phrases dictionaries typically try to be comprehensive, and this results in a very large number of particle phrases being listed, which does not help practitioners in selecting the most important ones to teach or test. Both are substantial figures and unviable to teach, clearly indicating the need to establish frequency lists of particle phrases in order to help teachers make an informed choice in their pedagogical selection.

This was pointed out by Cornell (1985) who speculated that without any attempt to select particle phrases, 'their discovery may be uncomfortably similar, from the learner's point of view, to the opening of Pandora's box' (p. 277); hence the need for selection and gradation prior to teaching, 'even at the risk of controversial inclusions and omissions'. Before the first attempt at a particle phrases frequency list was made, teachers were left with little but their own intuition to select the few particle phrases to be dealt with in the classroom. However, as Darwin and Gray (1999) point out, their intuitions may not be correct.

Yoshitomi (2006) examined the use of particle phrases by advanced EFL and ESL learners in a story telling task. The subjects were told to look at all the pictures in a picture book titled *Frog, where are you?* And tell the story whenever they were ready. Then they were asked to listen to the recording of their own narrative, and comment in Japanese on any difficulties or uncertainty they experienced and whether they employed any strategies to cope with such difficulties. The study confirmed findings in previous literature (e.g., Wray, 2002, 2008) that particle phrases are among those formulaic sequences even relatively identifiable ones of which are difficult to acquire. The study calls for "giving greater prominence to formulaic sequences including particle phrases" (p. 221).

In another study, Storch (2007) examined the learners' performance on completing an editing task individually or in pairs. The learners were asked to correct a short text as a regular classroom activity. Four intact ESL classes participated in the study. One of the classes completed the task in pairs, another one individually, and the other two classes had the choice to do it in groups or alone. No significant difference was found between the accuracy of the task when completed collaboratively versus individually.

Nassaji and Tian (2010) compared the effectiveness of two types of output tasks (reconstruction cloze tasks and reconstruction editing tasks) for learning English particle phrases. They conducted a study in Canada with 26 students engaging in collaborative pair work with 16 English particle phrases. The students' existing knowledge of particle phrase was gauged in a pretest. Then the students completed reconstruction cloze tasks and reconstruction edit tasks; one of each individually, and one of each collaboratively. After a posttest and data analysis, the conclusion was that collaborative work has higher results with either task than does individual work, but the difference in learning is not statistically significant. The authors stated, however, that the addition of a training session for the students to work collaboratively would lead to better performance in pairs.

Khatib and Ghannadi (2011) investigated the effectiveness of interventionist and non-interventionist approaches to the recognition and production of particle phrases. The results of the study revealed the superiority of interventionist groups over the non-interventionist group in both recognition and production of particle phrases. In addition, the interventional explicit group greatly outperformed the interventional implicit group in both recognition and production.

White (2012) conducted a seven-week study in two college-level ESL courses that allowed 30 participants to find their own examples of particle phrases, and then use their individual creativity to draw a sketch of the situation. The study introduced a 5-step methodology that involves reorienting students to the meanings, having them gather particle phrases, discussing the meaning through an illustrative worksheet, drawing after small group discussions, and then sharing their drawings. By drawing, the student ends up with a type of symbolism with which to convey personal meaning to classmates. The study reported "modest" results, yet the scores did increase for more than half of the participants, even though it seems that some of the particle phrases tested were not part of the exercise.

Liu and Zhan (2018) recommended using pictures and simple diagrams as instruments to help students easily grasp the basic differences between particles on one hand and to assist them in understanding difficult-to-distinguish uses of particles, on the other. They encourage sketching drawing in that pictures can also help explore how a figurative meaning of a particle has derived from its prototypical meaning via our embodied experience especially when the same preposition or particle expresses two different meanings. They deemed that having students memorize and practice using fixed prepositional phrases have proven to be useful. They further concluded that leaning and using fixed prepositional phrases helps students improve their accuracy and fluency in the use of prepositions.

