

# The Impact of Consciousness-raising vs. Structure-based Production Tasks on Reading Comprehension of Iranian Mid-intermediate EFL Learners

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**Abstract**—Task-based instruction is crucial in SLA research, teaching and learning language skills particularly reading comprehension. This study investigated the effect of two kinds of focused tasks on reading comprehension and on the attitudes of Iranians mid-intermediate EFL learners. At first, a pilot study was conducted to see the feasibility of the treatments as well as reliability and validity of the instruments of the study. In the main study, a language proficiency test was used to homogenize the 70 participants who attended two experimental groups followed by an administration of the attitudes questionnaires. During the treatments, in one group, the participants received consciousness-raising tasks, and in the other group structure-based production tasks were applied. At the end of instructional courses, the two groups took a reading post-test and were asked to fill out the questionnaire again. The statistical analyses indicated that structure-based production tasks had more significant effect not only on the learners reading comprehension but also on their attitudes toward reading comprehension; while consciousness-raising focused tasks had a significant impact only on learners' attitudes toward reading comprehension. The study also concluded the importance of applying appropriate tasks in reading courses.

**Index Terms**—consciousness-raising tasks, focused tasks, structure-based production tasks

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is used in many different situations such as the real world and educational fields, it is one of the crucial areas of learning a language. . As Urquhart and Weir (1998) state, the active process of reading refers to receiving and interpreting the information which is encoded in the language form and it can be interpreted by the medium of text (as cited in Schmitt, 2002). According to National Reading Panel (2000), comprehension is a cognitive process which requires the reader to interact with the text purposefully to get the implied meaning. As a result, considerable attention has been given to approaches and instructions which are thought to increase the comprehensibility of the input (oral or written text) and possibly to facilitate their language acquisition. One of these instructions is using of reading texts which involve one or more purposes, tasks or some operations to process the text.

Task-based instruction is considered as “an alternative method to traditional language teaching methods because it favors a methodology in which functional communicative language use is aimed at and strived for” (Brumfit, 1984, Ellis, 2003, Willis, 1996, cited in Kasap, 2005, p.2). Also, TBI is regarded to be an effective approach that fosters a learning environment in which learners are free to choose and use the target language forms which they think are most likely to achieve the aim of accomplishing defined communicative goals (Ellis, 2003 as cited in Kasap, 2005).

This study was an attempt to investigate the role of two kinds of focused tasks, consciousness-raising task and structure-based production tasks, in developing second language reading comprehension among Iranians intermediate EFL learners. It also looked at the effect of the tasks on the attitudes of the learners toward reading comprehension.

The study expected the outcomes such as gain in vocabulary, grammatical and discourse knowledge of students' reading comprehension, which seemed to achieve more easily through task-based instruction. To force the learners to exchange information at the time of performing the task in order to achieve some authentic interaction among the participants, task based instruction was chosen to improve learners reading skills and enhance learners attitude towards reading comprehension by using real world activities.

This study once more supported the significance of task-based instruction. It also signified the importance of focused task-based instruction, since focused tasks aim at inducing learners to process productively some particular linguistic feature. Moreover, researchers consistently indicate the direct relationship between success in comprehension and

positive attitudes of learners toward reading a text. In this study, it was hypothesized that task-based instruction could enhance not only learners' comprehension but also their attitudes toward reading comprehension skill.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do structure-based production focused tasks have any significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?
2. Do consciousness-raising focused tasks have any significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?
3. Is there any significant difference between the effect of structure-based production tasks and consciousness-raising tasks on reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?
4. Do structure-based production focused tasks have any significant effect on the attitude of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?
5. Do consciousness-raising focused tasks have any significant effect on the attitude of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?
6. Is there any significant difference between the effect of structure-based production tasks and consciousness-raising tasks on the attitude of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners?

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last decades more attention has been given to approaches and instructions which are thought and applied by language instructors to increase the comprehensibility of the input by second language learners and possibly to facilitate their acquisition.

Fountas and Pinnell, (2006) elaborate that "reading is a thinking process, is part of everything that happens to you as a person and comprehending a text is intimately related to your life" (p. 7). This definition reinforces Rosenblatt's (1994) theory that reading comprehension requires the reader to interact with the text. The Ministry of Education (2006) uses a similar definition of the reading process as: "Reading in the junior grades is an interactive, problem-solving process, with the primary purpose of making meaning" (p.61).

