

Explicit vs. Contrastive-based Instruction of Formulaic Expressions in Developing EFL Learners' Reading Ability

*Gholam-Reza Abbasian¹
Imam Ali University & IAU
Sayyed Jalil Ehsanian
Ministry of Education*

As an integrative component of textual structure, formulaic expressions (FEs) play a key role in communicating the message and comprehending the text. Furthermore, interlingually contrastive features of FEs add to their both significance and complexity of their instruction. Given these facts, this study was an attempt to explore a sound mechanism on how to teach FEs; whether an explicit or CA-based approach to FEs instruction could entail various achievements among EFL learners' reading ability. To this end, three groups of Iranian EFL learners, identified as homogeneous based on Nelson Proficiency Test, were classified into one control and two experimental (i.e. explicit and CA-based instruction) ones. They were exposed to conventional, explicit and CA-based instructions of a set of selected FEs developed into and presented in the form of an instructional handout. Their Knowledge of reading was also tested based on a researcher-made diagnostic test prior to the experiment. Both quantitative and qualitative paradigms were employed to measure both the achievements and the extent of contrast between Persian and English languages in terms of FEs. The former analysis revealed significance difference among the groups in terms of

¹ Corresponding author. E-mail: gabbasian@gmail.com

instruction type effectiveness; both explicit and CA-based instruction groups outperformed the control group; on the contrary, no statistically significant difference was revealed between the experimental groups. Additionally, the latter paradigm revealed differences and mismatches between Persian and English FEs in terms of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic parameters. The findings could be insightful for EFL instructors, learners, textbook writers, and syllabus designers to take into account issues like these in their pedagogical programs.

Keywords: Formulaic Expressions, Explicit Instruction, CA-based Instruction, Reading Ability

Different approaches, strategies, and skills have been suggested as to mastering reading skill. Lying on a continuum of instructions, they range from rendering a large portion of vocabulary, exploiting, “previewing and reading for main idea”, (Sharpe, 1989, p. 262), intensive and extensive reading skills (Chastain, 1988; Richards and Renandya, 2002), provision of pre-reading, schema-building tasks to predicting, skimming, and scanning strategies (Nunan, 2001). Besides, readers themselves may rely on various personal approaches such as bottom-up, text dependence, top-down approach, or schema dependence one to perceive and comprehend written passages (Nunan, 2001). From all these explicit-type instructions, it is inferred that teachers can help learners improve their reading comprehension ability and, consequently, develop themselves in learning a second or foreign language (SL/FL) (Richards & Platt, 1992). Researches adopt the effectiveness of explicit instruction in TESL/ TEFL. In this respect, Karen, et al. (2007) suggest that “the explicit instruction is significantly better than the implicit (instruction) for the complex rule” (p.1), and it may lead to a long term effect for learners (Tode, 2007). It helps learners to perceive new items consciously and this conscious awareness, consequently, assists and notifies learners to take the square and produce accurate pieces of language (Richard and Schmidt, 2010).

Explicit type of instruction may take variety of forms. Among them Contrastive Analysis (CA) oriented approach, though may be charged for being traditional in essence, has proved pedagogically significant in certain areas. CA aims at juxtaposing two language systems to compare and contrast the extent of similarities and differences between them, claiming that it can predict the problematic issues the learner encounters while learning a SL/FL, and thereby most appropriate materials for teaching SL/FL can be developed (Keshavarz, 2008; Ziahosseiny, 2008).

Further to the mechanism of developing reading, subject of instruction being either language skills or components is of crucial importance. For example, formulaic language as an innovative domain in TEFL and TESL has been subject to research in the last decade. Wray (2002) emphasizes the importance of the formulaic language and the lexicon in speakers' production and mentions that some formulaic sequences of language are present in normal conversations. Wood (2010) asserts a large portion of communicative acts deals with prefabricated chunks. These items are acquired and stored in long term memories. In addition, learners can retrieve these packages of chunks autonomously. Some others (Bulter, 2006; Charles, et al., 2009; Mey, 2009; Wray, 2008) discuss different advantages of formulaic language in a variety of perspectives. They assert that formulaic language helps learners reduce the processing load.

Studies on formulaic language (Birkenstein, et al., 2008; Hackson and Fernandez, 2008; Hall, 2009; Van Lancker & Rallon, 2004; Sadeghi, 2009; Wray, 2008) confirm the importance of teaching formulaic expressions and show that a great extent of any language consists of fixed or semi-fixed chunks and language packages. These chunks need to be fully taken into account since these pre-fabricated items let learners store language economically and develop autonomy in production.

The remaining controversial issue is the way formulaic expressions could be effectively rendered in pedagogical situations. Variety of solutions including form-focused, meaning focused, explicit, implicit, contrastive analysis (CA-based) and the

like has been experienced in the literature. Among many, CA-based and explicit instructions seem worthwhile to be investigated.

CA-based vs. Explicit Instructions

The main task of CA is to compare and contrast two languages to explore the rate of similarities and differences in terms of phoneme, morpheme, syntax, semantics, etc. Consequently, after studying the corpus, the findings are employed in pedagogical materials. The product of these processes shows that CA, in spite of its limitations in some cases, appears to be a significant tool for EFL learners to improve their learning career (Keshavaz, 2008; Yang, 1986; Ziahosseiny, 2008). Proponents of CAH state: "The main purpose of CA is to give a description of differences between languages to establish a linguistically motivated hierarchy of differences" (Ziahosseiny, 2008, p. 2). The modified version of CA, that is, Error Analysis (EA), still seems popular and dominant in pedagogy and serves as "the primary means of conducting research into L2 acquisition" (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2009, p. 52).

Yang (1986) states that in spite of some drawbacks of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), it can be an effective tool for "teachers to gain useful insight to find out their students' problems and students to better realize that their native language habits can be transferred to the new language system" (p.3).