While using particle phrases in speech, applied linguists have identified three major components: complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). Of the three dimensions of CAF, accuracy is the easiest to define and measure objectively. In other words, accuracy is a simple concept to be identified because all researchers agree with the main goal of accuracy. Skehan (1996) defines accuracy as the production of target language according to its rule systems. Housen and Kuiken (2009) regarded accuracy as "error-free" speech. Also, Ellis (2003) defined accuracy as "the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms to target language norms" (p. 339). Skehan and Foster (1999, pp. 96–97) considered accuracy as a manifestation of the ability to avoid error in performance. This reflects possibly higher levels of language control but possibly also the avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke errors.

Accuracy represents the degree to which some output, whether in the form of spoken, conforms to a specific standard of measure (Pallotti, 2009). One thing to bear in mind, however, is what exactly is the standard by which accuracy is measured? This speaks to the question of prescriptive and descriptive grammar, and which is the more appropriate for use in analysis. Though not a focus of this paper, it is worth considering whether using a NS standard—in other words, utilizing descriptive grammar as a standard—would not be more appropriate than prescriptive. This concerns the interface between accuracy and fluency, and shows that even something that seems as objective as accuracy may not, in fact, be so obvious.

Researchers distinguish between two types of measures of accuracy: specific measures of accuracy and general measures of accuracy (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). As specific measures of accuracy (Kawauchi, 2005), researchers attempt to measure certain forms on learners' proficiency levels and development. To illustrate, measuring target-like verbal morphology, and target-like verbal use of plural are specific measures of grammatical accuracy. In contrast to specific measure of accuracy, general accuracy is a more realistic and sensitive measure (Skehan & Foster, 1999) and captures more general changes in accuracy (Skeham & Foster, 1997). In general measures of accuracy, accuracy can be measured through percentage of error-free AS-units (Lambert & Engler, 2007), the number of errors per 100 words (Inagaki, &

Kim, 1998; Kuiken & Vedder, 2007; Wolfe-Quintero,) number of errors per T-unit (Bygate, 2001), errors per one hundred words (Mehnert, 1998); percentage of target-like use of plurals (Crooks, 1989); and target-like use of vocabulary (Skehan & Foster, 1997).

Takiguchi (2004) counted the number of errors per word; Bygate (2001) counted the number of errors per unit. Yuan and Ellis (2003) considered the proportion of correct target features. Wigglesworth (1998) divided the number of definite articles by the number of definite and indefinite articles to calculate the target participants' accuracy. Kozumi (2005) considered the number of error-free clauses per clause, per AS-unit and then calculated it once through number of errors per word and once per AS-unit.

Method

Design

The participants of this study were not randomly grouped; therefore, this study used a quasi-experimental design with time-series data. The participants of this study were rated based on their performance in terms of spoken accuracy in narrative video-based retelling. The participants' performance in the tests, i.e. pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test, were compared with each other to fulfil the requirements of a pre-test-post-test design.

Participants

This study employed 51 Iranian EFL learners out of 134 who were studying language translation at Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran as its participants. They were selected from among both male and female EFL students, with female participants more than males. The criterion for selecting the participants was a Preliminary English Test (PET). After the choosing and grouping process, they participated in the courses one day a week, each lasting 115 minutes. The participants' exposure to English language was merely as a foreign language in Iran and they had already passed three speaking courses at the university.

Instruments

One of the testing instruments that was used in this study to collect the required data were a standard 2010 version of Preliminary English Test (PET) as the criterion for selecting the participants for this study. There were also a pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed post-test, for which a video "850 meters" was chosen and confirmed by EFL experts. The pre-test, which was a narrative retelling of the video, was conducted at the first session of the course before start of the treatment. The immediate and delayed post-test were also retelling of the same animation. The immediate post-test was carried out immediately after the course finished, and the delayed post-test was taken two weeks after the end of the course.

