# The Role of Output, Input Enhancement and Collaborative Output in the Acquisition of English Passive Forms

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*Abstract*—This study was set up to investigate whether various Focus on Form techniques facilitate L2 grammar learning. The study involved a pre-test—post-test design with treatment and control group and attempted to examine the relative effectiveness of three focus on form techniques, i.e. input enhancement, output and collaborative output, on learning English passive forms. Forty-four Iranian learners of English were selected to participate in the study. The participants were assigned to one of the four groups consisting of input enhancement (IE) (n=11), input enhancement together with individual text-editing task (IE+TE) (n=11), input enhancement together with collaborative text-editing task (IE+TE+CO) (n=12) and a control group (CG) (n=10). The pretests and posttests were administered using a multiple choice and a fill in the blank test in context. The result of the study showed that among the three treatment groups, IE+TE and IE+TE+CO outperformed the control group in the acquisition of passive forms. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between IE+TE and IE+TE+CO in the acquisition of passive forms.

Index Terms-input enhancement, collaborative output, noticing, text-editing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recent research has demonstrated the need for focused attention on grammar and morphosyntactic features of L2 to attain high levels of proficiency (Doughty, 2003; Swain, 1995, 1998). This has led to a resurgence of grammar teaching where its role in SLA has become the focus of much current investigation (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). So, considering the worldwide importance of the use of English language accurately, the teaching of linguistic forms, especially grammar, continues to occupy a major place in language pedagogy. Discussion of how to teach form usually consists of accounts of the various pedagogical options available to teacher and the relative advantages of each option (see, e.g. Ellis, 1997 cited in Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2002). The present study attempts to investigate various focus on form techniques to find out if input-enhancement with or without text-reconstruction has any positive effect on learning. Furthermore, drawing on sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 2000), the study investigates how individual text-reconstruction task in terms of learning English passive forms by Iranian EFL learners.

#### II. BACKGROUND

Considering the fact that attention plays a crucial role in language learning, many SLA researchers have tried different methods of focusing learners' attention to linguistic forms during meaning-focused activities. Some of these studies employed input enhancement as an implicit way to draw learners' attention to form (Izumi, 2002; Jourdenais et al., 1995; Lee, 2007; Leow et al., 2003; Radwan, 2005; Robinson, 1997; Santis, 2008; White, 1998; Wong, 2003). Results of these studies cast considerable doubt on the efficacy of input enhancement since most of the studies reported that input enhancement does not induce desired learning effects as intended by the researchers. Consequently, they concluded that providing learners with input enhancement alone is too implicit to both draw their attention to form and affect their learning (Izumi, 2002; Robinson, 1997; White, 1998; Wong, 2003). Few studies showed effective role of input enhancement on the acquisition of target forms (Jourdenais et al., 1995; Lee, 2007; Santis, 2008). Among these studies, only Izumi (2002) used input enhancement along with output — a reconstruction task involving learners in the production of input passage as accurately as possible after reading it.

Output, as Swain (1985) puts it, has been viewed not only as an end product of learning but also as an important factor that can promote L2 learning. It is argued that producing output provides learners with great opportunities for a level of processing (i.e. syntactic processing) which may be necessary for the development of target-like proficiency or

accuracy (see Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Pica et al. 1989; Shehadeh, 2003; Song & Suh, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). By being 'pushed' to produce output, learners are required to pay attention to syntactic features of their language in order to formulate precise, meaningful and appropriate language. Furthermore, during the production of output, they formulate and test hypotheses about the accuracy of their language. It is argued that while producing output, learners are forced to process language more deeply than during input processing. In an experimental study, Izumi (2002) demonstrated that input enhancement, without any additional instructional technique, may assist learners only in the detection of highlighted target forms, but with an output task, it was adequate for engaging learners in further cognitive processing. The present study is an attempt to extend this line of research by providing learners with an output-oriented task, i.e. text editing task together with input enhancement.