CA claimed that learners transferred forms and meanings of their L1 while learning a foreign or second language. Lado (1957, p. 2 cited in Keshavarz, 2008, p. 5) states: "Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and distribution of the forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture, both productively when attempting to grasp and understand the language ... as practiced by natives." He maintains that "based on this assumption (as mentioned above), Structural linguists set out to identify areas of difficulty for second language learners and produce appropriate teaching materials to overcome these difficulties." (ibid). Citing from Fries (1947, p. 9), Keshavarz (2008, p.6) suggests that "the most effective materials (for foreign language teaching) are those that are (designed) based

upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with parallel description of the native language of the learner.” CA can help material developers to design appropriate materials, aids the learners to understand and learn how L1 differs from L2, assists the teacher to better understand weaknesses and strengths the learner may have while learning a second or foreign language (Corder, 1986; Ellis, 2009).

On the other side of the coin, we face explicit instruction. Semantically speaking, explicit means something clear-cut and direct which refers to visible and definite issues. But educationally speaking, the learner is most probably able to access, focus, understand and perceive the [target learning] points (Oxford, 2004; Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Moreover, instruction refers to pedagogical processes of any educational institution. It refers to a set of activities on the part of instructors and learners for fulfilling and approaching the pre-specified objectives (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). Instruction can also refer to “formal teaching that you are given in a particular skill or subject” (Longman, 2003, p. 844). Combining the two notions, Richards and Schmidt (2010) characterise explicit instruction as an approach which:

- *clearly describes the goals of learning in terms of observable behaviour;*
- *describes the conditions under which the behaviour will be expected to occur; and*
- *States an acceptable standard of performance (the criterion). For example, one of the behavioural objectives for a conversation course might be: Given an oral request, the learner will say his or her name, address and telephone number to a native speaker of English.”(p.51)*

Obviously, instructional mechanism should be compatible with the content or target of the instruction. So, necessity of awareness of the nature of formulaic expressions and respective research trend would be illuminating in the process of conducting this study.

Formulaic Expressions (FEs)

Sequences of words, phrases, or sentences such as ‘on time’, ‘make a mistake’, ‘look up’, ‘how do you do’, ‘see you later’, etc. are called FEs (Wray, 2002). As an umbrella term, “FE includes these terms: idioms, collocations, preferred ways of saying things, routines, set phrases, rhymes and songs, prayers and proverbs” (Gardiff University, 2011, p.1), which cover a large portion of any language in the form of fabricated chunks.

Researchers believe that “these sequences of words are stored and retrieved as a unit from memory” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 229). These chunks (i.e. linguistic packages) are significant because they assist learners to develop their fluency and productivity (Hall, 2007, p.1). According to Istvan (2006, p.1) “Nonnative learners find learning FEs problematic since they may not know the conventions of the expressions.” EFL learners may commit syntactic and semantic errors due to collocation discrepancies between the L1 and L2. Van Lancker & Rallon (2004) conclude that FEs make up nearly 25% of the phrases in any language. Ellis (2005) found that native speakers used a very large range of FEs. Then, he claimed that language learners needed a significant portion of such expressions for developing their fluency. Importantly, learners can achieve skill and fluency in language learning by using chunks or fixed sequences. In fact, formulae assist learners to produce spontaneous speech. Therefore, the researchers assumed that the inclusion of formulaic language in EFL educational programs could probably be beneficial and effective in developing learners’ reading comprehension ability. They assert that teaching and learning lexical chunks, collocations, idioms (i.e. FEs) should be taken into account in classroom practices for many advantageous, influences, and functions such as:

- “Conserving processing resources, enhancing both fluency and idiomatically” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 229).
- “Providing learners with connotational meaning besides dictionary meaning” (Lee, 2008).

- *“Reminding the teacher and the learner to look up equivalent or semi-equivalent items in his or her own native language rather than to rely on the loan translation” (Hackson and Fernandez, 2008, p. 57).*
- *“Helping the learner to store the string of lexical and chunk items in the mental lexicon as a single unit and retrieve them as a whole, too (Wray, 2002; cited in Hackson and Fernandez, 2008, p.2).*
- *“Helping the learner to develop productivity” (Hall, 2007, p.1).*
- *“Being the heart and soul of native-like use” (Wray, 2002, p.5).*
- *Teaching FEs develop fluent speakers, writers or learners. The inclusion of formulaic language provides learners with an opportunity to improve their own language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Birkenstein, 2008; Hackson and Fernandez, 2008; Hall, 2007; Laybott, 2009; Sefidvand and Vahdani, 2011; Wray, 2008).*

In addition to the targeted mechanisms (i.e., CA- and FE-based instructions), reading skill as the target skill being developed in light of these mechanisms, has been subject to extensive research as well. Nunan (2001) found that “background knowledge was a more important factor than grammatical complexity in the ability of readers to comprehend cohesive relationships in the text” (p.260). His finding is compatible with the schema theory as well. Richards and Renandya (2002) have focussed on incorporation of extensive reading as a developmental tool.

Favouring the role of culture in developing reading skill, Chastain (1988) suggests that “a significant factor affecting comprehensibility in language classes is the lack of familiarity students may have with the foreign culture” (p. 233). Furthermore, lots of studies have been done on how to teach reading skill; all emanating from the significance of reading ability.

Contrary to the significance of the formulaic expressions in language skill acquisition, what seems rather crucial is the way they can be rendered explicitly or contrastively. Since this area has

not been thoroughly investigated in the literature and almost all EFL learners find formulae expressions difficult to internalize, the present paper sets out to investigate the impact of such expressions on EFL learners' reading comprehension ability.

In this very line and to address the problem stated empirically, four research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Does explicit instruction of FEs have any significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension?
2. Does contrastive instruction of FEs have any significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension?
3. Are there any significant differences between explicit and contrastive instructions of FEs in developing EFL learners' reading comprehension ability?
4. To what extent are English and Persian different in terms of FEs?

Method

Participants

Seventy four Iranian senior high school male EFL learners participated in the study. They were divided into one control group (n=22) and two experimental groups (i.e. Explicit Instruction Group (n=27) and CA Instruction Group (n=25)).

Instrumentation

To conduct this study, the researchers employed the following multiple instruments and mechanisms:

Researcher-made Handouts of Explicit and Contrastive Types: Explicit and contrastive handouts had been planned before the experiment started. Whereas the explicit type handout was a collection of formulaic expressions extracted from the participants' textbooks without any Persian equivalence, the CA-based type included the Persian equivalence of the FEs.

Tests

- Ø *Nelson Reading Proficiency Test* was administered to select three homogenous groups of participants.