Procedure

Before the treatment, a PET test was administered to the participants as the selection criteria, based on which, 51 students were chosen out of 134 to take part in the study. After the PET test, the participants were divided into three groups: two experimental and one control. Before the treatment, a pre-test of narrative retelling of the video was administered to set the starting point of the study. Then the treatment began and the groups were taught through different ways, the details of which are described below.

In Experimental Group 1 (EG1), the participants were presented with the target particles (e.g., through) during each treatment session along with particle phrases revolving around the conceptual meaning of that particle (though as survival in pull through, etc.). Following that, they went through stages to have those particle phrases conceptualized and finally come up with a drawing once they shared their understandings and personal examples (White, 2012) in a think-aloud procedure (Cooper, 1999).

On the other hand, in Experimental Group 2 (EG2), the participants were presented with the same target particles during each treatment session along with particle phrases revolving around the conceptual meaning of the particle. They went through those same stages to have those particle phrases conceptualized except for the hands-on drawing task which was replaced by a passage they read on the meanings of those particle phrases.

However, in the Control Group (CG), the participants were presented the lists of those same particle phrases every session where the L1 (Farsi) meanings of those same target particle phrases were written on the screen (Ganji, 2011). In other words, the participants in this group were not directly presented with particle phrases. Elements of the story, different types of characters and theme of the stories were mainly discussed thus marginalizing learning lexis and particle phrases for the participants in this group.

Upon the end of the treatment phase, the learners took an immediate post-test, before which they were given five minutes as proposed by Foster and Skehan (1996) and Mehnert (1998) to do a pre-task activity known as "solitary planning" (Cooper, 2017). The use of solitary planning was to give them the time to rephrase their narratives with regards to grammar and lexis. Additionally, the delayed post-test was administered two weeks after the immediate post-test, with the same video and procedure as the pre-test and the immediate post-test. It is also noteworthy that the solitary planning time was also given to the learners just like the immediate post-test.

All exams were scored by three different raters to ensure that there was no bias and subjectivity in the scoring through inter-rater reliability. The three raters held a Ph.D. in applied linguistics and had over eight years of experience in the academic context of EFL. They were given the transcribed narratives, which were prepared from the recordings made from the learners' tests. The raters were required to score the participants' narratives in terms of accuracy, the results of which are presented in the results section below.

Findings

This study was undertaken in order to investigate the effects of three techniques of teaching particle phrases on the retention of spoken accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. To achieve these objectives, this study investigated the mentioned research questions through one-way ANOVA.

In order to make sure that the three groups were homogenous in terms of their ability on spoken accuracy, a one-way analysis of variances was run to compare EG1, EG2, and control groups' means on the pretest of spoken accuracy. After checking the assumptions of homogeneity of variances, a one-way ANOVA was carried out the results of which are presented in the following table.

Table 1.
One-Way ANOVA; Pretest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.312	2	.156	1.470	.240
Within Groups	5.088	48	.106		
Total	5.400	50			

Based on the results displayed in Table 1 ($F(2, 48) = 1.47$, $P = .240$, $\omega 2 = .018$ representing a weak effect size) it can be asserted that there were not significant differences between the means of the three groups on the pretest of spoken accuracy. That is to say; the three groups were homogenous in terms of their ability on spoken accuracy prior to the administration of the treatments.

After the homogenization, a one-way ANOVA was run to compare EG1, EG2, and CG on the posttests of spoken accuracy in order to investigate the first, second, and third research questions displays the results of the homogeneity of variances test.

