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Title	An Investigation of Method Effects on the Learning and Use of Grammatical Knowledge : Focus on Form and Focus on Forms(全文の要約)
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Abstract

Part I: Theoretical Background

Historically, the grammar-translation method has been widely used to teach English in Japan. The main objective of English education was originally to obtain knowledge from other countries through English-language books. However, as the communicative approach emerged in the 1970s (Hymes, 1972; Halliday, 1975; Widdowson, 1978), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Japan began to shift toward communicative language teaching. Since that time, the grammar-translation method has coexisted in Japan's educational context with the gradually developing communicative approach. With greater concern given to communicative engagements and transactions, the concept of teaching grammar for communication has often been neglected in Japan, even after Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1991) stressed the importance of form-meaning-use mapping in grammar teaching. Furthermore, in 2013, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) introduced new guidelines to develop Japanese students' communicative ability in English as a tool for communication with other people in the world. Thus the goal of EFL education is not to accumulate knowledge regarding English, but rather to enable students to develop that tool.

Against this backdrop, one outstanding issue is the most effective method for

integrating both communication and grammar learning. One second language acquisition (SLA) method which highlights grammatical features through and after communication-oriented activities is called Focus-on-Form (FonF).

The mainstream of SLA methodology is grounded in Krashen's "Input Hypothesis" (1982), from which the idea of Focus-on-Meaning originated. This hypothesis states that learners acquire grammatical features when they receive a sufficient amount of comprehensible input that uses an $i + 1$ level structure. Long (1983), maintaining Krashen's theory, focuses on how input can be made comprehensible. In his "Interaction Hypothesis," Long argues that receiving interactively modified input is the most important mechanism for making language comprehensible because the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors stimulates language development. In this sense, modified feedback through interaction has significance in language development. Swain (1985) proposes the "Output Hypothesis," which stresses the importance of comprehensible output, insofar as output extends the linguistic boundary. She builds upon this hypothesis in later years to assert the notion of "collaborative dialogue" (2000), which refers to how second language (L2) learners co-construct linguistic knowledge while engaging in production tasks, drawing their attention to form and meaning. Lastly Schmidt (1990) states in his "Noticing

Hypothesis” that noticing is indispensable for input to become intake. That is, L2 learners cannot begin to acquire a linguistic feature until they notice and understand the feature contained in input.

Long (1991) proposes a language teaching methodology, FonF, stating:

[F]ocus-on-form... overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication (p. 46).

With regard to grammar teaching, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1991) propose the notion of three dimensions of grammar—form, meaning, and use—and stress the significance of combining all three dimensions when teaching and learning a new language. Furthermore, this notion contends that each dimension is involved in each interaction, and the interdependence among the three leads to language acquisition. This notion has imparted significant influence on the framework of grammar teaching and learning as a subarea of communicative language ability. Long’s instruction incorporating FonF integrates this three-dimensional grammar framework.

Ellis proposed a weak interface position (1993), where “explicit knowledge can convert directly into implicit knowledge” (p. 99) if the learner is ready to acquire the target feature. Later Ellis (2006) noted that “explicit knowledge of a grammatical

structure makes it more likely for learners to attend to the structure in the input and carry out the cognitive comparison between what they observe in the input and their own output” (p. 97).

To determine the effectiveness of a new type of grammar instruction, form-focused instruction (FFI) and of the more prevailing type of grammar instruction, formS-focused instruction (FFSI), Norris and Ortega (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of these two types of grammar instruction. This analysis did not yield conclusive evidence and suggested that FonF and focus on formS (FonFS) interventions result in equivalent, quantifiable effects. Since then, a number of studies have been conducted, mainly in North America, aiming to confirm which is more effective for language acquisition to take place. To date, research findings show a tendency that FFI is more effective than FFSI in English as a Second Language (ESL) environments.