- Ø *Researcher-made pre-test* of reading ability was developed and administered to measure the reading achievement of the participants prior to the treatment.
- Ø *Researcher-made post-test* of reading ability, parallel to the pre-test, was designed and administered to probe the extent of effectiveness of the instructions.

Procedures

In order to conduct the experiment, the following steps were followed: First, Sampling was carried out by administering Nelson Proficiency Test and selecting homogeneous groups of participants. Second, the *Researcher-made pre-test* was administered in order to diagnose the participants' current mastery of reading comprehension ability on the related textbook. Then, *Treatment* was launched targeting three groups of the participants classified into one control group receiving conventional instruction and two experimental groups one of which received explicit instruction and the other received contrastive instruction of FEs. To implement the treatment, the pre-planned handout of explicit instruction of FEs was distributed among the explicit instruction group. Besides their common instruction of reading, the participants received explicit instruction of the formulaic expressions for five weeks, twice a week. For example:

Teacher: When you get completely confused, it means you get mixed

Class: Mixed up

Meanwhile, every session, the errors were used to be recorded and collected for further analysis in an answer to research question No. 4.

-The pre-planned handout of contrastive instruction of formulaic expressions was distributed and taught among the group of contrastive instruction of FEs for five weeks, twice a week.

For example:

Teacher: If you practice some words over and over, they will stick in your mind. In Persian, you say that they will

Students: ملکه ذهن میشود [malak-e zehn mishavad]

Finally, *Researcher-made post-test* was administered following a five-week instruction carried out in 10 sessions to probe the extent of the effectiveness of the instructions.

Results

Overview

The statistical analyses took the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative research methods depending on the variable and research question types. Correlation coefficients estimation, ANOVA, Shefee test, and frequency analysis were the main procedures of data analysis.

Preliminary Analyses

In order to run any parametric test, four assumptions of independence, interval data, normality and homogeneity of variances should be met (Field, 2009). The first two assumptions of independence and interval data do not have any statistical test. The researcher should confirm that none of the subjects participates in more than one group and the dependent variables are measured on an interval scale. However, the latter two assumptions – normality and homogeneity of variances - require statistical test.

To investigate the normality of the data, the ratio of the skewedness over their respective standard errors should be within the ranges of ± 1.96 . As displayed in Table 1, the ratios of the skewedness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are all within the above mentioned range (i.e. the present data enjoy normal distribution on all tests).

Table 1
Normality Test

GROUP		N	Skewness		Normality Of	Kurtosis		Normality Of
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Skewness	Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis
CONTROL	PRETEST	22	-0.35	0.49	-0.71	-0.75	0.95	-0.79
	POSTTEST	22	0.46	0.49	0.95	-0.48	0.95	-0.50
	NELSON	22	-0.09	0.49	-0.19	-1.32	0.95	-1.39
CIFES*	PRETEST	25	-0.39	0.46	-0.84	-0.45	0.90	-0.50
	POSTTEST	25	-0.15	0.46	-0.32	-1.45	0.90	-1.60
	NELSON	25	-0.03	0.46	-0.05	-0.99	0.90	-1.10
EIFES**	PRETEST	27	-0.55	0.45	-1.23	-1.02	0.87	-1.17
	POSTTEST	27	-0.59	0.45	-1.33	-0.70	0.87	-0.81
	NELSON	27	-0.41	0.45	-0.91	-0.03	0.87	-0.03

Note: * means Contrastive Instruction of Formulaic Expressions;
**stands for Explicit Instruction of Formulaic Expressions

The assumption of homogeneity of variances is discussed when reporting one-way ANOVA results, although in case this assumption is violated, one can reduce the significance level to .01 to compensate for the violation.

NELSON Test

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the three groups (i.e. control, explicit instruction of FEs and contrastive instruction of FEs) on the NELSON test in order to find out whether the groups were homogeneous. As displayed in Table 2, the mean scores for the control, EIFEs and CIFEs are 37.68, 43.28 and 41.19, respectively.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for NELSON

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
NELSON	CONTROL	22	37.68	6.00	1.28	35.02	40.34	28.00	46.00
	CIFE	25	43.28	13.06	2.61	37.89	48.67	18.00	62.00
	EIFE	27	41.19	10.14	1.95	37.17	45.20	16.00	56.00
	Total	74	40.85	10.40	1.21	38.44	43.26	16.00	62.00

As displayed in Table 3, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is not met (Levene's $F = 6.68$, $P = .002 < .05$). To compensate for the violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, as suggested by Pallant (2005, pp. 234-259), the level of significance was reduced to .01.

Table 3
Assumption of Homogeneity of Variances for NELSON

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
6.684	2	71	.002

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that there are not any significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups on the NELSON test ($F = 1.75$ (2, 71), $P = .181 > .01$). Based on these results, it can be concluded that three groups enjoyed the same level of general proficiency knowledge prior to the administration of the treatments.

Table 4
One-Way ANOVA NELSON Test by Groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	371.478	2	185.739	1.753	.181
Within Groups	7523.887	71	105.970		
Total	7895.365	73			

Instrument Validation: Criterion Related Validity

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the NELSON test and pretest and posttest of reading comprehension were employed as validity indices of the latter two tests. As displayed in Table 5, the pretest of reading comprehension ($r = .47$, $P = .000 < .05$) and posttest of reading comprehension ($r = .46$, $P = .000 < .05$) both show significant correlations with the NELSON test; in other words, the pretest and posttest of reading comprehension enjoy acceptable indices of criterion related validity.

Table 5
Pearson Correlation

		PRETEST	POSTTEST
NELSON	Pearson Correlation	.479**	.467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	74	74
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Reliability Indices

As displayed in Table 6, the K-R21 reliability indices for the pretest, posttest and NELSON test are .89, .93 and .95, respectively.