Table 2.
Test of Homogeneity of Variances; Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Posttest of Spoken Accuracy	Based on Mean	5.909	2	48	.005
	Based on Median	5.988	2	48	.005
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	5.988	2	31.014	.006
	Based on trimmed mean	6.132	2	48	.004

The results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated (Levene's $F(2, 48) = 5.90$, $P = .005$). That was why the results of the robust Brown-Forsythe and Welch tests were reported instead of the ordinary one-way ANOVA.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
EG1	18	4.82	.378	.089	4.64	5.01	4	6
EG2	18	5.16	.585	.138	4.87	5.45	4	6
Control	15	3.81	.151	.039	3.73	3.89	4	4
Total	51	4.64	.697	.098	4.45	4.84	4	6

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the three groups on the posttest of spoken accuracy. The results indicated that EG1 (M = 5.16, SD = .585) had the highest mean on the posttest of spoken accuracy. This was followed by EG2 (M = 4.82, SD = .378) and CG (M = 3.81, SD = .697) groups.

Table 4.
Robust Tests of Brown-Forsythe and Welch; Pretest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest of Spoken Accuracy	Welch	86.616	2	27.420	.000
	Brown-Forsythe	47.704	2	31.968	.000

The robust results of Welch (F (2, 27.42) = 86.61, p = .000) and Brown-Forsythe (F (2, 31.96) = 47.70, p = .000) (Table 4) indicated that there were significant differences between the means of the three groups on the pretest of spoken accuracy.

Table 5.
Post-Hoc Comparisons; Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EG2	Word	.334	.164	.146	-.08	.75
	Control	1.347*	.143	.000	.97	1.72
EG1	Control	1.013*	.097	.000	.76	1.26

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

Based on the results of the post-hoc tests (Table 5), it can be concluded that EG2 (M = 5.16) significantly outperformed CG (M = 3.81) on the posttest of spoken accuracy (Mean Difference = 1.34, p = .000). Furthermore, it was found that EG1 (M = 4.82) significantly outperformed CG (M = 3.81) on the posttest of spoken accuracy (Mean Difference = 1.01, p = .000). In addition, results showed that there was not any significant difference between EG1 (M = 5.16) and EG2'S (M = 4.82) means on the posttest of spoken accuracy (Mean Difference = .334, p = .146).

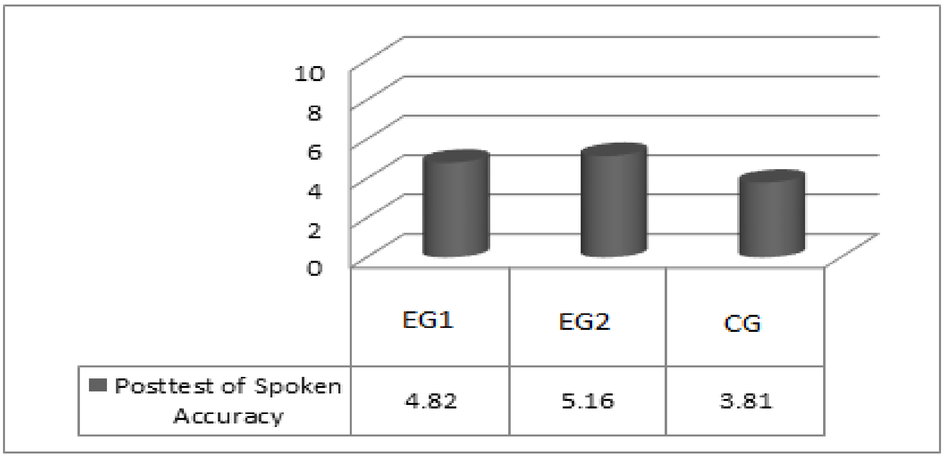

Figure 1.
Posttest of spoken accuracy by Groups

For the delayed post-test, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were retained.

Table 6.
Testing Normality Assumption of Delayed Posttest of Spoken Accuracy

Group	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Group 1	18	1.048	.536	.266	1.038
Group 2	18	-.367	.536	.723	1.038
Control	15	.118	.580	-1.032	1.121

As displayed in Table 6, the absolute values of the skewness and kurtosis were not higher than ±2 (Bachman, 2005). The assumption of homogeneity of variances was also retained on delayed posttest of accuracy.

