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# Form-focused Instruction in Incidental Learning of English Verb Patterns*

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The present study investigated what kind of form-focused instruction would yield better results for incidental learning of English verb patterns in two experiments. Experiment 1 compared the effectiveness of focus on form (reading + translation) and focus on forms (verb pattern list + translation) tasks in learning new English verb patterns incidentally in Korean EFL college classrooms. The results of Experiment 1 showed significantly higher results for the focus on forms group. Since it was revealed by Experiment 1 that the learners did not notice unknown target verb patterns, Experiment 2 was undertaken to examine whether the difference between the focus on form and focus on forms conditions found in Experiment 1 would be retained even after the isolated form-focused instruction or focus on forms aiming at teaching students how to recognize verb patterns was provided for the learners before the focus on form and focus on forms tasks were carried out. The results showed that the focus on form group yielded significantly higher incidental learning scores than the focus on forms group. The effectiveness rates of the focus on form in Experiment 2 were statistically higher than those of the focus on forms in Experiment 1. The results of the two experiments indicated that the combination of the isolated form-focused instruction and focus on form was significantly more effective in learning English verb patterns incidentally. In conclusion, form-focused instruction including both isolated form-focused instruction and focus on form is an effective way to incidental learning of English verb patterns.

**[English verb patterns/incidental learning/focus on form/focus on forms/isolated form-focused instruction]**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the learning of large amounts of vocabulary is an essential component of second or foreign language acquisition. Wray (2000) particularly pointed out that an increase in the knowledge of collocations, which are particular combinations of words, can result in fluency development and improvements in accuracy. Therefore, many studies have reported on the importance of knowledge of collocations (Lewis, 2000; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005; Nesselhauf, 2003). However, ESL or EFL learners have difficulties with collocations (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003). Collocations therefore deserve to be a central part of vocabulary learning. Although there is much interest in collocations in vocabulary instruction in recent years, there are few empirical studies on how to instruct students in collocations effectively in the language classroom.

Collocations fall into two major groups: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations (Benson et al., 2007). According to Benson et al. (2007), a grammatical collocation is a phrase consisting of a dominant word (nouns, adjectives, verbs) and a preposition or grammatical structure, while a lexical collocation consists of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, and do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or clauses. According to this definition, an English verb pattern consisting of a verb and grammatical structures is an example of grammatical collocation. Shokouhi and Mirsalari (2010) showed that grammatical collocations are more difficult to acquire than lexical collocations.

Laufer (2006) argued that meaning-focused instruction does not necessarily result in satisfactory vocabulary learning, and consequently vocabulary instruction should incorporate form-focused instruction, which has primarily been related to grammar. Different types of form-focused instruction have been discussed in the literature: focus on form, focus on forms, isolated form-focused instruction and integrated form-focused instruction (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

The present study was designed to investigate what kind of form-focused instruction would yield better results for incidental learning of English verb patterns. Each researcher has his/her own definition of incidental vocabulary learning. In this study, the definition made by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) was adopted. Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) defined incidental vocabulary learning in contrast with intentional vocabulary learning. Intentional vocabulary learning refers to an activity aiming at committing lexical information to memory, while incidental vocabulary learning is the acquisition of vocabulary as a by-product of any activity in which individuals process new lexical information without the intention to commit this information to memory. Incidental learning does not mean that learners do not attend to words during the activity. They may attend to words, but they do not deliberately try to commit words to memory. Vocabulary tasks are one effective way of

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adding to the learner's knowledge of new words. In the present study, therefore, translation activities, which were proved to be effective tasks in vocabulary learning by Laufer and Girsai (2008), were incorporated into classroom instruction to enhance incidental learning of English verb patterns.

## II. BACKGROUND

### 1. Verb Patterns

In English, a verb has a special kind of co-occurrence restriction that is syntactically based. For example, a caused-motion verb, like *put*, requires both an object noun phrase and a locative adverbial prepositional phrase. This restriction explains why the sentence in (1) is ill-formed.

(1) * John put the book.

In linguistics, this restriction is called the subcatgorization frame of the item concerned. Subcategorization frames are specifications of the number and kinds of other words that a word selects when appearing in a sentence. For example, the verb *put* has a lexical entry like:

(2) put: V, +[–NP–PP]

The lexical entry like (2) contains not only categorical information (i.e., about whether some item is a V or an N, etc.), but also subcategorization information about the kinds of complements a given lexical item may permit. The subcategorization frame [–NP –PP] produces the verb pattern *put*+N+P+N (N in verb patterns actually represents NP), so the sentence like (3) is produced.