As an additional way to encourage further processing of the form beyond noticing and immediate intake, Izumi and Izumi (2004) proposed 'collaborative dialogue'. Collaborative dialogue, advocated by Swain (1998), occurs when learners encounter linguistic problems and attempt to solve them together. Collaboration provides assistance in completing a task that the individual could not perform alone (Lantolf, 2000). A number of studies reported the effective role of collaboration on various aspects of second language learning (Lapkin, Swain & Smith, 2002; Lynch, 2001; Storch, 2005; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). However, few studies compared the effectiveness of collaborative output versus individual output (Garcia & Asenci ón, 2001; Kim 2008; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Reinders, 2009; Storch, 1999, 2005). Among them, Storch (1999) and Garcia and Asencion (2001) supported partially the benefits of collaborative tasks. Therefore, due to scarcity of studies conducted on the comparison of collaborative versus individual output tasks, this study also aims to fill this gap by comparing two groups of learners working on the enhanced text and editing task in collaboration and individually.

# **III. KEY CONCEPTS**

## A. The Role of Noticing

Many SLA researchers have emphasized the role of attention and 'noticing' in the process of L2 learning (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; Tomlin & Villa, 1994). It is generally assumed that some level of attention to form is needed for language acquisition to take place (Radwan, 2005). Schmidt's (1990) view toward noticing was very strong when he claimed that noticing at the level of awareness is both necessary and sufficient for language learning to take place. Noticing was, initially, defined as the kind of conscious perception of linguistic features that is necessary for successful L2 learning. Later, Schmidt (2001, p. 21) proposed a weaker version of noticing and argued that "people learn about the things they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to".

According to Swain (1998), noticing has several levels, which could be exploited in formal L2 instruction in various ways. At one level, learners may reflect on their own output and notice the gap or mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language. Noticing the gap may trigger cognitive processes which might produce new linguistic knowledge or might consolidate the existing knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). This level of noticing corresponds to the 'notice the gap principle' introduced by Schmidt and Frota (1986). They suggested that input has an impact on interlanguage development if it is noticed. Furthermore, for the noticed input to become *intake*, learners have to compare what they have noticed in the input and what they are producing based on their current interlanguage. So, learners can benefit from input if they become consciously aware of the gap or mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language (Schmidt, 1990, 2001).

At another level, the act of producing target language might prompt learners to notice what they do not know or know partially about the target language (Swain, 1995). Swain and Lanpkin (1995) argued that even if learners are not provided with explicit or implicit feedback by their interlocutors, they may still notice the limitations in their interlanguage when they encounter problems in producing target language. That is, learners may *notice a* hole in their interlanguage when they do not know how to "express precisely the meaning they wish to convey at *the very moment of attempting to produce it*" (Swain, 2000, p.100, emphasis is original).

Finally, learners may notice salient and frequent linguistic features in the input. Accordingly, input might be seeded with high frequency of target features (e.g. input flooding) or the target features might be highlighted in the input through various formatting techniques (e.g. input enhancement) to draw learners' attention to specific features (Sharwood Smith, 1993; Doughty& Williams, 1998). Although, the concept of noticing has been examined in different ways, most of the scholars agree on the importance of noticing in SLA. If noticing is crucial for L2 acquisition, the key issue, therefore, is how to focus learners' attention on linguistic features in the input (or output) to promote the development of their interlanguage. The present study employs various techniques to tackle this issue.

# B. The Role of Production

Swain (1985) proposed comprehensible output hypothesis as a complement to Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis. She believed that providing learners with comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for acquisition to take place as it was the case with French immersion students in Canada. She observed that immersion students did not move beyond their current level of interlanguage because they were not provided with the opportunities to 'stretch' their interlanguage. She argued that producing language (spoken or written) is an important part of the process of second language learning. As mentioned before, "it is *while attempting to produce* the target language (vocally or subvocally)

that learners may notice that they do not know how to say (or write) precisely the meaning they wish to convey" (Swain, 1997, p.5, emphasis is original). Swain emphasizes that under certain circumstances, the act of producing output may prompt L2 learners to become consciously aware of their linguistic problems. In this way, their attention may be directed to the relevant input, which may result in the generation of new knowledge or consolidation of existing knowledge about the target language (Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

Swain and Lapkin (1995) proposed three main functions for output in second language learning. The *noticing* function of output is defined as the process of learners becoming aware of their linguistic deficiencies in the course of producing output. That is, while they are producing language, they will notice a 'hole' between what they want to say and what they are able to say. The *hypothesis testing* function refers to the fact that producing language encourages learners to formulate and test their hypothesis about the correct use of the target language. By providing feedback, learners will make sure whether their hypothesis is right or wrong. Finally, *metatalk* or *metalinguistic* function refers to the ways in which learners consciously reflect on the language they produce, which promotes the chance of internalizing the target language. Metatalk, according to Swain and Lapkin (2002, p. 286), is one type of "collaborative dialogue" which is defined as a "dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem–solving and knowledge building" (Swain, 2000). The concept of collaborative dialogue— which was extended from the output hypothesis (Swain & Lapkin, 1998— and its possible impact on learning L2 features will be discussed in the next section.