However, in Japan, the quantity of research conducted on FFI is not very large, particularly in the context of secondary education. Notably, the results of only two FFI studies conducted in junior and senior high schools have been published. One study was conducted at a junior high school and the other at a senior high school, and both report only qualitative data based on FFI classes. Despite the effectiveness of FFI in the case of teaching English as a second language, FFI is not typically conducted in the EFL

environment of Japanese education. There are several reasons why second language acquisition has not been used as a teaching methodology despite the introduction of communicative teaching/learning in Japan's EFL classrooms at the secondary level. First, FFI in communicative situations requires teachers to use English in the classroom, but not many Japanese EFL teachers teach in English. Second, in many cases, communicative activities and tasks presume a certain level of language ability on the part of the learners as a prerequisite. Learners need to be comfortable in using English to communicate in English, but this is not always the case in Japan. Third, the large number of students in English classes results in organizational difficulties when communicative language activities and tasks are implemented. Fourth, teachers are requested to observe a set curriculum and teaching method established by the school for which they work. All students at any given school are expected to progress at the same rate, regardless of the class or teacher to which they are assigned. Therefore, a new teaching method is hard to use unless every teacher agrees to adopt the new method. Fifth, many schools prioritize preparing for senior high school or university entrance examinations. Therefore, the FonF approach has not been adopted in Japan's junior or senior high schools. In light of this, the current study investigates the effects of two teaching approaches on the learning and use of grammatical knowledge for

communication-based learning.

Part II: Experiments

At present, in light of the limited amount of research on secondary school learners with consistency in its qualitative and quantitative data, there is a need for studies verifying the effect of FFI on secondary school learners in Japan.

The current study investigates the effects of FFI and FFSI on the learning of two grammatical features by 10th grade students in a Japanese senior high school. The study investigates (1) which approach (FonF, FonFS, or grammar translation) is most effective in promoting the acquisition of the grammatical features, (2) what factors contribute to the acquisition of the grammatical features, and (3) which has greater sustainability after a period of six weeks, FFI or FFSI. To assess the effects, three sets of production and grammar questions were used as pre-, immediate post-, and delayed post-tests.

Specifically, the target grammatical features are the subjective relative pronoun in Study 1 and past perfect tense in Study 2. It is said that those grammatical items are very difficult for Japanese EFL learners to acquire. First, the Japanese language has no equivalent for either. The Japanese language does not use post-qualifiers, and Japanese

does not distinguish between what is represented in English as the past and past perfect tenses. Secondly, the relative pronoun and the past perfect tense are generally categorized as linguistically “complex” rules. Some question thus remains among practitioners whether rules should be explicitly taught, or taught implicitly through meaning-based contexts.

To investigate the acquisition of the two grammatical items mentioned, a pretest was administered to measure learners’ initial knowledge of the target features. One week after the pretest, treatment was administered. Soon after the treatment, an immediate post-test was administered to assess the immediate effects of the target instruction, followed by a questionnaire and an interview for qualitative data. Lastly, a delayed post-test was administered to verify the short-term and long-term effects of FonF and FonFS. For total statistical verification of FonF and FonFS via repeated measures, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and multiple comparisons were also used to search among the three tests for different effects as time passes.

To measure the participants’ development in the knowledge and use of the grammatical features, two types of written tests were administered: production tests and receptive grammar tests. The production tests require participants to verify their productive ability by describing five different pictures using the target grammatical

items. The grammar tests require them to verify their reactive ability by recognizing how to use the correct target feature in each context. The validity and reliability of these tests (the pretests, immediate post-tests, and delayed post-tests) are significant specifically regarding consistency in the degree of difficulty. While all of the questions used in the three tests are different, the linguistic level is equivalent, because before implementation of these tests, students in a higher grade who had already studied these patterns in a previous year were given those test items to verify equivalency in the degree of difficulty of the questions. Afterward, two experts discussed and adjusted the degree of difficulty. Some of the grammar tests were excluded to eliminate ceiling effects.