(3) I put the book in the box.

According to Graver (1986), there are about 40 different structures which are allowable as verb patterns, including V+*to*+V, V+V-*ing*, V+N+*to*+V. Native English speakers know instinctively which patterns of complementation a particular verb allows or rejects. However, according to Bourke (2007), verbal complementation errors are among the most frequent and intractable error types generated by ESL or EFL learners of all levels.

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## 2. Form-focused Instruction

A growing body of evidence that second language learners may fail to reach high levels of linguistic knowledge and performance from entirely meaning-focused instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Lyster, 1994; Swain, 1988) has led applied linguists to stress the need for form-focused instruction (FFI) in conjunction with communicative interaction (DeKeyser, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Long, 1991; Norris & Ortega, 2000). Some types of FFI have been discussed in the literature. Long (1991) distinguished focus on forms (FonFs) from focus on form (FonF). Focus on forms is a traditional teaching approach in which discrete language features are taught in separate lessons. FonFs always entails isolation of linguistic features from context or from communicative activity. In contrast, focus on form refers to instruction in which learners' attention is drawn to linguistic elements during communicative activities or tasks. In FonF, overriding focus is on meaning. Many researchers have provided positive evidence for the effectiveness of FonF in second or foreign language learning (Doughty & Williams, 1998). Most proponents of FonF have suggested that FonFs is unnecessary and generally ineffective in comparison with FonF. However, some studies have showed that the effect of FonFs is of some significance. Sheen (1996, 2003, 2005) stressed that FonFs should not be dismissed. In addition, Norris and Ortega (2000) indicated that FonF and FonFs are equally effective.

Spada and Lightbown (2008) used the terms isolated form-focused instruction and integrated form-focused instruction to distinguish different types of FFI. Isolated FFI is attention to form in separate lessons which primarily aim at teaching students about a particular language feature. In isolated FFI, attention to form is separated from the communicative or content-based activity, but separate lessons occur as part of a program that is primarily communication oriented. Therefore, isolated FFI is not the same as Long's (1991) FonFs, which is not directly connected to communicative or meaning-based activity. Integrated FFI, on the other hand, draws learners' attention to form during communicative or meaning-based activities. This approach does not differ from Ellis's (2001) FonF. Spada and Lightbown (2008) see isolated and integrated FFI as complementary parts of a complete language learning environment. As stated above, many studies have showed that integrated FFI (same as FonF) can induce positive effects on acquiring certain language features (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Williams & Evans, 1998). Some recent studies have found that students can benefit from isolated FFI (Barcroft, 2002; Trofimovich, 2005).

FFI has been related to teaching grammar and studies of FFI have also been conducted on grammar instruction. But it can be extended to vocabulary learning and teaching. "FonF attends to lexical items (single words and multi-word units) within a communicative task environment, since these lexical items are necessary for the completion of a

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communicative or an authentic language task. FonFs, on the other hand, teaches and practices discrete lexical items in non-communicative, non-authentic language tasks" (Laufer, 2006, p. 150). For example, when learners read a text, they may look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. The activity of consulting a dictionary is FonF since the words looked up, i.e., attended to, are necessary tools to complete a communicative task. However, in a FonFs approach, discrete lexical items are presented with their translations in a decontextualized list and vocabulary exercises may be provided. In empirical vocabulary research, much attention has not been directed to FFI. However, some examples of studies classified as FonF studies found empirical evidence for the efficacy of FonF for lexical learning (De la Fuente, 2002; Ellis & He, 1999; Hulstijn, 1992; Luppesku & Day, 1993; Watanabe, 1997), while some examples of studies classified as FonFs studies found that FonFs is beneficial to learning new words (Horst et al., 2005; Kitajima, 2001; Snellings et al., 2002; Webb, 2007). There have not been many studies designed to compare the effectiveness of FonF and FonFs approaches for lexical learning. Such comparison was made in three studies: Laufer (2003), Hill and Laufer (2003), and Laufer (2006). In the three studies, FonFs yielded better results than FonF. As far as the researcher knows, there have not been any studies in which isolated FFI is adapted to vocabulary learning and teaching.