Table 6
K-R21 Reliability Indices

	Mean	Variance	K-R21
Pretest	51.5553	201.833	0.89
Posttest	59.9792	304.688	0.93
NELSON	40.8514	108.156	0.95

Pretest of Reading Comprehension

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the three groups (control, explicit instruction of FE's and

contrastive instruction of FE's) on the pretest of Reading Comprehension test in order to ascertain whether they were homogeneous in terms of reading comprehension ability prior to administration of the treatments to the experimental groups. As displayed in Table 7, the mean scores for the control, contrastive instruction of FEs (CIFE), and explicit instruction of FEs (EIFE) are 47.59, 55.54 and 51.10, respectively.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics Pretest of Reading Comprehension

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
PRETEST	CONTROL	22	47.59	8.29	1.77	43.91	51.26	33.33	60.00
	CIFE	25	55.54	11.71	2.34	50.71	60.38	30.00	76.66
	EIFE	27	51.10	18.86	3.63	43.64	58.56	13.00	80.00
	Total	74	51.56	14.21	1.65	48.26	54.85	13.00	80.00

As displayed in Table 8, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is not met (Levene's $F = 12.47$, $P = .000 < .05$). To compensate for the violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, as suggested by Pallant (2005, pp. 234-259), the level of significance is reduced to .01.

Table 8

Assumption of Homogeneity of Variances for Pretest of Reading Comprehension

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
12.474	2	71	.000

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that there are not any significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups on the pretest of Reading Comprehension test ($F = 1.90$ (2, 71), $P = .156 > .01$). Based on these results, it can be concluded

that the three groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability, along with general language proficiency, prior to the administration of the treatments.

Table 9
One-Way ANOVA Pretest of Reading Comprehension Test by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	750.084	2	375.042	1.904	.156
Within Groups	13983.744	71	196.954		
Total	14733.828	73			

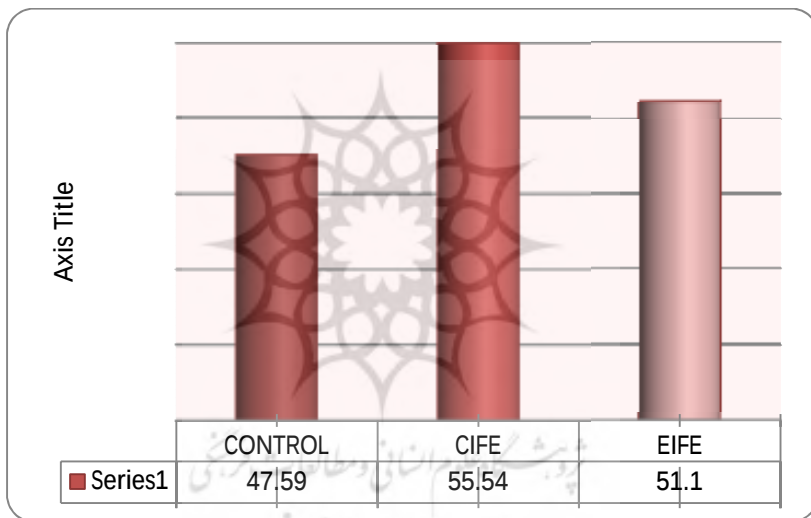


Figure 1. Mean Scores on Pretest of Reading Comprehension Test

Analyses of the Post-test Results: Investigation of the Research Questions

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the three groups (control, EIFE and CIFE) on the posttest of Reading Comprehension test in order to investigate the effect of the explicit and contrastive instruction of FEs to develop reading ability. As displayed in Table 10, the mean scores for the control, CIFE, and EIFE groups are, 48.33, 66.25 and 63.66, respectively.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics Posttest of Reading Comprehension

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
CONTROL	22	48.33	13.79	2.94	42.22	54.45	26.66	80.00
CIFE	25	66.25	18.38	3.68	58.66	73.84	40.00	86.66
EIFE	27	63.66	14.94	2.88	57.75	69.58	30.00	83.33
Total	74	59.98	17.46	2.03	55.94	64.02	26.66	86.66

As displayed in Table 11, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's $F = 3.05$, $P = .053 > .05$).

Table 11

Assumption of Homogeneity of Variances for Posttest of Reading Comprehension

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.055	2	71	.053

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that there are significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups on the posttest of Reading Comprehension test ($F = 8.59$ (2, 71), $P = .000 > .05$).

Table 12

One-Way ANOVA Posttest of Reading Comprehension Test by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4335.065	2	2167.532	8.594	.000
Within Groups	17907.193	71	252.214		
Total	22242.258	73			

Although the F-value of 8.59 indicates significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups on the posttest of reading comprehension, the post-hoc Scheffe's tests should be run to compare the means two by two. Based on the results displayed in Table 12, it can be concluded that:

A: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the EIFE and control groups. The EIFE group with a mean score of 63.66 outperformed the control group on the posttest of reading comprehension (see table 10). Thus, the first null-hypothesis (i.e. explicit instruction of FEs does not have any significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension) is rejected.

Table 13
Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests

(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CONTROL	CIFL	-17.91*	4.64	.001	-29.52	-6.31
	EIFE	-15.33*	4.56	.005	-26.73	-3.92
CIFE	EIFE	2.58	4.40	.842	-8.43	13.60

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

B: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the CIFE and control groups. The CIFE group with a mean score of 66.25 outperformed the control group on the posttest of reading comprehension (table 10). Thus, the second null-hypothesis (i.e. CIFE does not have any significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension) is rejected.

C: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the CIFE and EIFE groups. Thus, the third null-hypothesis (i.e. there are not any significant differences between EIFE and CIFE instructions in developing EFL learners' reading comprehension ability) could not be rejected (see table 10 and graph 2).

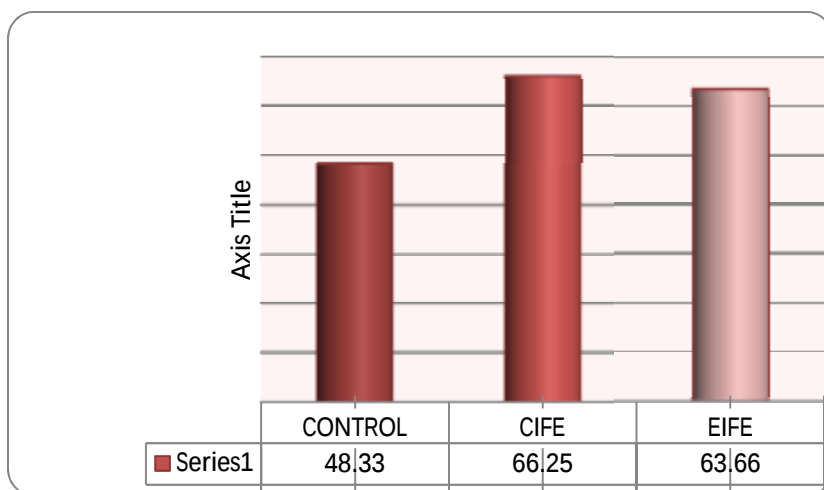


Figure 2. Mean Scores on Posttest of Reading Comprehension Test

Quantitative Analysis: Research Question Four

In order to answer the research question four, a list of FEs was extracted from the participants' textbooks including English Book 3 and Pre-university English Book. Then, the FEs were juxtaposed to explore the matches or mismatches interlingually. The list is given in Appendix B, which obviously reveals that these two languages vary semantically, syntactically and pragmatically. Out of 91 (i.e. 60+31) cases of FEs, Persian and English vary in 31 cases, an indication of roughly 34 percent. The distinctive specifications are as follows:

I Expressions may be **structurally** divergent. For example, 'make plans: برنامه چیدن [barname chidan] 'indicates that the English structure (Verb + Noun) does not match the Persian structure [noun+verb] (اسم + فعل) or the formulaic expression 'be afraid of: ترسیدن از [tarsidan az] is different from that of Persian in terms of structure (be + adjective+ preposition versus فعل + حرف اضافه) [verb+pp].

II. Expressions may be **semantically** divergent, for example, 'make a decision: تصمیم گرفتن [tasmim gereftan] rather than * یک تصمیم ساختن [tasmim saakhtan] or 'take action: اقدام

اقدام برداشتن* rather than [eghdam kardan] 'کردن bardashtan].

III. Expressions may be **pragmatically** divergent. For example, 'How do you do? : از دیدار شما خوشوقتم : [az didar-e shoma khosvagtam] may have different interpretations for English and Persian speakers.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings indicate that explicit instruction of FEs plays a significant role in developing learners' reading comprehension ability. They are in line with the studies supporting the effectiveness of explicit instruction (Andrew, 2007). In addition, the results revealed that formulaic instruction made the EFL participants outscore the control group, suggesting that teaching Formulaic expressions could be an effective pedagogical technique in enhancing reading comprehension competence.

Along the same line, some researchers (Butter, et al., 2006; Ellis, 2005; Mey, 2006; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2005) found that teaching and learning lexical chunks, collocations, idioms (i.e. FEs), had significant effects and functions on learners. But they did not investigate the effect of FEs instructions on EFL learners' reading ability. In fact, most of them have been concerned with the effect of FEs on EFL learners' fluency and productivity.

Additionally, CA-based instruction of FEs helps learners develop their reading comprehension ability significantly. CA-based instruction of FEs assists learners in perceiving L1 and L2 similarities and differences by comparing and contrasting the systems. Then, the achievements may be insightful for learners in enhancing and learning EFL reading materials. Therefore, the study confirms Ellis (2009) and Corder (1986) suggesting that teachers, learners, and researchers can take advantage of CA. However, the scope of this study (i.e. CA-based mechanism of FEs instruction) appears to be an innovative approach in teaching reading in the field of TEFL. Even though some researchers such as Ziahosseiny (2008) and Keshavarz (2008) have concerned themselves with contrastive analysis of English and Persian, they don't fully support the argument of the current research.

Meanwhile, the findings are consistent with that of Manucheri (2005). She concludes that, for example, the Persian learner of English has problems while learning the verb forms such as ‘teach: یاد دادن/ yaad dadan/ rather than * give learning’ or ‘learn: یاد گرفتن/ yaad gereftan/ rather than *get learning’. She suggests that the teacher should provide ample opportunities for learners to realize the collocational nature of verb forms on CA-based study.

Meanwhile, this study reveals that the two mechanisms of explicit and CA-based instructions bring about roughly equal achievements. Even though the dual mechanism equality probably seems to be the unique achievement of this experiment, it supports the significance of explicit instruction of Richards and Schmidt (2002), confirming Ziahosseiny’s (2008) claim that “Contrastive analysis is largely associated with language teaching” (p.6).

Both the explicit and CA-based experiments reported in the literature (Ghadessy, 1977; Jafarpur, 1979; Keyvani, 1977; Yarmohammadi, 1967) aimed at providing learners, teachers, researchers with new insights to develop in their pedagogical programs. Along the same line, this study was an attempt to teach the most frequent formulaic expressions extracted from the participants’ textbook through two mechanisms of explicit and contrastive approaches. CA-based study on the extracted sample of FEs reveals that 34 percent of English and Persian formulae are different in terms of structures, semantics and pragmatics.

FEs are almost fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated chunks which play a significant role to develop learners’ fluency. In addition, formulae assist language users to acquire language (Lucker, 2004). In fact, learners store and retrieve these chunks wholly within a set of ready-made packages (Gardiff University, 2011). However, almost all EFL learners in different levels find idioms and collocations problematic. They often find such formulae difficult to internalize since syllabus designers do not include enough proportion of formulaic expressions- collocations and idioms- in EFL course books. EFL teachers might sometimes overlook teaching formulaic expressions at the expense of teaching isolated items. In addition, the study of formulaic language is in its infancy.

Conclusively, the findings assert roughly equal effectiveness of both EIFE and CIFE instructions on the participants' reading comprehension ability and greater incompatibility between Persian and English in terms of FEs, which warrants the inclusion of CIFE instruction at the top of the priority list of candidate instructional mechanisms.

The Authors

Gholam-Reza Abbasian, born in Ahar, East Azerbaijan, Iran, is an assistant professor of TEFL at Imam Ali University & IAU. He has presented at (inter) national conferences and is the author & translator of about 15 books, publisher of scholarly articles and offers psycholinguistics, language testing, & syllabus design courses. He has received awards as top scholar and has been nominated as the most successful teacher for seven years. He is the internal manager of JOMM, reviewer of Sage, FLA and GJER journals and a member of editorial board of JSSIR.

Sayeed Jalil Ehsanian, holds an MA in TEFL and is an English teacher at the Iranian Ministry of Education and has been teaching English for fifteen years. His research interests are syllabus design and materials preparation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Explicit Handout of FEs

Grade one at guidance school

And you?

Notebook

What are they?

Grade two at guidance school

Excuse me.

Here you are.