Task is defined as a set of differentiated, sequence able, problem-posing activities involving learners and teachers in some cognitive and communicative procedures within a social milieu (Candlin, 1984). Other scientists agree on Candlin point of view and add the following descriptions to the concept of task. In Prabhu's view (1987), task is an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process (cited in Ellis, 2003). Nunan (1989) refers to it as piece of class room work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language. He also defines that "task-based language teaching constitutes a strong version of CLT. That is, tasks are provided for an entire language curriculum. It involves an integrated set of processes involving the specification of both what and how" (cited in Ellis, 2003, p.30-31).

Researchers have categorized tasks as focused and unfocused tasks. Ellis (2003) distinguishes between unfocused and focused tasks in a way that unfocused tasks may predispose learners to choose from a range of forms but they are not designed with the use of a specific form in mind. In contrast, focused tasks aim at inducing learners to process, receptively or productively, some particular linguistic feature, for example, a grammatical structure. He states that "the implication for effective TBT is that tasks must be structured in such a way that they pose an appropriate challenge by requiring learners to perform functions and use language that enable them to dynamically construct ZPDs" (p.179).

On the other hand, there are some principles which can be used to guide instructors in the selection of the most appropriate kind of tasks such as choosing an appropriate level of task difficulty, developing an appropriate orientation to performing the task in the students, establishing clear goals for each lesson, encouraging students to take risks and finally ensure the students to focus primarily on meaning when they perform a task (Ellis, 2003, P. 277).

There are three different kinds of focused tasks. Schmidt (1994) describes consciousness raising task as "a task which is designed to cater primarily to explicit learning and intend to develop awareness at the level of understanding rather than at the level of noticing" (cited in Ellis, 2003, p.163). However, Richards and Schmidt (2002) distinct consciousness raising approach from its task types and refer to this approach as getting the attention of the learners to form of the language which he believes this awareness foster the acquisition of L2. Inferences made from instances of the language and comparing different forms of saying one meaning are the examples of this approach.

Structure-based tasks are the other type of focused tasks which refer to "a task that involves exchange of information and automatized the existing knowledge, a task which makes the target structure natural, useful or essential" (Ellis, 2003, pp. 152). He also mentions that Structure-based production task directed at eliciting production of a specific structure.

An enormous amount of studies have been done on reading comprehension, and on techniques to enhance learners' comprehension in the area of second language acquisition. On the other hand, several attempts were made to verify the validity of tasks. Sterlacci (1996) carried out a study to investigate whether a task can elicit the productive use of modal

verbs or not. It found that the task was successful in eliciting the targeted structure and that the learners did not intentionally set out to use modal verbs.

The role of structure-production tasks in eliciting various question forms in lower proficiency EFL learners was studied by Mackey (1999). She noted that when the tasks were performed interactively with native speakers, the learners often had difficulties producing a particular question form. But, if the tasks were persisted, students were able to formulate more target-like and comprehensible question to their interlocutor. The result also indicated that learners who completed the given tasks (story completion, picture sequencing and differences) manifested clear developmental gains in their production (Ellis, 2003).

The effectiveness of consciousness raising tasks with traditional teacher-fronted grammar lessons was studied by Fotos and Ellis (1991). The study resulted that the task was as effective as the grammar lesson in the short term, and was only slightly less effective in maintaining proficiency than the grammar lesson. Mohamed (2004) examined learners' perspectives of the effectiveness of consciousness raising tasks. He concluded that there was no preference for a particular type of task over the other among the learners. For the learners, consciousness raising tasks were helpful in getting new L2 knowledge. The study also concluded that both inductive and deductive types of the task were effective in increasing learners' awareness of linguistic forms.

#### IV. METHOD

##### Participants

While the participants of the pilot study comprised of 28 mid-intermediate EFL learners evaluated as mid-intermediate by a language proficiency test provided by the Institute. In the main study, 70 mid-intermediate EFL learners were involved and assigned in two experimental groups. All the participants were young adults and their age varied between 17 and 36 including male and female.

##### Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study were as follows:

(A) A Language Proficiency Test including four skills provided by the language institute used to specify the homogeneity of the sample and the equality between the two experimental groups at the beginning of the study.

(B) A Reading Comprehension Pre-Test extracted from the same Language Proficiency Test was used to compare learners reading comprehension improvement before and after applying the treatment.

(B) A single reading comprehension test extracted from another standard proficiency test as the post-test was used to compare the differences between structure-based production and consciousness-raising groups within and between groups.

(D) An attitude questionnaire derived from CASI (Cognitive Assessment Screening Instrument) assessment package (Doctorow, 2003) including closed items to evaluate the learners' attitudes toward reading and each kind of focused tasks was used in the study. Some items reflected learners attitude toward reading, while others showed how much they were familiar with focused tasks- consciousness-raising and structure-based productions tasks – and to what extent they applied them unconsciously in the process of comprehending a passage. The items were based on Likert scale of agreement.

##### Design

The current study was a quasi- experimental study since it was not possible to carry out random sampling. This quasi-experimental research was through a treatment and a questionnaire survey.

##### Procedure

At the outset, a pilot study was conducted with 28 mid-intermediate English learners evaluated by the language institute. A similar treatment with the main study was applied to them to see the feasibility of the treatments followed by getting feedback from the students. The pilot study indicated that the learners seemed to be more involved in classroom interaction at reading time when the treatment of focused tasks was applied. They were also asked to fill out a 20-item questionnaire in order to estimate its reliability and validity. While the Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate the index of reliability principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying constructs of the reading attitude questionnaire. After analyzing the factors based on the SPSS 16<sup>th</sup> version result, three items were excluded from the questionnaire after piloting the study.

In the main study, the proficiency language test was administered in both experimental groups. After verifying the homogeneity of the samples, the questionnaire was administered to evaluate learners' primary attitudes toward reading and focused tasks. Afterwards, each experimental group was treated with two types of tasks. Experimental group1 received structure-based production focused task type 1(story completion) and type 2 (information exchanging). Experimental group 2 obtained the consciousness-raising focused task type 1 including explicit instruction of rules and grammar within the passage, so that the students can utilize them in their interaction and production. In the consciousness-raising task type 2, a specific structure within a text was selected to focus on and students were required to talk meaningfully about it with their own linguistic recourses.

In the experimental group1, both in task type 1 and 2, students were not forced to use any specific new words or grammar; they were just expected to enhance their reading and respond to questions meaningfully by their own existing knowledge. The instructor tried to act as a facilitator who guided students to correct their own and their classmates'

mistakes as the students needed to answer the questions with complete sentences rather than single words. As a result, students explained the text to each other; they corrected their friends understanding; they also added some new information from their own experiences. More detailed questions were asked to improve learners' comprehension and evaluate their findings. Students were guided to modify and simplify the text difficulties just by activating their own passive knowledge (using simpler structures instead of complex ones to express their understanding). So the text was comprehended through interaction (between both student-student and instructor-student). Then instructor just guided the students to produce the correct future forms without forcing or providing them with explicit instruction. The students tried to activate their existing knowledge by paying more attention to the passage to respond the questions.

In the experimental group2, in type 1, students were expected to use the explicitly taught rules and features of the passage in their interaction and production. A single rule or form continued to be practiced until the students gained full command of using them meaningfully in their production. Type2 included focusing on specific points in the text and the students were required to use these points meaningfully in their production. The teacher also proposed some questions asking for the answers using the taught points. Then the students asked their classmates the same questions and corrected their mistakes according to what they had learned through reading a passage. The instructor guided students to remind their classmates to use the exact new word appropriately, not any other similar words or antonyms. Before starting to read a passage, if students find any words or grammatical points unfamiliar, the teacher provided an explicit description or instruction. Finally, students needed to answer the questions with complete sentences rather than a single word.

After conducting ten session treatments in each group, the modified attitude questionnaire from the pilot study and also a post-test of reading comprehension extracted from a standard proficiency test were administered to test the hypotheses of the study.

V. RESULTS

Analysis of proficiency Test

The Cronbach Alpha reliability index was calculated as index of reliability for Language Proficiency Test.

TABLE 1.  
CRONBACH ALPHA RELIABILITY OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST

Cronbach's alpha	N of Questions
0.78	56

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the standard proficiency language test.