## 3. Involvement Load Hypothesis

In connection with vocabulary tasks, involvement load has been discussed. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) developed Involvement Load Hypothesis for L2 vocabulary learning by translating and operationalizing the notion of depth of processing in terms of L2 vocabulary tasks. Laufer and Hulstijn's basic contention was that "The retention of unfamiliar words is, generally, conditional upon the degree of involvement in processing these words" (p. 545). 'Involvement' consists of three basic components: 'need,' 'search,' and 'evaluation.' 'Need' is defined as the drive to comply with task requirements, and 'need' is present during reading when an unknown word is absolutely necessary for understanding a text. 'Search' is the attempt to find the meaning of an unknown word when the meaning is not provided. The 'search' process may include a variety of strategies, such as contextual guessing, consulting a dictionary, or asking the teacher. 'Evaluation' implies some kind of selective decision about the word's meaning, or form, in which the word's context is taken into account. Depending on the presence or absence of these components, tasks may induce a different degree of involvement on the part of the learner that will affect vocabulary retention. Involvement Load Hypothesis posits that tasks that induce higher involvement are conducive to vocabulary learning.

Laufer and Girsai (2008) showed that translation tasks are effective in vocabulary

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learning since translation is a task with high involvement load. The ‘need’ element is present as the target word has to be understood to complete a translation task. There is ‘search’ because translation into L1 requires a search for the meaning of the target word. The element of ‘evaluation’ is present since a decision has to be made as to which translation alternative of the target word fits a given sentence.

## III. THE STUDY

### 1. Aim

The aim of the study was to investigate what kind of form-focused instruction would be beneficial to learning new English verb patterns. Such an investigation was made during incidental learning in form-focused instruction which entails translations tasks.

### 2. Research Questions

The specific research questions were:

1) Will there be a significant difference between FonF and FonFs conditions in incidental learning of verb patterns?
2) If isolated FFI or FonFs whose purpose is to teach students how to recognize verb patterns is conducted before giving opportunities for incidental learning of verb patterns in FonF and FonFs conditions, will the difference (if any) found between the two conditions be retained?

### 3. Experiment 1

1) Subjects

The original pool of participants was 60 freshmen from the two departments, A and B, enrolled in ‘Practical English 1’ classes at a university in Seoul, Korea. ‘Practical English 1’ was a compulsory subject for these students. Experiment 1 (Exp. 1) was conducted during ‘Practical English 1’classes in the spring semester 2010. In the first week of the semester, pretests were administered to select target verb patterns and subjects for this experiment. After selecting 10 articles each of which contains more than two verb patterns

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from Voice of America,[1] all participants took pretests on 30 verb patterns appearing in the 10 articles selected. Pretests were sentence translation tests measuring receptive and productive knowledge of the target verb patterns. The findings of the pretests showed that two out of the 10 articles contained verb patterns of which about 88% of the original participants had neither receptive nor productive knowledge. The six verb patterns appearing in the two articles were selected as the target verb patterns and participants who have neither the ability to comprehend the target verb patterns nor the ability to produce them were chosen as the subjects of the experiment. As a result, seven (about 12%) of the 60 original participants were excluded. Of the remaining 53 subjects, 26 were in Department A and 27 in Department B. Department A was assigned to the FonF condition and Department B to the FonFs condition. The trial TOEIC taken after the entrance ceremony revealed that the English language proficiency levels of 53 subjects ranged from low (200) to intermediate level (575).

2) Target Verb Patterns

The six verb patterns selected as the target verb patterns are as follows:

(4)a. call on+N+to+V
The company called on their employees to take responsibility for increasing profitability by creating a responsibility-based culture.
b. call+N+A
They called these consumer demands unacceptable.
c. offer+to+V
The American company has offered to buy Unocal in a deal worth about seventeen thousand million dollars.
d. make+N+V
Bacteria can make foods go bad.
e. keep+N+from+Ving
The sides and bottom should have additional material, called insulation, to keep the heat from escaping.
f. require+N+of+N
This generally requires it of the people trying to protect food.

[1] Voice of America (VOA) is the official external radio and television broadcasting service of the United States federal government. Its daily broadcasts include news reports, editorials, and discussion of U. S. political and cultural events. It is available through the Internet in both streaming media and downloadable formats at VOANews.com.

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3) Form-focused Instruction

In the second week's class, form-focused instruction on the target verb patterns was conducted.