Hurry up

Let's.....

On (Tuesday)

Policeman

See you later

Sit down

Thanks God

You're welcome.

What time.....?

Just fine

What is he/she?

What about you?

Feel fine/ well

How many.....?

In the afternoon/ evening

Make (tea , dinner.....)

Put on

Say prayers

She is twelve

Stand up

There is /there are

What color.....?

Whose car

Grade three at guidance school

A little

Bookcase

Come back

Can I help you?

Free time

Good luck

Handwriting

How much

Have a good time

Have breakfast

Have an accident

Have a break

A lot of

Be in time

Com from

Fifteen years old

Get ready

Go shopping

Have a headache

How many

Have a test

Have a difficult life

Heavy traffic

Hard worker

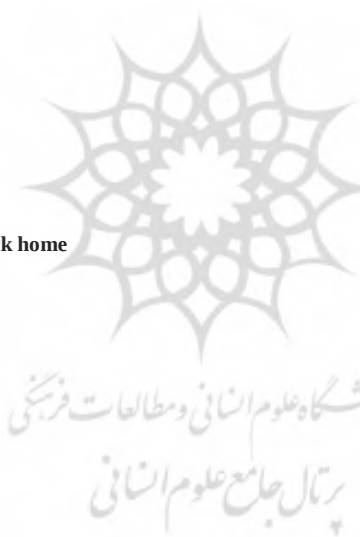
How old.....?
In a hurry
I see
Look like
On the way
Say hello to
Take off
Turn on
Wait for
What does he /she look like ?

Ice- cream
It may rain
Keep clean
Not too bad
Shopping center
Sunrise
The country
What's the matter?
Wake up
With sth

Grade one at high school

Ask for
Anything else...?
All day long
A long time
As As
Be afraid of
Be away
Change into
Climb up/down
Do good
Far from
Find one's way back home
For certain
Get late
Get sick
Glad to meet you.
Grow shorter
Good looking
Have a cold
How far.....?
Hometown
Help yourself
In front of
Last name
Look for
May I borrow.....?
Not at all
On time
Opposite of
Ok, I'll take it.
Pay attention to

A. D
A short time
All over
At the age of
Be born
Be able to
Be good
Could I?
Daylight
Drop down
First name
Fly by
Full of sth
Get lost
Get up
Grow up
Go away
Get milk
Have got
How odd!
How about this one?
Just a moment
Learn about sth
Light brown
Make a noise
Never mind.
Nice to meet you.
Once more
On top of
Out of reach
Pay for



Peace be upon him.

Plenty of

Share of sth

Stand in line

Some more

Turn down

Turn off

Turn against

What size do you wear?

Who is it on the phone?

Piece of sth

Receive sb with open arms

Steam engine

Some day

Something else

Turn into

Sitting room

Welcome sb warmly

Would you?

What fun it was?

Grade two at high school

Against the law

All of a sudden

According to

Cassette player

Depend on

Disagree about

Feel sorry for

For a while

For no good reason

Get cold

Get into trouble

Go hungry

Go on a picnic

Go around

Have to

Hold one's breath

How is everything with you?

Language lab

Light up

Make a mistake

Mixed up

Most of the time

Pay attention

Pick up

Run along

Small talk

Soft drink

Take a breath

Take place

Toy gun

You're welcome.

Would you mind.....?

A short while

A foot wide/ long

Bad luck

Comment on /about

Different from

Do right

Find out

For the fun of it

Full of sth

Get out of sth

Get mixed up

Go hic

Go on a trip

Give back

Hand clock

How about this one?

Keep on

Light bulb

Look like

Merry -go -round

Mind one's own business

Paper bag

Put sth aside

Run out of

Say goodbye

Stay with

Take sth apart

Take a photograph

Transport system

Turn off

Walk around

rite about

Grade three at high school

At the end of
After a while
As soon as
Be careful about
Be ashamed of
By means of
Do silly things
Far apart
Get away from
Hard working
How do you do?
Instead of
In other words
Keep accounts
Look after
On holidays
Over & over
Responsible for
Pocket-sized
Search for
Slow down
Stick in one's mind
Turn up
Take part
Track & field
Up & down
Worry about

At the front
And so on
Be afraid of
Be interested in
Be on time
Do best
Driving test
First aid
Go straight on
Hear about
Ice-hockey
In addition to
Insist on
Long ago
Make up
On your left
Once a week / month
Play a part in
Right- hand side
Similar to
Sorry about
Talk with/ to
Take a test
Take sth away from
Twice a week/ month
Wind power
What time is the film on?

Grade four at high school/ pre-university

A large number of
As soon as possible
As well as
Be concerned about
Be made up of
By oneself
Concentrate on
Do research in sth
Give a speech
In addition to
In the front of
Make a decision
Make a speech
Make plans

As long as
As well
Be aware of
Be free of sth
Be robbed of sth
Come in
Do one's part
Get tired
Help out
In public
Keep up with sth
Make a difference
Make eye –contact
Pass on

Rely on
Stand away
Take action
Take sth seriously
Whether or

Run away
So far
Take notes
Tell a joke
Weigh sth against sth

Appendix B: CA-based Handout of FEs

Grade one at guidance school

And you?
Fine, thanks.
Just fine
Notebook
What is he/she?
What are they?
What about you?

و شما چطور؟
خوبم ، ممنون
حالم خوبه
دفتر یادداشت
او (مذکر/مونث) چکاره است؟
آنها چکاره اند؟
شما چطور؟

Grade two at guidance school

At the table
Excuse me.
Feel fine/ well
Here you are.
How many.....?
Hurry up
In the afternoon/ evening
Let's.....
Make (tea , dinner.....)
On (Tuesday)
Put on
policeman
Say prayers
See you later
She is twelve
Sit down
Stand up
Thanks God
There is /there are
You're welcome.
What color.....?
What time.....?
Whose car?