#### C. The Role of Collaboration

Within sociocultural theory, "development based on collaboration and imitation is the source of all the specifically human characteristics of consciousness that develop in the child" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 210). This cognitive development is outlined in Vygotsky's genetic law of cultural development. He explains that "any function in child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category" (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 163; cited in Ohta, 2000). While Vygotsky was speaking of children, this principle is recently applied to second language learner as well. It is argued that L2 learning occurs in two planes, at first in a dynamic sociocultural context where knowledge is first constructed interactively, that is, between the learner (novice) and a more knowledgeable other (teacher/expert peer) who is capable of guiding, supporting and 'scaffolding' the actions of the learner. Next, the co-constructed knowledge is internalized when the learner's mental processing becomes independent of external factors.

Adopting this Vygotskian view of development, Swain (2000, p. 113) extended the scope of the output hypothesis and introduced the concept of collaborative dialogue. She argued that "internal mental activity has its origins in external dialogic activity" and explained that collaborative dialogue is "where language use and language learning can co-occur" (p. 97). During this dialogue, learners use language as a mediating tool to build knowledge and to interact with each other. Collaborative dialogue, in fact, allows learners to draw attention to problems and verbalize alternative solutions. This verbalization, as Swain (2000) put it, objectifies thought and makes it available for further scrutiny. Swain argued that the analysis of collaborative dialogue gives researchers access to examine L2 learning in process. A detailed analysis of the process results in "an understanding of how language learning occurs in dialogue, not as a result of it" (Swain & Lapkin, 2002, p. 286), that is, "learning does not happen outside performance; it occurs *in* performance" (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 321, emphasis is original). Swain and her colleagues (Swain & Lapkin, 2002; Swain, Brooks, & Tocallli-Beller, 2002) have discussed the support of collaborative dialogue for providing opportunities for L2 development in a number of ways including (a) provision of 'scaffolded' support, (b) guidance through peer dialogue, (c) co-construction of linguistic knowledge, (d) consolidation and reorganization of existing L2 knowledge and finally (e) making this knowledge explicit for each other's benefit.

Several empirical studies have suggested that peer-peer collaborative dialogue is a crucial aspect of L2 learning. Following that, various collaborative tasks have been employed to enhance learning opportunities in different settings (e.g., Kowal & Swain, 1994; Leeser, 2004; Storch, 1999; 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Although several studies have provided valuable insights regarding the effectiveness of collaborative tasks, very few of them investigated the output tasks in individual and collaborative setting. The present study attempts to investigate this issue by comparing individual and collaborative completion of an output task. The study specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of (1) input enhancement, (2) input enhancement followed by text-editing task, and (3) collaborative output via input enhancement and text-editing task on the acquisition of English passive forms?

2. Do these tasks differ in the amount of progress (if any) they make in the acquisition of English passive forms?

#### IV. METHOD

#### A. Participants

To accomplish the objectives of this study, 44 Persian learners of English, ranged in age from 18 to 23, were selected to participate. Although there were initially 48 participants, four learners were excluded from the study because of being absent in some stages of the treatment sessions. The placement test administered in the language institute indicated that all the participants were intermediate learners of English. All participants had the same language background (Farsi).

They were studying English in Iran and have not ever been in any English speaking countries. The present study was conducted in Kish Air Language Teaching Institute located in Babol, Iran.

#### B. Procedure and Design of the Study

An overview of the design of this study is presented in Table 1. The study was conducted within approximately one month, in four sessions. After analyzing pretest scores, the participants were randomly assigned into four groups, that is, input enhancement (IE), input enhancement and text-editing task (IE+TE), collaborative output via input enhancement and text editing task (IE+TE+CO) and control group. The importance of having a control group was taken into consideration to ascertain instructional effects (Kasper & Rose, 2002).



Notes: CG (control group), IE (input enhancement), - (No treatment), TE (text- editing task), CO (collaborative output)

One week before the treatment session, all participants received the pretest which consisted of a comprehensionbased multiple choice test and a production-based fill in the blank test. Following that, the three experimental groups received treatments within two sessions (the first treatment highlighted the present passive structure and the second treatment session focused on the past passive structure in English. One week after the treatments, all participants, including the control group, were administered a posttest.