① Focus on Form Condition

The learners in the FonF condition (Department A) encountered the target verb patterns during reading. The researcher conducted a reading lesson focusing on content, giving a brief explanation of some sentence structures. The reading texts were the two articles which contained the target verb patterns, which all subjects didn't know. While reading the texts, they received the translation task in which they were asked to translate the sentences in which the target verb patterns appeared into Korean. They were advised to look words up in a dictionary whenever they felt the need to consult a dictionary. They were given enough time to translate the sentences after consulting a dictionary. They were asked to record the dictionary entries looked up in a dictionary on a sheet of paper handed out to each student. Since translation was incorporated into a communicative reading activity, the researcher provided the correct translation of each sentence without explanation whenever the learners completed the translation of each sentence.

② Focus on Forms Condition

Before a reading lesson was conducted, the FonFs group received a verb pattern list. The learners in the FonFs condition (Department B) encountered the target verb patterns in the list. The target verb patterns were presented on the left of the Korean translations, which were in turn followed by the sentences in which the target verb patterns appeared, as in (5).

(5) keep…from… …이 …하지 못하게 하다
They kept her from going out.

The learners received the translation task in which they were asked to translate each sentence following each target verb pattern into Korean, seeing the list. After completing the task, the researcher provided the correct translations without explanation. After the FonFs instruction in the target verb patterns, the learners read the texts which did not contain any target verb pattern.

4) Testing

After the reading lesson, immediate posttests were administered. Although all learners in the FonF and FonFs groups received form-focused instruction, only the subjects in the two

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groups chosen in the pretests were unexpectedly tested on the target verb patterns. Since they were not told in advance that they would be tested on vocabulary afterwards, they may not have deliberately attempted to commit the target verb patterns to memory. Therefore, any target verb pattern that was acquired in the FonF or FonFs condition was incidental. Like the pretests, they took two translation tests measuring receptive and productive knowledge of the target verb patterns. In the first test, they were given Korean translations of English sentences including the target verb patterns and had to translate them into English. The example in (6) is the test item measuring productive knowledge of the target verb pattern *make*+N+V.

(6) 나는 그가 그 회의에 참석하게 했다.

In order to force the subjects to use the target verb patterns, the Korean-English translation test contained the condition that the words which appeared in the text (FonF group) or in the list (FonFs group) must be used. In the second test, after the Korean-English translations had been collected, they translated English sentences including the target verb patterns into Korean. The example in (7) is the test item measuring receptive knowledge of the target verb pattern *call on*+N+*to*+V.

(7) He called on the community to join forces with other groups.

In the Korean-English translation test measuring productive knowledge of the target verb patterns, it was checked whether the target verb patterns were used correctly. Since a verb pattern is an example of collocation, which must be memorized as a chunk, two points were given to each absolutely correct translation of the target verb pattern, but one point was given when the nominative form of the pronoun appeared in the position of the noun after the head verb (e.g., the position of N in the verb pattern *make*+N+V). In the English-Korean translation test measuring receptive knowledge of the target verb patterns, two points were given to each correct translation of the target verb pattern. Partially correct translation was not given points because it is possible that the meaning of the target verb patterns was partially guessed from the context in the English-Korean translation. Therefore, the highest score for each test was 12.

A week later the same kind of translation tests were administered in the same manner in order to check how many of the target verb patterns were still remembered.

5) Results

Since learners who have neither the ability to comprehend the target verb patterns nor

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the ability to produce them were picked out through the pretests, the pretest mean scores for both groups were zero. This means that any differences found on the immediate posttests can be attributed to the difference in learning condition.

To test for a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the immediate posttest mean scores, paired *t*-tests were conducted. TABLE 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the immediate posttests for those subjects who scored zero in the pretests.

**TABLE 1**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Immediate Posttests in Exp. 1**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonF | 26 | 0.615 | 1.235 | 5.115 | 0.000 |
| | FonFs | 27 | 3.111 | 2.175 | | |
| Korean > English | FonF | 26 | 0.192 | 0.567 | 3.169 | 0.003 |
| | FonFs | 27 | 1.148 | 1.148 | | |

maximum score for each test: 12

P < .05: statistically significant

As can be seen from TABLE 1, the FonFs group outperformed the FonF group in both receptive and productive tests and the differences were significant, which answered Research Question 1 about the difference between the FonF and FonFs conditions in incidental learning of the target verb patterns.

TABLE 2 presents the results of the delayed posttests. Since one subject in the FonF group was absent for the delayed posttests, data from 25 subjects were analyzed.