TABLE 2.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PROFICIENCY TEST

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Structure-based Production Task	35	55.69	10.33	.729	.398
Consciousness-raising Task	35	56.86	5.28	.253	.398

Dividing the statistic of skewness by its standard error, the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the scores of the two groups (1.83 for the structure-based group and 0.63 for the conscious-raising group, all falling within the range of 1.96 and +1.96). Figure 1 displays the normality of the EFL learners in both experimental groups.

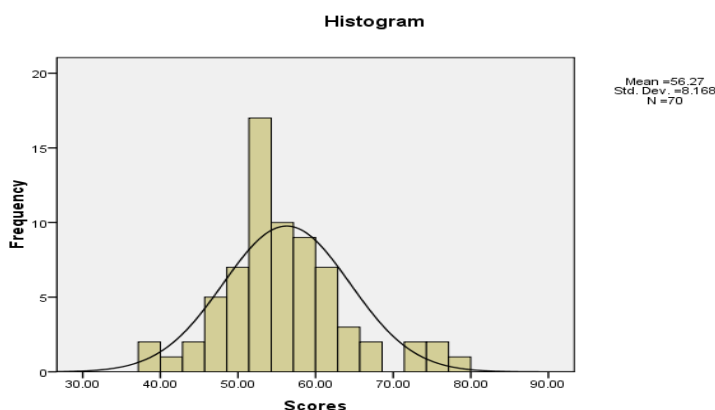


Figure 1.Homogeneity of the Learners in both groups

Figure 2 shows the mean difference of the two experimental groups on the proficiency test.

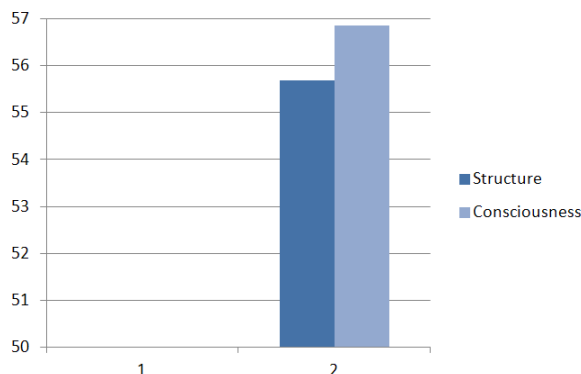


Figure 2. The Mean Scores of the Two Groups on the Proficiency Language Test

In order to check the homogeneity of two groups prior to the treatment, an independent t-test was carried out to ensure the initial existing difference was not of a significant importance and there was equality between the two experimental groups. As is evident in the table 3, the probability associated with the F-observed value of .003 disconfirms the equality of variances; nevertheless, an independent t-test was run to find if there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the proficiency test. Since, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.552) was higher than the significant level of .05, it was safely concluded that the two groups belonged to the same population in terms of their proficiency level before the treatment.

TABLE 3.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	9.35	.003	-.59	68	.552	-1.17	1.96	-5.08	2.74
	Equal variances not assumed			-.59	50.6	.553	-1.17	1.96	-5.11	2.76

**Analysis of Reading Comprehension Pre test**

The reading test which was included in the language proficiency test was used as pre test. It enabled the researcher to investigate the possible impact of the treatment on the improvement of the reading of the experimental groups. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the two experimental groups' reading pretest.

TABLE 4.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PRETEST

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Structure-based Production Task	35	9.42	1.68	-.495	.398
Consciousness- raising Task	35	9.17	1.82	-.486	.398

The results of the skewness analysis, as shown in this Table 4, revealed that the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the pretest scores of the two groups (-1.24 for the structure-based production group and -1.22 for the consciousness-raising group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96). Figure 4.3 shows the normality of the pretest scores.

Figure 3 shows the mean difference of the two experimental groups on the reading pretest.