# C. Instruments

This study was conducted in four sessions within approximately one month period. All participants received a pretest in the first session. Next, they took part in two treatment sessions. Each treatment was administered with one week interval. In the fourth session, they were all given a posttest. In order to examine subjects' knowledge of passive forms and their appropriate use of this structure in both comprehension and production, two types of tests were administered: a production-based test i.e. a fill in the blank test and a comprehension-based test, i.e. a multiple-choice test. The tests were piloted with 12 students of similar proficiency level in order to determine item difficulty and test reliability. There were 30 items in the multiple choice test and 35 items in the fill in the blank test. Fifteen items in each test focused on passive structures; the rest of the items targeted active voice. Since the multiple choice test might provide participants with models for the production of target forms, it was administered after the fill in the blank test.

Regarding the treatment, the study employed several passages to draw the learners' attention to the target forms. These passages were piloted with 8 students of similar proficiency level. Based on the result and the feedback obtained from the students and their teachers, the readability of these passages was found to be high. So, they were modified in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure during the piloting sessions. To draw learners' attention to target forms, the target forms were enhanced through bolding and underlining. These enhanced passages were used for all three treatment groups i.e. input enhancement, input enhancement plus editing (output) and collaborative output. The next two passages were also selected after piloting to be used as editing tasks. These two passages, administered in the first and second treatment sessions, included some problems in present and past passive voice, respectively. Two of the experimental groups, that is, input enhancement plus editing and collaborative output group received the editing tasks.

After collecting the data, students' papers were objectively scored. Every correct answer (i.e. present or past passive forms) received one point. Partially correct responses were scored zero because based on the output hypothesis the correct and precise production of output can be a sign of learning (Swain, 1995).

# V. RESULTS

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the three treatment types and the control group for the production and comprehension of passive forms on the pretest. To establish if all four groups are not different in their knowledge of passive forms, a one-way ANOVA was performed on the participants pretest scores. The result of this analysis

(presented in Table 3) showed no significant difference among the groups in terms of their knowledge of passive forms as measured through a multiple choice and a fill in the blank test.

TABLE 2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICES FOR PRETEST SCORES

	Comprehension		Production	
	М	SD	М	SD
CG ( <i>n</i> =10)	5.10	2.18	1.00	1.69
IE ( <i>n</i> =11)	6.72	2.68	1.09	1.44
IE+TE $(n=11)$	6.45	3.23	1.27	2.68
IE+TE+CO $(n=12)$	6.66	2.60	1.25	1.95
Total	6.42	2.76	1.15	1.94

Notes: CG= control group; IE= Input enhancement; IE+TE= Input enhancement + text-editing task; CO= Collaborative output

SUMMARY OF AN	OVAS FOR LEARNERS' COMP	TABLE 3 REHENSION AND 1	PRODUCTION (	OF PASSIVE VERBS I	IN THE PRETEST
	Sources of variance	SS	df.	MS	F
Comprehension	Between groups	18.25	3	6.08	.826
(Multiple-choice)	Within groups	294	40	7.362	
Production	Between groups	.545	3	.182	.045
(Fill in the blank)	Within groups	161.34	40	4.03	
		p<.05			

Thus, it can be concluded that the four groups were similar in their knowledge of passive forms at the beginning of the study. Based on these results, it can be assumed that any measurable changes in the posttest were unlikely to be due to any preexisting differences among the groups and, instead, they could be attributed to the different treatments that the various groups experienced.

In order to determine the effect of the treatment types on the acquisition of passive forms, two paired t-tests were performed for each group to compare their pretest-posttest scores obtained from the two tests. The analysis for the effect of input enhancement treatment (see Table 4) showed no statistically significant difference between the pretest to posttest in both comprehension and production of target forms. In other words, the treatment did not result in any significant change on the acquisition of passive verbs as measured by their scores on the multiple choice and fill in the blank tests. Thus, we can conclude that the participants made no significant gains from pretest to posttest neither on comprehension (df=10, p=.548) nor on production (df=10, p=.441) of target forms.