**TABLE 2**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Delayed Posttests in Exp. 1**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonF | 25 | 0.480 | 0.871 | 3.326 | 0.002 |
| | FonFs | 27 | 1.703 | 1.636 | | |
| Korean > English | FonF | 25 | 0.160 | 0.553 | 1.728 | 0.090 |
| | FonFs | 27 | 0.555 | 1.012 | | |

maximum score for each test: 12

P < .05: statistically significant

The FonFs condition yielded significantly higher results than the FonF condition in the receptive test, but the significant difference between the two conditions disappeared in the productive test.

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## 4. Experiment 2

The researcher collected the pieces of paper on which the subjects in the FonF condition wrote down the dictionary entries looked up in a dictionary and looked through them. About 77% of 26 subjects, 20 subjects, did not look up any head verbs of the target verb patterns. It was understood that head verbs such as *call, offer, make, keep* and *require* are high-frequency words and these words are familiar to them, so they did not look up the words in a dictionary. The remaining six subjects looked up one or two head verbs, but three subjects did not choose any correct dictionary entry corresponding to the target verb pattern. Two subjects found the correct dictionary entries for two target verb patterns and one subject found only one correct dictionary entry. In other words, almost all subjects (23 subjects) did not look up any target verb pattern encountered in the text. This fact shows that it seemed that the subjects failed to notice the presence of unfamiliar verb patterns. This coincides with the finding of Arnaud and Savignon (1997) that second or foreign language learners do not notice unknown formulaic sequences, one type of which is collocation. It seemed that the subjects did not notice unknown target verb patterns since they could not recognize unknown verb patterns. Therefore, Experiment 2 (Exp. 2) was undertaken to examine learners' incidental learning of verb patterns after they are taught how to recognize verb patterns.

### 1) Subjects

The subjects in this experiment were different from those in Exp. 1. The following are the two reasons why new subjects were chosen for this experiment. First, if the subjects in Exp. 1 had participated in Exp. 2, they would have predicted the giving of posttests when translation tasks were conducted like Exp. 1 even though each group had been provided with different learning condition from the one provided in Exp. 1. Second, it is thought that seeing the verb pattern list, some subjects in the FonFs group may have gotten some knowledge related to recognizing verb patterns. Because of these possibilities, new subjects were chosen.

The original pool of participants in this experiment was 80 freshmen from the two departments, C and D, enrolled in 'Practical English 1' classes at a university in Seoul, Korea. Exp. 2 was conducted during 'Practical English 1'classes in the spring semester 2010. In the third week of the semester, pretests were administered to select target verb patterns and subjects for this experiment. Like Exp. 1, the participants took two translation tests on 33 verb patterns appearing in ten articles from Voice of America which were not selected in Exp. 1. Similarly to Exp. 1, two out of 10 articles contained verb patterns of which about 83% of the original participants had neither receptive nor productive

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knowledge. The seven verb patterns appearing in the two articles were selected as the target verb patterns and participants who have neither the ability to comprehend the target verb patterns nor the ability to produce them were selected as the subjects of the experiment.

As a result, out of the 80 original participants, 14 (about 17%) were excluded. Of the remaining 66 subjects, 32 were in Department C and 34 in Department D. Department C was assigned to the FonF condition and Department D to the FonFs condition. The trial TOEIC taken after the entrance ceremony revealed that the English language proficiency levels of 66 subjects ranged from low (205) to intermediate level (595), which showed that the subjects of this experiment and those of Exp. 1 possessed the same level of English proficiency.

2) Target Verb Patterns

The seven verb patterns selected as the target verb patterns are as follows:

(8) a. find+N+Ving
A lot of people find themselves paying more than they anticipated on their mortgage or rent.
b. have+N+Ved
If the business does badly and cannot pay its debts, any creditor can have it declared bankrupt.
c. make+N+N
Lower interest rates made euro loans a good deal at the time.
d. balance +N+against+N
Companies have a debt-equity ratio that is determined by balancing tax savings against the risk of being declared bankrupt by creditors.
e. urge+N+to+V
The World Heart Federation urges parents to keep their children active.
f. keep+N+A
The World Heart Federation urges parents to keep their children active.
g. get+N+to+V
It could also get more children to walk or bicycle to school.