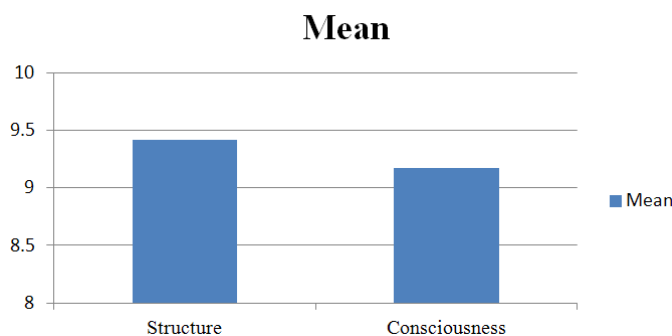


Figure 3. The Mean Scores of the Two Groups on the Reading Pretest

In order to compare the reading passages in pre and post tests more confidently, grading the readability (the level of difficulty) of the passages was essential. Fog formula was used to score the texts and almost a same number for both texts (9.5) was found appropriate for the mid- intermediate level. Therefore, it was safe enough to compare the reading passages in pre and post tests while they were not a repeated measure.

**Analysis of Reading Post test**

The Cronbach Alpha reliability index was calculated as index of reliability for the reading post test.

TABLE 5.  
CRONBACH ALPHA RELIABILITY OF THE READING POST TEST

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Questions
0.763	12

After ten instructional sessions, a post-test including a single reading comprehension test derived from a standard proficiency test was administered to measure the effects of the treatment at the end of the study. The mean scores, standard deviation, and the skewness of the reading posttest are reported for the two groups in Table 6.

TABLE 6.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE READING POSTTEST

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Structure-based Production Task	35	10.69	1.30	-.477	.398
Consciousness-raising Task	35	9.43	1.29	.167	.398

The results of the skewness analysis (Table 6) again revealed that the assumption of normality observed in the distribution of the reading posttest scores of the two groups (-1.19) for the structure-based production group and (.41) for the consciousness-raising group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96).

Figure 5 shows the mean difference of the two experimental groups on the reading posttest.

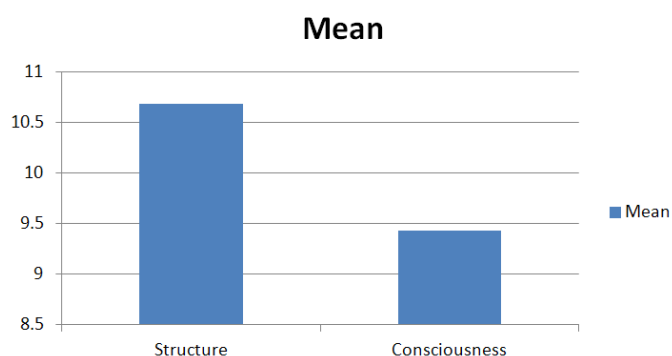


Figure 4. The Mean Scores of the Two Groups on the Reading Posttest

**Hypothesis one**

A paired-samples t-test was employed to investigate the significant effect of structure-based production tasks on reading comprehension of the learners. Table 7 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest of structure-based production group.

TABLE 7.  
 PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS OF THE STRUCTURE-BASED PRODUCTION GROUP

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	9.43	35	1.68	.285
	Posttest	10.69	35	1.30	.220

The probability associated with t-observed value (.000) is lower than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 8.  
 PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF STRUCTURE-BASED PRODUCTION GROUP

Structure Group	Paired Differences	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-1.25	1.01	.171	-1.60	-.91	7.36	34	.00

Based on the results it can be concluded that structure-based tasks had significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners.

**Hypothesis Two**

A paired-samples t-test was employed to investigate the significant effect of consciousness-raising tasks on reading comprehension of the learners. Table 9 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest of consciousness-raising group.

TABLE 9.  
 PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUP

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	9.17	35	1.82	.308
	Posttest	9.43	35	1.29	.218

The probability associated with t-observed value (.247) is higher than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 10.  
 PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUP

Structure Group	Paired Differences	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest- Posttest	-.25	1.29	.218	-.70	.18	1.17	34	.247

Based on the results it can be concluded that consciousness-raising tasks did not have any significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners.

**Hypothesis three**

An independent t-test was run between the mean scores of the posttest of the structure-based production and consciousness-raising groups on the reading comprehension to investigate the significant difference between their effects. As table 11 shows, since the probability associated with the F-observed value (.611) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances. Also the probability associated with the t-observed value (.00) was lower than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 11.  
 INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	.262	.611	4.06	68	.000	1.25	.31	.63	1.87
	Equal variances not assumed			4.06	67.99	.000	1.25	.31	.63	1.87

Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the reading comprehension test. Structure-based production focused tasks had significantly more effect on reading comprehension than consciousness-raising tasks.