Concerning the treatment of FonF and FonFS, specifically, FonF treatment, which requires a great deal of input, needs communicative elements in accordance with real-life topics. Topics that are unfamiliar or uninteresting to learners do not raise their level of interest sufficiently for them to participate in the negotiation of meaning voluntarily. Topics are therefore chosen with care in order to increase the degree of participant interest and therefore participant involvement, in the tasks.

As Study 1 was conducted as a pilot survey, the number of the participants was small for the FonF group ($n = 13$), the FonFS group ($n = 12$), and the control group ($n =$

13). Study 2 was carried out as the main survey, and thus the number of participants was larger for the FonF group (n = 69), the FonFS group (n = 66), and the control group (n = 23). In both studies, students were assigned to the FonF group, which used a problem-solving activity in a communicative context, the FonFS group, which received an explicit explanation of grammatical features, or the control group, which was taught using the grammar-translation method. These groups were essentially equivalent in level according to the results of CASEC testing.

During the experiment, the pretest resulted in similar outcomes for both the FonF and FonFS groups. The immediate post-test indicated a fairly considerable development of grammar in the FonFS group and an equal development of production in the FonF group. The delayed post-test indicated different evidence about these two groups. Specifically, the uptake of grammar was more successful and sustained in the FonF group. Study 1 and Study 2 yield almost equivalent results. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrates a clear distinction between the FonF and the FonFS groups in the test scores for each test. The result indicates FonF had a greater effect on the uptake of form by the learners. The p-values of the FonF group's production and grammar tests are both less than 0.05 ($p < .05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups. Though the FonF and FonFS group

were not statistically different at the initial stage or immediately after the treatment, a significant difference appears in the production delayed post-tests. That is, the FonFS group did not show long-lasting development after the treatment, whereas the FonF group developed stably and sustainably, as reflected in production tests. Therefore, regarding grammar acquisition, FFI was more effective over the long term. FFSI positively impacts short-term memory. This current research indicates that FFI results in marked sustainability of form, which leads to a productive effect.

Part III: Discussion and Conclusions

As a secondary effect, FFI also has an advantage in that students are more likely to be conscious of and learn vocabulary, because vocabulary is essential when attending to meaning. Therefore, participants are encouraged to access vocabulary in a communicative context. Another effect demonstrates that learner-initiated FonF encourages learners to directly fill the grammatical gaps between interlanguage and the native speakers' language. Still another effect is that FFI promotes the process of learning L2 in context. It can be said that the possibility of acquiring L2 through a natural process is strong because learners are naturally exposed to many linguistic resources while communicating with interlocutors. Consequently, this research indicates

that FFI in a communicative context (Task-Based Language Teaching, etc.) promotes the learning of target forms, in this case, the subjective relative pronoun and the past perfect tense. The findings should be further discussed in the context of EFL at the secondary level in Japan.

This study concludes that FFI has the potential to be of great value when implemented in Japan's EFL environment. As EFL teachers and learners typically depend on the grammar-translation method, naturally enough, EFL learners receive only limited English input. Now that nurturing international human resources is a significant socio-economic issue, developing an effective method to promote English learners' competence is also valuable from an educational standpoint. English teachers should try to implement an effective approach, that is, FFI, in accordance with their individual circumstances. Communicative teaching/learning can be compatible with grammar teaching/learning through the use of FonF. Effects on the learning and the use of grammatical knowledge are highlighted by FonF. This study supports the theoretical claim that grammatical knowledge plays an important role in reinforcing messages with accuracy.

Despite the numerous problems that may be found in individual classrooms, this type of instruction can be expected to motivate learners in a positive way and yield

positive effects. Under Japan's present curriculum, most English learners receive only a limited number of hours of instruction each week. So it is critical for there to be a strong possibility of integrating FonF and FonFS, which can be introduced at least partially into the curriculum.

Furthermore, the development of learners' English skills leads to visible progress and encourages them to study harder toward their goals. English teachers in Japan's secondary schools should consider a new approach combining communicative orientation and recognition of form.