3) Form-Focused Instruction

In the fourth week's class, form-focused instruction on the target verb patterns was conducted. The aim of Exp. 2 was to examine how a separate lesson aiming at teaching

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students how to recognize verb patterns would affect the difference between the FonF and FonFs conditions in incidental learning of verb patterns found in Exp. 1. For this purpose, both groups were taught a lesson on how to recognize verb patterns before they were given opportunities for incidental learning of the target verb patterns in the FonF and FonFs conditions. Spada and Lightbown (2008) asserted that learners might need isolated FFI when they could not detect and understand a particular language feature. Since Exp. 1 proved that the subjects in the FonF group did not notice unknown target verb patterns, those in the FonF group in this experiment were provided with the isolated FFI whose primary purpose is to make them recognize verb patterns. The researcher explained that the subcategorization feature of a verb derives a verb pattern and made the learners recognize the general importance of verb patterns in the English language. Instruction involved helping them recognize there are a large number of possible structures after the verb by giving instances of the verb pattern. Then sentences including verb patterns were provided and they were asked to recognize verb patterns by encouraging them to focus carefully on the words that come after a verb. The focus was on enhancing recognition by drawing their attention to verb patterns in order that they could recognize verb patterns when they were exposed to further text. In addition, they were taught how to use a dictionary to identify the meaning of verb patterns in order that they could find the correct meaning in a dictionary or might not misinterpret the dictionary entry. The instruction the learners in the FonF condition received was conducted in preparation for a communicative reading activity, so it can be called isolated FFI. The learners in the FonFs condition received the same instruction as those in the FonF condition. But the instruction provided in the FonFs condition was not tied to a communicative activity, so it was FonFs instruction. After the lesson on how to recognize verb patterns, the learners in both groups were given opportunities for incidental learning of the target verb patterns in the FonF and FonFs conditions in the same manner as Exp. 1.

4) Testing

Like Exp. 1, the subjects in the FonF and FonFs groups chosen in the pretests unexpectedly had immediate two translation tests measuring receptive and productive knowledge of the target verb patterns. The tests used were the same kind as those described in Exp. 1. Scoring was the same as in Exp. 1 and the highest score for each test was 14. A week later, the delayed posttests were administered in the same manner.

5) Results

TABLE 3 presents the results that answer Research Question 2 about whether the

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difference between the FonF and FonFs conditions in incidental learning of verb patterns found in Exp. 1 would remain unchanged even after conducting isolated FFI or FonFs aiming at teaching students how to recognize verb patterns.

**TABLE 3**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Immediate Posttests in Exp. 2**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonF | 32 | 5.562 | 3.281 | 2.191 | 0.032 |
| | FonFs | 34 | 3.941 | 2.718 | | |
| Korean > English | FonF | 32 | 3.031 | 2.375 | 2.348 | 0.022 |
| | FonFs | 34 | 1.764 | 2.000 | | |

maximum score for each test: 14

P < .05: statistically significant

As a result of conducting the isolated FFI, the difference between the FonF and FonFs conditions was just the opposite of that found in Exp. 1. That is, in contrast to Exp. 1, the FonF group yielded higher results than the FonFs group in both receptive and productive tests, and the differences as measured by paired *t*-tests were significant.

TABLE 4 presents the results of the delayed posttests. Since one subject in the FonFs group was absent for the delayed tests, data from 33 subjects were analyzed.

**TABLE 4**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Delayed Posttests in Exp. 2**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonF | 32 | 3.875 | 2.379 | 3.448 | 0.001 |
| | FonFs | 33 | 2.060 | 2.060 | | |
| Korean > English | FonF | 32 | 1.531 | 1.645 | 2.028 | 0.047 |
| | FonFs | 33 | 0.787 | 1.293 | | |

maximum score for each test: 14

P < .05: statistically significant

The FonF condition yielded significantly higher results than the FonFs condition in both receptive and productive tests even a week after the form-focused instruction.

Since the maximum score in Exp. 1 was different from that in Exp. 2, percentage calculation (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) was used to measure the effectiveness of the FonFs in Exp.1 and the FonF in Exp. 2. The effectiveness rates (recall rates) of the two conditions were calculated in percentages by calculating each student's posttest score in terms of the percentage of the maximum score. To test for a statistically significant difference between the two conditions in the effectiveness rates, paired *t*-tests were

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conducted.

