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Abstract

A cross-sectional empirical study was carried out among Saudi college students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to determine whether or not a learner's first language (L1) plays a prominent role in acquiring the English present perfect (EPP). This research also attempted to evaluate the effect of 'noticing' as a possible facilitator in the acquisition of this target feature. Thus, the study tried to answer two questions. The first was whether differences between L1 and the second language (L2) negatively influence the learners' acquisition of EPP. The second was to determine if 'noticing' L1 and L2 differences has a significant effect on promoting the EFL learners' (a) comprehension and production, or (b) comprehension rather than production of the EPP. It was hypothesised that L1 would have a negative influence on the L2 learners' acquisition of EPP, and that noticing the L1/L2 differences could be helpful in minimising this negative influence of L1. However, this possible effectiveness of noticing would not be sufficient per se. Therefore, it was also hypothesised that the students' production of EPP wouldn't reveal as much progress in acquiring it as their comprehension. Three tests (a pre-test, a post-test and a delayed post-test) were administered to 100 students, who were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to a contrastive treatment (CT) while the control group was not. Results showed that the hypotheses were confirmed.

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