Table 7.
Test of Homogeneity of Variances; Delayed Posttest of Accuracy by Groups

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	.309	2	48	.735
Based on Median	.314	2	48	.732
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.314	2	45.684	.732
Based on trimmed mean	.310	2	48	.735

The non-significant results of Levene's tests ($F(2, 48) = .314$, $p > .05$) indicated that there were not any significant differences between three groups' variances on delayed posttest of spoken accuracy.

Table 8.
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient; Delayed Posttest of Accuracy

	Intraclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.546	.387	.689	4.610	50	100	.000
Average Measures	.783	.655	.869	4.610	50	100	.000

There was significant agreement between the three raters who rated the participants' performance on the delayed posttest of spoken accuracy. As displayed in Table 8, the results ($\alpha = .783$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.655, .869]) indicated that the three raters enjoyed significant inter-rater reliability.

Table 9.
Descriptive Statistics; Delayed Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Group 1	18	5.046	.3730	.0879	4.861	5.232	4.7	5.8
Group 2	18	5.037	.3734	.0880	4.851	5.222	4.3	5.8
Control	15	4.123	.4047	.1045	3.899	4.347	3.5	4.8
Total	51	4.771	.5651	.0791	4.612	4.930	3.5	5.8

The descriptive statistics for the three groups on the delayed posttest of accuracy are displayed in Table 9. The results indicated that Group 1 ($M = 5.046$, $SD = .373$, 95 % CI [4.86, 5.23]) had the highest mean. This was followed by Group 2 ($M = 5.037$, $SD = .373$, 95 % CI [4.85, 5.22]) and control ($M = 4.123$, $SD = .405$, 95 % CI [3.90, 4.35]) groups.

Table 10.
One-Way ANOVA; Delayed Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.938	2	4.469	30.518	.000
Within Groups	7.029	48	.146		
Total	15.967	50			

The results of one-way ANOVA ($F (2, 48) = 30.51$, $p < .05$, partial eta squared = .560 representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the three groups' means on delayed posttest of spoken accuracy.

Table 11.
Multiple Comparisons Tests of Delayed Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Group 1	Group 2	.009	.128	.997	-.31	.33
	Control	.923*	.134	.000	.59	1.26
Group 2	Group 1	-.009	.128	.997	-.33	.31
	Control	.914*	.134	.000	.58	1.25
Control	Group 1	-.923*	.134	.000	-1.26	-.59
	Group 2	-.914*	.134	.000	-1.25	-.58

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

Table 11 displays the results of post-hoc Scheffe's tests. Based on these results, it can be concluded that a) there was not any significant difference between Group 1 (M = 5.046) and Group 2 (M = 5.037) groups' means on delayed posttest of spoken accuracy (MD = .009, $p > .05$, 95 % CI [-.31, .33]., and b) the first group (M = 5.046) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 4.123) on delayed posttest of spoken accuracy (MD = .923, $p < .05$, 95 % CI [.59, 1.26]., and c), the second group (M = 5.037) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 4.123) on delayed posttest of spoken accuracy (MD = .914, $p < .05$, 95 % CI [.58, 1.25].