**TABLE 5**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Effectiveness Rates in the Immediate Posttests**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Effectiveness Rate (%) | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonFs(Exp.1) | 27 | 3.111 | 25.9 | 0.181 | 2.495 | 0.016 |
| | FonF(Exp.2) | 32 | 5.562 | 39.7 | 0234 | | |
| Korean > English | FonFs(Exp.1) | 27 | 1.148 | 9.6 | 0.119 | 3.106 | 0.003 |
| | FonF(Exp.2) | 32 | 3.031 | 21.6 | 0.169 | | |

maximum score for each test: Exp. 1 (12), Exp. 2 (14)

P < .05: statistically significant

TABLE 5 shows that the FonF condition was more effective than the FonFs condition for recall of verb pattern forms and meanings: the means of the FonFs in Exp. 1 and the FonF in Exp. 2 were 25.9 % and 39.7 % on the test of immediate recall of verb pattern meaning (translation into Korean); 9.6 % and 21.6 % on the test of immediate recall of verb pattern form (translation into English). There were statistically significant differences in the effectiveness rates between the FonFs and FonF conditions.

TABLE 6 shows that the significant differences in the effectiveness rates between the two conditions were retained even one week after the form-focused instruction.

**TABLE 6**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Effectiveness Rates in the Delayed Posttests**

| Test | Group | N | Mean | Effectiveness Rate (%) | Standard Deviation | T | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English > Korean | FonF(Exp.1) | 27 | 1.703 | 14.2 | 0.136 | 3.142 | 0.002 |
| | FonFs(Exp.2) | 32 | 3.875 | 27.2 | 0.170 | | |
| Korean > English | FonF(Exp.1) | 27 | 0.555 | 4.6 | 0.084 | 2.327 | 0.024 |
| | FonFs(Exp.2) | 32 | 1.531 | 10.9 | 0.117 | | |

maximum score for each test: Exp. 1 (12), Exp. 2 (14)

P < .05: statistically significant

Based on the results of the two experiments, it can be concluded that the combination of the isolated FFI and FonF was significantly more effective in learning the target verb patterns incidentally.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In accordance with Laufer and Girsai (2008)'s opinion that translation tasks are helpful

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for vocabulary learning since translation is a task with high involvement load, translation tasks were incorporated into reading activities and verb pattern list activities to enhance incidental learning of the target verb patterns in the FonF and FonFs conditions. The translation tasks assigned to the FonF and FonFs groups were the same kind of English-Korean translation tasks. However, there was predicted difference in the degree of involvement load due to the presence or absence of 'need,' 'search' and 'evaluation' in the FonF and FonFs conditions in which they were conducted. In Exp. 1, according to Involvement Load Hypothesis, it was predicted that the FonF condition would yield better learning results because the FonF tasks (reading + translation) would have a greater involvement load than the FonFs tasks (verb pattern list + translation). When the FonF group translated while reading, a strong 'need' would occur because the learners had to decide to look up the target verb patterns in a dictionary during translation. The element of 'search' would be present as well since they had to attempt to find the meaning of the target verb patterns by consulting a dictionary. An element of 'evaluation' would be necessary since they had to make a decision as to which one of several senses a verb pattern may have fitted in a given context. When the FonFs group translated while seeing the verb pattern list, 'need' would be induced, but 'need' would be moderate because the learners knew that the target verb patterns given in the list were necessary vocabulary for task completion. There would be neither 'search' nor 'evaluation'. Accordingly, it was predicted that the FonF tasks would induce a greater involvement load than the FonFs tasks. However, contrary to the prediction, the results of Exp. 1 showed that the FonFs condition yielded significantly higher results than the FonF condition.

As a result of examining the dictionary entries the subjects in the FonF condition looked up in a dictionary, it was proved that they did not know that they did not know the target verb patterns. Therefore, it was understood that the ineffectiveness of the FonF condition on incidental learning of verb patterns in Exp. 1 might be related to noticing. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary acquisition includes three processes, namely noticing, retrieval, and creative use. The process of noticing involves learner's detection of a given word and marking it as an unknown. De Bot et al. (1997) argued that there needs to be recognition of an unfamiliar lexical form, and also the conscious awareness that the form lacks a meaning. Clearly if a learner does not know that he or she does not know a word, learning is not likely to take place. Almost all subjects in the FonF group did not notice any unknown target verb patterns, and so they did not look them up in a dictionary. Therefore, the FonF tasks did not, as a matter of fact, induce involvement load, so they were not beneficial to incidental learning of the target verb patterns. On the other hand, the FonFs tasks induced 'need,' one of components of 'involvement,' which yielded significantly better results for the FonFs group.