TABLE 4 RESULTS OF PAIRED T-TESTS FOR LEARNERS' (IE) COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF PASSIVE VERBS							
		Ν	М	SD	t value	df	sig.(2tailed)
Comprehension	pre test	11	6.72	2.68			
	posttest	11	7.27	2.79	.622	10	.548
Production	pre test	11	1.09	1.44			
	posttest	11	1.45	1.91	.803	10	441
p<.05							

Our first research question (1.2) addressed the effect of input enhancement and text-editing task on the learners'
acquisition of passive forms. Results of two paired t-tests for this group (illustrated in Table 5) revealed statistically
significant differences between their pretest and posttest scores. This means that the learners' scores improved
significantly from pretest to posttest both in comprehension ( $df=10$ , $p=.043$ ) and in production ( $df=10$ , $p=.014$ ) of
passive forms. This improvement, however, was more to the benefit of production than comprehension.

TABLE 5
RESULTS OF PAIRED T-TESTS FOR LEARNERS' (IE+TE) COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF PASSIVE VERB

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		Ν	М	SD	t value	df	sig.(2tailed)
Comprehension	pretest	11	6.45	3.23			
	posttest	11	9.90	2.77	2.316	10	.043
Production	pretest	11	1.27	2.68			
	posttest	11	5.81	3.99	2.962	10	.014
n<.05							

The research question 1.3 addressed the effect of input enhancement and text-editing task completed in collaboration on the acquisition of English passive forms. The results of two paired t-tests on participants' pretest and posttest scores are presented in Table 6.

RESULTS OF PAIRE	ED T-TESTS F	OR LEARN	ERS' (IE+TE+	-CO) COMPI	REHENS	SION AND PRO	DUCTI	ON OF PASSIVE VE	RBS
		Ν	М	SD		t value	df	sig.(2tailed)	
Comprehension	pretest	12	6.66	2.60		2.432	11	.033	
	posttest	12	9.25	2.63					
Production	pretest	12	1.25	1.95		3.228	11	.008	
	posttest	12	4.25	2.09					
	p<05								

The analyses revealed t values of 2.432 for comprehension and 3.228 for production with 11 df., which are statistically significant at the .05 level. The results of these tests lend substantial support to the claim that input enhancement and text-editing task completed collaboratively promote participants' acquisition of passive forms.

The second research question addressed the differences among the four groups (IE, IE+TE, IE+TE+CO and CG) in the progress they made in learning target forms. In order to answer this question, two ANOVAs were performed on the posttest scores of the four groups obtained from multiple choice and fill in the lank tests. The result of these tests revealed statistically significant effect for treatment type (F(3, 40) = 9.072, p < .05). Consequently, we can claim that significant group differences, with a level of probability of p<.05 were found with regard to the gains in comprehension of passive forms.

TABLE /						
ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION OF PASSIVE VERB IN THE POSTTEST						
Source of variance	SS	d.f.	MS	F		
Between groups	179.441	3	59.814	9.072		
Within groups	263.741	40	6.594			
p<.05						

To establish where the differences lie, *post-hoc LSD* analysis revealed the following contrasts (Table 8): (a) the three treatment groups (IE, IE+TE, IE+TE+CO) performed significantly better than the control group, (b) there was also a significant difference between IE and IE+TE, and (c) there was no significant difference between IE+TE and IE+TE+CO.

		TABLE 8		
LSD	TEST FOR LEARNERS'	COMPREHENSION OF PA	ASSIVE VERB IN THE POSTTEST	
CG	IE	IE+TE	IE+TE+CO	
X=4.60	X=7.27	X=9.90	X=9.25	
SD= 1.89	SD=2.79	SD=2.77	SD=2.63	
Comparisons		Sig.		
CG vs. IE		.022*		
CG vs. IE+TE		.000*		
CG vs. IE+TE+CO		.000*		
IE vs. IE+TE		.021*		
IE vs. IE+TE+CO		.072		
IE+TE vs. IE+TE+CO		.542		

p<.05

Notes: CG (control group), IE (input enhancement), TE (text-editing task), CO (collaborative output)

So we can conclude that the three experimental groups (input enhancement, input enhancement plus text-editing task and input enhancement plus text-editing with collaboration) outperformed the control group in the comprehension of passive forms. There was also a significant difference between input enhancement group and input enhancement plus text-editing task group.

Next, an ANOVA was performed to establish if there was an effect for treatment type on the production of passive forms. Results of this analysis revealed statistically significant differences among the four groups in the posttest (F(3, 40) = 9.581, p < .05).