**Analysis of the Reading Attitude Questionnaire in Pretest**

As it is depicted below, KMO degree of 0.69 is higher than .60, hence the sample size was sufficient for the purpose of the study. The probability associated with the Bartlett's Test is also significant (less than .05) and correlations between variables are all zero. So the use of factor analysis is allowed.

TABLE 12.  
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.698
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	844.331
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

Table 13 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the reading attitude as a pretest.

TABLE 13.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE READING ATTITUDE IN PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
Structure-based production Task	35	54.46	6.98	-.661	.398
Consciousness-raising Task	35	55.11	6.48	-.509	.398

Figure 5 shows the mean differences of the two experimental groups on the reading attitude questionnaire as a pretest.

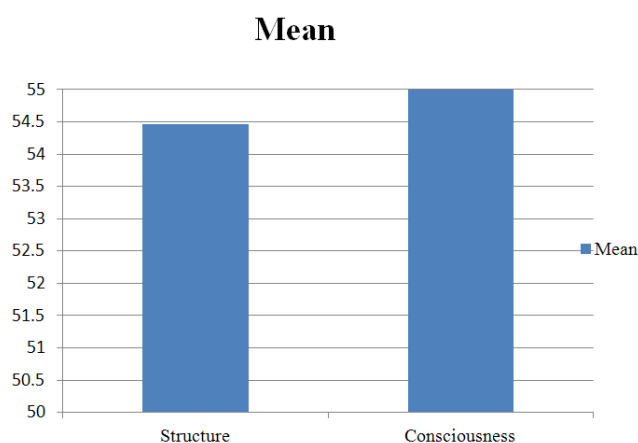


Figure 5. The Mean Scores of the Groups on the Reading Attitude in Pretest Questionnaire

**Analysis of the Reading Attitude Questionnaire in Posttest**

The mean scores, variance and standard deviation of the questionnaire posttest are reported for the two groups in Table 14.

TABLE 14.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE READING ATTITUDE IN POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
Structure-based Production Tasks	35	62.17	5.73	-.367	.398
Consciousness-raising Tasks	35	58.14	4.32	.447	.398

Figure 6 shows the mean differences of the two experimental groups on the reading attitude questionnaire as a posttest.



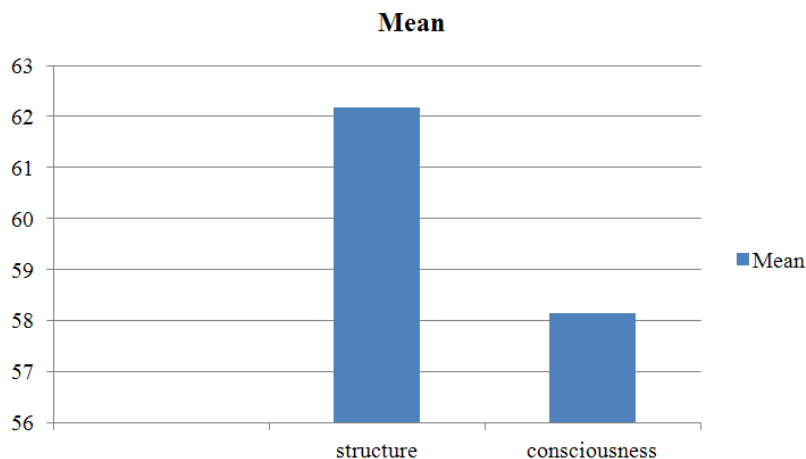


Figure 6. The Mean Scores of the Groups on the Reading Attitude in Posttest Questionnaire

**Hypothesis Four**

A paired-samples t-test was employed to investigate if structure-based production tasks had any significant effect on the attitudes of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners. Table 15 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest of the structure-based production group on the students' attitude.

TABLE 15.  
PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS OF THE STRUCTURE-BASED GROUP

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre test	54.46	35	6.98	1.18
	Posttest	62.17	35	5.73	.97

The probability associated with t-observed value (.000) is lower than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 16.  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF THE STRUCTURE-BASED GROUP

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre test – Posttest	-7.71	5.63	.953	-9.65	-5.77	8.09	34	.000

Based on the results, it can be concluded that structure-based production tasks had a significant effect on attitudes of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners.