کنار میز
ببخشید
سرحال بودن
بفرمایید.
چه تعداد.....؟
عجله کن
عصر / سر شب
بیاییم.....
درست کردن (چای ، شام.....)
در روز (سه شنبه)
پوشیدن
مرد پلیس
نماز خواندن
به امید دیدار
(او) دوازده ساله هست
بنشین
پا شو
خدایو شکر.....
وجود دارد/ وجود دارند
خواهش میکنم
..... چه رنگی هست؟
..... چه ساعتی؟
.....ماشین چه کسی هست؟

Grade three at guidance school

A little
A lot of

مقدار کمی
مقدار/تعداد زیادی

Bookcase	قفسه ی کتاب
Be in time	زودتر/دیرتر از معمول حاضر بودن
Come back	برگشتن
Com from	اهل جای بودن
Can I help you?	ممکنه به شما کمک کنم؟/ چیزی می خواستید؟
Fifteen years old	پانزده ساله
Free time	وقت آزاد/ اوقات فراقت
Get ready	حاضر شدن
Good luck	موفق باشید
Go shopping	خرید رفتن
Handwriting	دست خط
Have a headache	سر درد داشتن
How much?	چه مقدار.....؟/..... چه قیمتی هست؟
Have a good time	وقت تان بخیر
Have a test	امتحان داشتن
Have breakfast	صبحانه خوردن
Have a difficult life	زندگی سختی داشتن
Have an accident	تصادف کردن
Heavy traffic	ترافیکسنگین
Have a break	زنگ تفریح داشتن/ استراحت مختصر کردن
Hard worker	کارگر سخت کوش
How old.....?	 چند ساله است ؟
Ice- cream	بستنی
In a hurry	با عجله
It may rain	ممکن است باران ببارد
I see	متوجه ام
Keep clean	تمیز نگه داشتن
Look like	شبیه بودن
Not too bad	خیلی بد نیست
On the way	در راه
Shopping center	مرکز خرید
Say hello to	سلام کردن
Sunrise	تابش خورشید
Take off	در آوردن لباس
The country	بیلاق
Turn on	روشن کردن
What's the matter?	موضوع چیست
Wait for	منتظر ماندن
Wake up	بیدار شدن / بیدار کردن
What does he /she look like ?	او شبیه چه کسی هست؟
With sth	باچیزی/ به وسیله ی چیزی
Grade one at high school	
A piece of sth	یه تکه از چیزی

Ask for	تقاضا کردن برای
A. D	پس از میلاد مسیح
Anything else...?	چیز دیگه.....؟
A short time	زمان کوتاهی
All day long	تمام طول روز
All over	سراسر، تمام
A long time	زمان طولانی
At the age of	در سن
As as	به میزان برابر
Be born	متولد شدن
Be afraid of	ترسیدن از
Be able to	قادر بودن / توانا بودن
Be away	دور شدن
Be good	خوب بودن
Change into	تبدیل شدن به
Could I?	آیا می توانم.....؟
Climb up/down	بالا رفتن / پایین آمدن
Daylight	روشنایی روز/ روز روشن
Do good	کار نیک انجام دادن
Drop down	به پایین افتادن
Far from	دور از
First name	اسم کوچک
Find one's way back home	مسیر برگشت را یافتن
Fly by	اطراف پرواز کردن
For certain	به طور یقین
Full of sth	پر از چیزی
Get late	دیر شدن
Get lost	گم شدن
Get sick	بیمار شدن
Get up	برخاستن
Glad to meet you.	از دیدارتان خوشحالم
Grow up	بزرگ شدن (افراد)
Grow shorter	کوتاه شدن (روز)
Go away	دور شدن
Good looking	خوش تیپ
Get milk	شیر گرفتن (دوشیدن از گاو،...)
Have a cold	سرما خوردن
Have got	داشتن
How far.....?	؟...
	چقدر فاصله
How odd!	عجیب است!
Hometown	زادگاه
How about this one?	این یکی چطور است

Help yourself	از خودتان پذیرایی کنید.
In front of	در مقابل
Just a moment	یک لحظه صبر کنید
Last name	نام خانوادگی
Learn about sth	درباره چیزی آگاه شدن
Light brown	قهوه ای روشن
Look for	گشتن برای
Make a noise	سر و صدا کردن
May I borrow.....?	ممکن است قرض کنم؟
Never mind.	مهم نیست
Not at all	قابلی نداره/ چه زحمتی
Nice to meet you.	از ملاقات با شما خوشوقتم
On time	به موقع، سر وقت
Once more	دفعه ای دیگر
Opposite of	مخالف/ متضاد
On top of	در بالای
Ok, I'll take it.	خوب آن را بر می دارم (زمان خرید کردن)
Out of reach	دور از دسترس
Pay attention to	توجه داشتن به
Pay for	پرداخت کردن برای
Peace be upon him.	(ص)/ سلام خدا بر او باد
Piece of sth	تکه ای از چیزی
Plenty of	مقدار/ تعداد فراوان
Receive sb with open arms	با آغوش باز از کسی استقبال کردن/ به گرمی کسی را پذیرفتن
Right now	همین حالا/ فوراً
Share of sth	سهم چیزی
Stand in line	به صف ایستادن/ صف بستن
Steam engine	موتور بخار
Some more	کمی بیشتر
Some day	زمانی / روزی
Something else	چیز دیگر
Turn down	کم کردن (صدای رادیو، تلویزیون.....)
Turn off	خاموش کردن
Turn into	تبدیل شدن
Turn against	مخالف/ ضد شدن
Sitting room	اتاق نشیمن
Welcome sb warmly	به گرمی استقبال کردن
What size do you wear?	چه شماره ای را می پوشید؟
Will you.....?	آیا می شود.....؟
Would you	آیا لطف می کنید.....؟
Who is it on the phone?	شما؟ (پشت خط تلفن)
What fun it was!	چقدر جالب بود!