TABLE 9					
ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR LEARNERS' PRODUCTION OF PASSIVE VERB IN THE POSTTEST					
Source of variance	SS	d.f.	MS	F	
Between groups	184.48	3	61.489	9.581	
Within groups	256.714	40	6.418		
p<.05					

In order to see where the differences lie, another *LSD* test was conducted (illustrated in Table 10). *Post hoc* analyses showed that: (a) among the three treatment groups, IE+TE and IE+TE+CO outperformed the control group, (b) there was also a significant difference between IE and IE+TE, with an advantage for the IE+TE over IE treatment, (c) there was no significant difference between IE and control group, and IE+TE and IE+TE+CO in the production of passive forms.

LSD TEST FOR LEARNERS' PRODUCTION OF PASSIVE VERB IN THE POSTTEST					
CG	IE	IE+TE	IE+TE+CO		
X= .700	X1=.454	X= 5.818	X= 4.250		
SD= 1.15	SD=1.916	SD= 3.995	SD= 2.094		
Comparisons			Sig.		
CG vs. IE			.499		
CG vs. IE+TE			.000*		
CG vs. IE+TE+CO			.002*		
IE vs. IE+TE			.000*		
IE vs. IE+TE+CO			.012*		
IE+TE vs. IE+TE+CO			.149		

TABLE 10 I SD TEST FOR I FARNERS' PRODUCTION OF PASSIVE VERB IN THE POSTTEST

p<.05

Notes: CG (control group), IE (input enhancement), TE (text-editing task), CO (collaborative output)

Therefore, the results show a significant advantage of the input enhancement and text editing task together both in collaborative and individual setting over the control group. It is also worth mentioning that input enhancement plus textediting task outperformed input enhancement in the acquisition of passive forms. But we could not find a significant advantage for the collaborative over individual input enhancement plus text-editing treatment.

# VI. DISCUSSION

Results demonstrated that among the three treatment groups, input enhancement with text editing task completed individually and in collaboration were effective in promoting learners' acquisition of passive forms. Based on the results of this study, it can be stated that the development of L2 grammatical competence can be influenced through output and collaborative output techniques, but input enhancement, by itself, could not be regarded as an effective technique in the development of L2 English passive forms, though it can draw learners' attention to form.

It can be concluded that this study lends support to the use of output and collaborative output in teaching of grammar in the EFL classrooms. The results are consistent with the findings of the majority of previous studies on output (Izumi, 2002; Izumi et al., 1999; Pica et al., 1989; Shehadeh, 2003; Song &Suh, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) and collaborative output (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Garcia &Asencion, 2001; Lapkin, Swain & Smith, 2002; Lynch, 2001; Spielman Davison, 2000 cited in Swain et.al 2002; Storch, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). On the other hand, this study does not support input enhancement as an effective technique in improving learners' acquisition of English passive forms, which is consistent with the previous studies (Alanen, 1995; Al-Hejin, 2004; Comb, 2008; Izumi, 2002; Leow, 1997, 2001; Leow et al., 2003; Overstreet, 1998; Robinson, 1997; White, 1998; Wong, 2003), but not in support of studies which reported significant effect of IE on learners' acquisition of grammar (Jourdenais et al., 1995; Lee, 2007; Santis, 2008).

There may be different explanations for these findings. The reason that output group (IE+TE) improved from pretest to posttest and also outperformed the control and input enhancement groups is that producing output might have engaged participants in a deeper level of processing of the target forms compared to the input enhancement alone. That is, output triggered deeper and more elaborate processing of the forms, which led them to establish a more durable memory trace (Izumi, 2002). According to Craik and Lockhart (1972), the quality of human memory trace depends on the level of processing, i.e. deeper level of analysis leads to more elaborate, longer lasting, and stronger traces. As Izumi (2002, p.569) explains, "maintaining information at one level of processing by rehearsing it repeatedly or by sustaining continued attention to certain aspects of the stimulus will not, by itself, lead to improved retention unless a shift to deeper levels of analysis occurs". This finding is consistent with the fundamental claim of the output hypothesis that producing output allows L2 learners to engage in syntactic as well as semantic processing (Swain, 1985). Learners produced the target forms through text editing task and then tested their hypotheses through the feedback they received in written form. Our result suggests that input enhancement alone does not have an important effect on the acquisition of the target forms. This result is also in support of Izumi's (2002) finding, stating that input enhancement which is solely connected with drawing learners' attention to form, does not necessarily engage further cognitive processing that may be necessary for acquisition. The result that input enhancement does not improve learners' acquisition of grammar is also compatible with Sharwood Smith (1993) that cautions enhancing input only increases the chances that learners will select the input as intake. Other researchers such as Radwan (2005) and Wong (2003) obtained similar results. Input enhancement activities required learners in three treatment groups to pay attention to the target structures while reading the enhanced text in order to find and solve the grammatical problems when they were working on text-editing tasks.