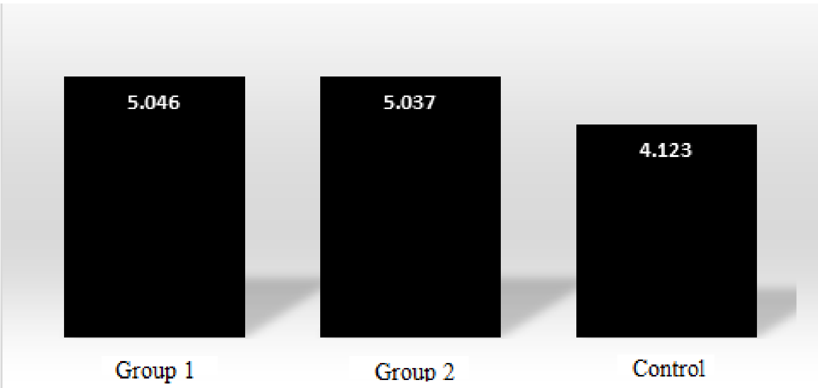

Figure 2.
Means on Delayed Posttest of Spoken Accuracy by Groups

Discussion and Conclusion

Results confirmed that teaching particle phrases extracted from genuine contexts on one hand and the advantage of having them as prefabricated chunks have saved the participants from the burden of word-by-word construction of lexical items (Wray, 2002) that may not be correct in terms of grammatical as well as lexical accuracy (correct use of collocations). By definition, particle phrases are prefabricated "chunks" to be stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 1)

Studies carried out by Marashi and Maherinai (2011); Oe and Alam (2013), and Liu and Zhan (2018) also confirm the effectiveness of using nonverbal media in teaching particle phrases. In these studies, it was found that "there is a significant distinction in fostering pictorial teaching designed for EFL classrooms and implementing communicative language learning activities to comprise higher achievement and better understanding" (Marashi & Maherinia, 2011, p. 41). In the case of participants in Oe and Alam's (2013) study, those who were presented with particle phrases through still pictures outperformed those with L1 glosses which had a negative effect on learning usages of particle phrases.

The findings of the present study are in line with that of Kailani (1995), who stresses the genuine practice and reiterates that regardless of the method or technique being adapted to improve grammaticality of a product, written or spoken, it is only through genuine practice that accuracy and effectiveness could be increased. As for the long-term effects of teaching particle phrases on grammatical accuracy, the performance of the participants in the experimental groups remained equally unchanged (M = 5.04 vs. M = 5.03).

However, results contradict those of Sadeqkouhestani and Rahimy's (2013) study in which it was investigated whether knowledge of particle phrases would enhance higher knowledge of grammatical patterns of particle phrases in Iranian EFL learners. Whereas the results of their study revealed an insignificant higher score for the experimental group, the results gained in this study reveals that teaching particle phrases have been effective in the accuracy of the participants.

Regardless of the method or technique being adapted to improve grammaticality of a product, written or spoken, it is only through genuine practice that accuracy and effectiveness could be increased (Kailani, 1995). According to Wray (2002), in the holistic outlook of language, the whole chunks of language of various lengths are processed as a unit. In this model, particle phrases are viewed a dynamic response to processing and interactional needs of language users.

Therefore, it can be concluded that involving EFL learners with nonverbal media (e.g., pictures by Marashi and Maherinai (2011) and Manga cartoons by Oe and Alam (2013) is a feasible teaching method with characteristics compatible with the current wave of educational reform in Iran, especially with respect to the aim of fostering basic competencies of students. Such teaching does not only enhance students' overall achievement and boost their motivation towards learning English as a foreign language, it also cultivates the students' overall ability as human beings thenceforth facilitating the ability to guess and imagine.

Regarding the implications, findings of this research highlight the significance of incorporating conceptual metaphor through hands-on tasks of student-generated drawings. Numerous studies have revealed the positive benefits on students' understanding and retention of particle phrase meanings when these frameworks are explicitly taught (e.g. Karahan, 2015; Neagu, 2007; White, 2012; Yasuda, 2010). Although NSs are not consciously aware of metaphorical frameworks inherent primarily in their language and particle phrases, it calls for teachers to first become aware of these very frameworks and turn their procedural knowledge into explicit knowledge to make their students visualize how the meanings are conceptually at work.

It is also essential for teachers to be given intensive training on how to implement drawing before attempting to make it part of the curriculum. It is also a sound idea to teach some parts of L2 which is possible through drawing (as suggested by Liu & Zhan, 2018). Such initiatives need to be complemented with support networks and ready-made materials to increase the likelihood that all teachers would adopt this approach to teaching and learning in proper way. The conceptual approach strives not simply to promote the learning of particle phrases. At a more generative level, the goal is for learners to utilize conceptual tools in their efforts to make sense of novel particle phrases they may come across in the future.

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