Grade two at high school

Agree about/ on	موافق بودن در مورد / سر
Against the law	بر خلاف قانون
A short while	مدت زمان کوتاه
All of a sudden	ناگهان
A foot wide/ long	به عرض/ طول یک پا
According to	طبق
Bad luck	بد شانس
Cassette player	ضبط صوت
Comment on /about	نظر دادن درباره ی/ سر چیزی
Depend on	وابسته بودن
Different from	متفاوت بودن از
Disagree about/on	اختلاف داشتن سر چیزی/ درباره ی چیزی
Do right	درست کردن
Feel sorry for	احساس تاسف کردن برای
Find out	پی بردن / فهمیدن
For a while	برای مدتی
For the fun of it	بخاطر سرگرمی
For no good reason	بخاطر دلیل ناخوشایندی/نامعلومی
Get cold	سرما خوردن
Get out of sth	از چیزی رها/خلاص شدن
Get into trouble	به درد سر افتادن / به مشکل بر خوردن
Get mixed up	سر در گم شدن/ گیج شدن
Go hungry	گرسنه شدن
Go hic	به سسکه افتادن
Go on a picnic	به تفریح رفتن
Go on a trip	به سفر کوتاه رفتن
Go around	چرخیدن به دور
Give back	پس دادن
Have to	ناچار بودن
Hold one's breath	نفس خود را حبس کردن
How about this one? ؟	این یکی چطور است
How is everything with you?	کارو بارت چطوره؟
Keep on	ادامه دادن
Language lab	آزمایشگاه زبان
Light bulb	لامپ حبابی
Light up	روشن کردن/ روشن شدن
Look like	شبیه بودن
Make a mistake	اشتباه کردن
Merry –go –round	گردونه/ چرخ و فلک
Mixed up	قاطی/ سردرگم
Mind one's own business	تو لاک خود بودن
Most of the time	بیشتر مواقع
Paper bag	پاکت کاغذی

Pay attention	توجه داشتن
Put sth aside	کنار گذاشتن چیزی
Pick up	برداشتن
Run out of	تمام کردن/ تمام شدن
Run along	در امتداد حرکت کردن
Say goodbye	خداحافظی کردن
Small talk	گپ مختصر و دوستانه
Stay with	ماندن پیش/ نزد
Soft drink	نوشابه بدون الکل
Take sth apart	اجزای چیزی را از هم باز کردن/ جدا کردن
Take a breath	نفسی کشیدن
Take a photograph	عکسبرداری کردن/ عکس انداختن
Take place	اتفاقی افتادن/ در مکانی برگزار شدن
Transport system	سیستم حمل و نقل
Toy gun	تفنگ اسباب بازی
You're welcome.	خواهش می کنم
Walk around	در اطراف قدمی زدن
Would you mind.....?	آگه برات زحمتی نیست.....؟
Write about	درباره (موضوعی) نوشتن
Grade three at high school	
At the same time	هم زمان
At the end of	در انتها/ در پایان
At the front	در خط مقدم (جبهه ی جنگ)
After a while	برای لحظه ای
And so on	و غیره
As soon as	به محض اینکه
Be afraid of	ترسیدن از
Be careful about	مواظب بودن
Be interested in	علاقمند بودن به
Be ashamed of	خجالت کشیدن از/ شرمنده شدن از
Be on time	سر وقت حاضر شدن / بودن
By means of	با استفاده از/ به وسیله ی
Do best	نهایت سعی را انجام دادن
Do silly things	کارهای احمقانه انجام دادن/ خنگ بازی در آوردن
Driving test	آزمون راهنمایی و رانندگی
Far apart	دور از هم
First aid	کمک های اولیه
Get away from	دور کردن(کسی از چیزی) / دور شدن
Go straight on	مستقیم ادامه مسیر دادن
Hard working	سخت کوش
Hear about	درباره ی (چیزی) شنیدن
How do you do?	از آشنایی با شما خوشوقتم
Ice-hockey	هاکی روی یخ

Instead of	بجای، به عوض
In addition to	به انضمام
In other words	به عبارت دیگر
Insist on	اصرار ورزیدن برای/ بر سر
Keep accounts	حسابداری انجام دادن
Long ago	زمان دور
Look after	مواظبت کردن از (کسی، چیزی)
Make up	درست کردن، درست شدن
On holidays	روزهای تعطیل
On your left	سمت چپ تان
Over & over	به طور مکرر
Once a week / month	یکبار در هفته، یکبار در ماه
Responsible for	مسئول (چیزی) بودن
Play a part in	نقشی در (انجام کاری) داشتن
Pocket-sized	جیبی
Right- hand side	دست راست
Search for	تحقیق کردن برای
Similar to	شبيه به
Slow down	کند شدن
Sorry about	متأسف در مورد
Stick in one's mind	ملکه ی ذهن کسی شدن
Talk with/ to	صحبت کردن با
Turn up	بالا بردن صدا (رادیو، تلویزیون)
Take a test	امتحان دادن
Take part in	شرکت داشتن در
Take sb /sth away from	دور ساختن
Track & field	دو و میدانی
Twice a week/ month	دو بار در هفته، دو بار در ماه
Up & down	بالا و پایین
Wind power	نیروی باد
Worry about	نگران بودن درباره ی
What time is the film on?	چه ساعتی فیلم شروع میشود؟
Grade four at high school/ pre-university	
A large number of	شمار زیادی
As long as	مادامی که، تا زمانی که
As soon as possible	در اسرع وقت
As well	هم چنین
As well as	و، به انضمام
Be aware of	آگاه بودن از
Be concerned about	درباره ی (چیزی) نگران بودن
Be free of sth	مضون بودن از، در امان بودن از
Be made up of	متشکل شدن از چیزی
Be robbed of sth	از چیزی (حق کسی) دزدیدن

By oneself	به تنهای
Come in	متداول بودن
Concentrate on	متمرکز شدن بر
Do one's part	وظیفه ی خود / سهم خود را انجام دادن
Do research in sth	در کاری تحقیق کردن
Get tired	خسته شدن
Give a speech	سخنرانی کردن (استاد ، دانشجو ، محقق،)
In public	در جمع (افراد)
In front of	در روبروی ، در مقابل
Keep up with sth/sb	از عهده کاری بر آمدن، از کسی عقب نماندن
Make a decision	تصمیمی گرفتن
Make a difference	تمیز دادن ، تشخیص دادن
Make a speech	سخنرانی کردن
Make eye –contact	ارتباط چشمی ایجاد کردن
Make plans	برنامه چیدن
Pass on	انتقال دادن
Rely on	وابسته بودن
Run away	در رفتن ، فرار کردن
Stand away	دور ایستادن
So far	تا کنون
Take action	اقدام کردن
Take notes	نکته برداری کردن
Take sth seriously	کاری را جدی گرفتن
Tell a joke	لطیفه تعریف کردن
Whether or	خواه خواه/ یا ، چه چه
Weigh sth against sth	چیزی را با چیزی سنجیدن، سبک سنگین کردن



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