It was very likely that since the subjects in the FonF group in Exp. 1 could not know

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how to recognize verb patterns, unknown target verb patterns were not noticed by them and therefore were not learned incidentally. Accordingly, it was necessary to investigate whether the FonFs condition was more effective in incidental learning of verb patterns even after enabling learners to notice unknown verb patterns. In Exp. 2, the subjects in the FonF condition were provided with an isolated FFI in preparation for reading activity and translation task. The isolated FFI was designed to teach them how to recognize verb patterns with explanations. After the isolated FFI, the FonF tasks (reading + translation) were conducted. As a result, the FonF group yielded significantly higher incidental learning scores than the FonFs group, which is in contrast to the result of Experiment 1. This result can be understood as showing the benefits of the isolated FFI because the only difference between Exp. 1 and Exp. 2 was that the isolated FFI was given to the FonF group in Exp. 2 but not in Exp. 1. The Isolated FFI gave the learners an opportunity to learn about how to recognize verb patterns. This enabled the subjects to notice unknown target verb patterns, which was proved by collected pieces of paper on which the subjects in the FonF condition in Exp. 2 wrote down the dictionary entries looked up in a dictionary. About 90% of the subjects noticed 2～7 unknown target verb patterns and looked them up in a dictionary. Since the subjects in the FonF condition realized that they had to know the meaning of unknown target verb patterns they noticed to complete the translation task, they attempted to find the meaning by consulting a dictionary. That is, the elements of 'need,' 'search,' and 'evaluation' were present. The FonF tasks induced high involvement load, so they were effective in incidental learning of the target verb patterns. The beneficial role of the isolated FFI revealed in Exp. 2 corroborates Spada and Lightbown (2008)'s suggestion that isolated FFI is useful in promoting the acquisition of some language features. According to Spada and Lightbown (2008), isolated FFI may be needed to "teach students about a particular language feature because the teacher believes that students are unlikely to acquire the feature during communicative activities without an opportunity to learn about the feature in a situation where its form and meaning can be made clear" (Spada & Lightbown, p. 187).

The findings of Exp. 2 coincide with Spada and Lightbown (2008)'s opinion that isolated and integrated FFI (same as FonF) are not in competition with each other but complementary parts of a complete language learning environment. The isolated FFI was useful for helping the subjects in the FonF condition recognize verb patterns in a text. Once they were able to recognize unknown target verb patterns when reading the text, the FonF condition showed significantly better results than the FonFs condition in incidental learning of the target verb patterns. It can be said that the combination of the isolated FFI and FonF produced significantly better results. In conclusion, form-focused instruction that includes both isolated FFI which teaches students how to recognize verb patterns and FonF which involves reading and consulting a dictionary is an effective way to incidental

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learning of English verb patterns. In addition, the present study suggests that incorporating translation activities into a communicative reading lesson may be helpful in enhancing incidental learning of English verb patterns.

Knowledge of verb patterns is part of English native speakers' intuitive competence. However, ESL or EFL learners have difficulties with verb patterns. Verb patterns, therefore, deserve to attract a great deal of attention. There are a large number of possible structures after the verb. Therefore, there are so many English verb patterns that teachers cannot present learners with a list of all verb patterns of English. Teachers need to design classroom activities which will help promote successful learning of English verb patterns. The present study provided suggestions on how to instruct students in English verb patterns effectively in the classroom. As seen in the present study, there are many Korean learners of English who cannot notice unknown verb patterns. Teachers need to help learners with recognition of verb patterns with explanations. Once students have been taught how to recognize verb patterns, teachers need to encourage them to focus on the wording of texts in order that they may recognize verb patterns while reading texts. To help with this, translation activities, which have high involvement load since they require them to identify the meaning of unknown vocabulary by consulting a dictionary, can be incorporated into a text-based communicative lesson. These classroom activities may encourage learners to look critically at texts for themselves outside the classroom, and they may notice unknown verb patterns when they come across them while reading texts. Then they may identify the meaning of unknown verb patterns by consulting a dictionary. Consequently, learners can be more independent learners.

The present study has limitations. Above all things, the subjects of the study were low and intermediate Korean learners of English. Learners whose English proficiency is higher than the proficiency of the present subjects may benefit from another kind of form-focused instruction. Further studies would need to be conducted to investigate whether the findings of this study apply to advanced Korean learners.

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**Examples in: English**
**Applicable Languages: English**
**Applicable Levels: College**

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