With respect to the collaborative output group, the results indicated an increase in the gains of this group from pretest to posttest both in comprehension and production of the target forms. *Post hoc* analysis showed that this group outperformed the control group. Therefore, this study is consistent with most of the previous studies carried out on the collaborative output (Storch, 2005; Swain et al. 2002). The reason for this outcome can be the fact that collaborative output provided opportunities for two types of feedback: internal auditory feedback as learners verbalized their own decisions, and external peer feedback (Storch, 1999). Kowal and Swain (1994) and Swain and Lapkin (1998) argued

that collaborative output tasks are beneficial in developing learners' grammatical competence, because the joint act of production generates metatalk and reflection about language choices. Such verbalization and reflection may serve to raise learners' attention to gaps in their knowledge or provide them with positive feedback and thus promote language learning.

There was also no significant difference between the collaborative and individual output groups in the acquisition of passive forms. This result is in support of the previous studies such as Nassaji and Tian (2010), Storch (2005). However, there might be several reasons for such findings. One reason can be that both groups received the same amount of time (i.e. thirty minutes) in performing the tasks while in previous studies (Storch, 1999; Garcia & Asencion, 2001) pair groups had more time than individual groups. Another reason might be related to the nature of the interaction that took place during pair work. Analysis of learners' interaction (the scope of this study did not allow us to include transcripts of learners' interaction) showed that although there were interactions among learners, in many cases, these interactions were mechanical, brief, and limited. Thus, although the learners were fairly successful in correcting the target forms in editing task, the interaction may not have been rich enough to lead to a better performance than when completing the task individually. Another reason could be related to the learners' collaboration depends on learners' ability to work and solve language-related problems collaboratively (Nassaji & Tian, 2010). So, in future studies, there should be some instruction and modeling on how to collaborate effectively before starting the treatment sessions.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The present study has shown that different types of activities have differential effects on the comprehension and production of passive forms. There are, however, a number of limitations to this study. One of the limitations is related to the selection of two particular passive structures as target forms. In fact, these forms represent only a small part of the overall range of the passive structures. Subsequent research could additionally examine other linguistic structures to find possible effects of input-output treatment on learning those forms. The second limitation of the study concerns the small number of participants in each group which restricts the generalizability of the results. Moreover, all participants were female with an intermediate level of proficiency in English. Thus, the student individual variables may have influenced these results. Similarly, age and proficiency should be taken into consideration, which means that it is not clear how different younger, older, beginner or advanced learners would have performed in a similar way after receiving these focus on form instructions. A third limitation of this study deals with the short-term effects of the instructional treatment. It would have been interesting to employ a delayed post-test in order to determine whether learners' gains in passive forms have been retained some time after the instructional period took place. In addition, in this study learners were exposed to each passive form in just one single session. Therefore, employing multiple sessions over an extended period of time may have different results. Finally, the current study included only one task, i.e. textediting. Future studies could extend this study by investigating the impact of other kinds of output tasks (e.g. dictolgoss and picture cued writing task) on learning English passive forms.

In light of the findings from this study, some pedagogical implications may be proposed. The use of output tasks on the development of grammatical competence is a beneficial aspect to be implemented in EFL classrooms. This study showed that simple typographical enhancement did not have a strong effect on the acquisition of target forms. Instead, a combination of input enhancement with text-editing task resulted in greater learning of the passive form. Therefore, a combination of implicit and explicit approaches (see Doughty & Williams, 1998) would possibility trigger learners' cognitive processes and reinforce acquisition of target forms more than a single implicit activity.

In conclusion and despite the above limitations, the present study has combined to the growing body of research investigating the effects of different instructional techniques on the acquisition of grammar. The results obtained in this study, although tentative, may expand the scope of enquiry in the field of grammar acquisition as well as open several lines of investigation to be examined in future research.

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