**Hypothesis Five**

A paired-samples t-test was employed to investigate the significant effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the attitudes of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners.

TABLE 17.  
PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUP

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre test	55.11	35	6.48	1.09
	Posttest	58.14	35	4.32	.73

The probability associated with t-observed value (.026) is lower than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 18.  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUP

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre test – Posttest	-3.029	7.67	1.297	-5.664	-.393	2.33	34	.026

Based on the results it can be concluded that consciousness-raising tasks had also an effect on the attitudes of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners.

### Hypothesis Six

An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the posttest of the structure-based production and consciousness-raising groups of the attitude questionnaire to investigate the significant difference between the effects of the tasks on the attitude of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL learners. As table 19 shows, since the probability associated with the F-observed value (.065) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances. Also the probability associated with the t-observed value (.001) was lower than the significant level of .05.

TABLE 19.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	3.51	<b>.065</b>	-3.31	68	<b>.001</b>	-4.02	1.21	-6.45	-1.60
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.31	63.219	.002	-4.02	1.21	-6.45	-1.60

Based on these results, it can be concluded that structure-based production tasks had more significant effect on the attitudes of the learners towards reading comprehension.

## VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicated that between the two different focused tasks, structure-based production tasks strongly improved reading comprehension of Iranian mid-intermediate EFL, while consciousness-raising focused tasks were not very effective ones. The study also revealed that both focused tasks positively influenced the attitude of learners towards reading comprehension. However; structure-based production tasks had more positive effect on the attitude of learners.

This supported the idea of Dornyei (2001) that learners with more positive preferences and attitudes toward the second language are likely to be more successful in language learning. This study was also in line with Otunuku and Brown (2007), that positive attitudes improve student's achievement in language learning. It was also concluded that enhancing students' positive attitudes towards reading comprehension needs to be developed as a priority; this conclusion supports Rye's (2006) idea in which he believes that students attitudes is important because, it is the individual students who finally decide whether or not they wish to engage themselves in the critical process of reading comprehension (as cited in Devi, 2012).

Furthermore, the results of this study also agreed with Mohamed's (2004) finding in a sense that consciousness-raising tasks are effective learning tool to enhance learners' attitude towards language acquisition particularly reading comprehension.

The findings of this study seems to be supported by other studies such as Lindsey' (2010), Devi' (2012), Johnson' (2012), Guthrie and Wigfield' (2006). All concluded that the majority of EFL learners in different proficiency level responded more positively towards reading after the task-based instruction was applied. On the other hand, Zhou and Siriyothin (2009) verified the positive effect of writing-to-read tasks of EFL students' attitude towards both reading and writing since there is a strong connection between these two skills.

Several studies have been done to examine the validity of task-based instruction particularly structure-based production tasks in reading comprehension. For instance, Gevin Bei (2013) examined the immediate effects of oral narrative task repetition in promoting fluency and accuracy of intermediate and high proficiency adult EFL learners' production. They concluded that task-based instruction is effective tool not only in reading comprehension but also in EFL learners' production. Spiro (2001) and Mackey (1999) both concluded the effectiveness of structure-based production task in eliciting the targeted structure. This is also supported by the present study.

They were also several studies which examined the effectiveness of consciousness- raising tasks in the field of fostering second language acquisition. Fotos and Ellis (1991) concluded that the consciousness- raising task appeared to have only slight effect in grammar lesson. On the other hand, Yip (1994) concluded that using the consciousness raising method can be effective in teaching grammatical points to advanced EFL learners; however, because of the small number of participants involved in his research, he suggested the results cannot be generalized. The current study also revealed that consciousness-raising tasks were less effective in improving learners' reading comprehension. The effectiveness of consciousness- raising focused tasks might be the case for advanced levels. However, the result of this

study was in contradiction with Ellis (2003) that consciousness-raising tasks result in increased understanding of the explicit features and enable learners to use features in their communicative behavior.

The study came to the conclusion that there is a need to understand and acknowledge appropriate task-based instruction to improve reading comprehension among EFL learners.

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