

## **EFFECTS OF PLANNED FOCUS ON FORM ON GRAMMAR LEARNING**

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## **EFFECTS OF PLANNED FOCUS ON FORM ON GRAMMAR LEARNING IN A2 STUDENTS FROM A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

### **ABSTRACT**

EFL students tend to have problems with accuracy. It is mainly observed when they have to produce a text or maintain a dialogue. Swam, and Ellis agreed that it occurs due to a breaking between meaning and form. Therefore, this research intends to determine if a Planned focus on form Instruction (PFoF), which mixes form and meaning generates an effect of A2 learners from a Public University in Ecuador. Hence, a pre-test and post-test were applied to 31 students, who learned grammatical structures by using PFoF. The results indicate that PFoF produces a positive effect on grammar knowledge and English skills.

Keywords: PFoF, grammar knowledge, A2 EFL learners.

### **INTRODUCCIÓN**

Being involved in teaching practice in EFL context has allowed teachers to observe the difficultness that students have at the moment to produce communication using English. It seems that they can understand the grammatical rules; however, at the time of applying it in a conversation or a piece of writing, students present lack of accuracy.

Regarding grammar teaching, Krashen (1982) stated that learners have to acquire an L2 following a naturalistic way; on the other hand, Swan (2008) and Basoz (2014) maintained the significance of learning grammar, mainly for its incidence in accuracy, which is required for university students.

Considering those positions, Long (1997) and Ellis (2002) presented Focus on Form (FoF) Instruction, which joins the best characteristic of the opposite positions. FoF intends to raise student attention to the grammatical structures, while they are immersed in communication throughout reading, listening, and speaking.

FoF is divided into planned focus on form and incidental focus on form. The former refers to the previous selection of the grammatical aspects to be learned by students; while the latter makes students learned a variety of grammatical topics as they arise during the lesson (Ellis, 2002; Nourdad & Aghayi, 2014).

Due to the A2 level of the learners (Common European Framework), the researchers applied a planned focus on form instruction (PFoF). Therefore, the research questions are:

What is the effect of PFoF instruction in the grammar knowledge of A2 students?

Is there a significant difference between learners` knowledge of grammar after intervention?

Does PFoF affect any other learners` skill related to language learning?

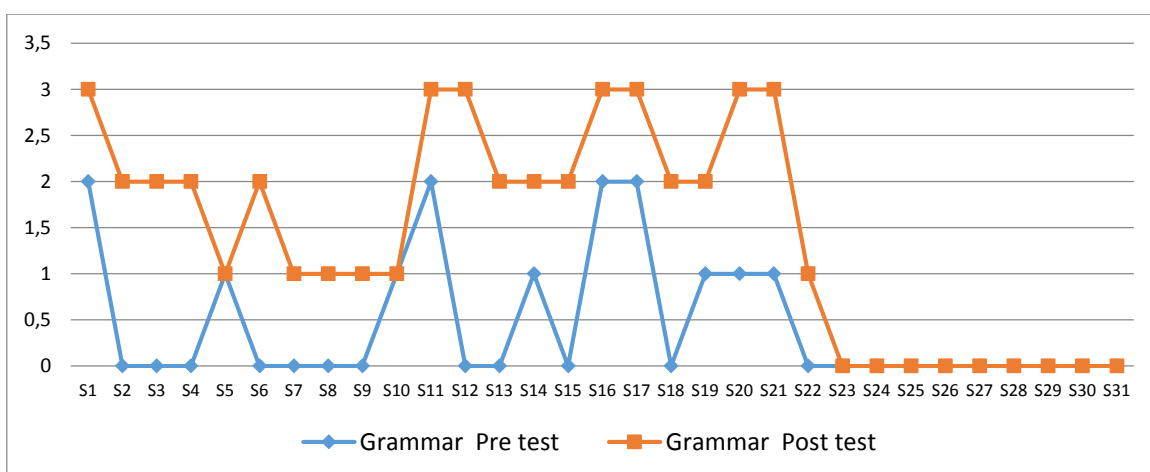
## METHOD

This research responds to an experimental action research design (Creswell, 2015). It included 31 students, who study in a public university in Ecuador and they belong to middle and low middle socio-economic status. Also, it used a pre test and post test. These tests were the KET test from Cambridge, and two versions of them were applied, the version one was the pre-test and version 2 the post-test. The intervention was done during 5 weeks, and a total of 8 sessions, where students learned six main topics for an A2 level (North, Ortega & Sheehan, 2010). The results of pre-test and post-test were compared with T test from SPSS statistical program.

## RESULTS

The effect of PToF instruction in grammar knowledge was analyzed using the writing section of KET exam. It was evaluated using a rubric developed by Fry, E., Kress, J., and Fountoukidis, D. (2000). The results indicate that the knowledge of grammar and its application in writing production increased 31%, which indicate that the PToF has a significant impact in grammar knowledge and application (appendix 1).

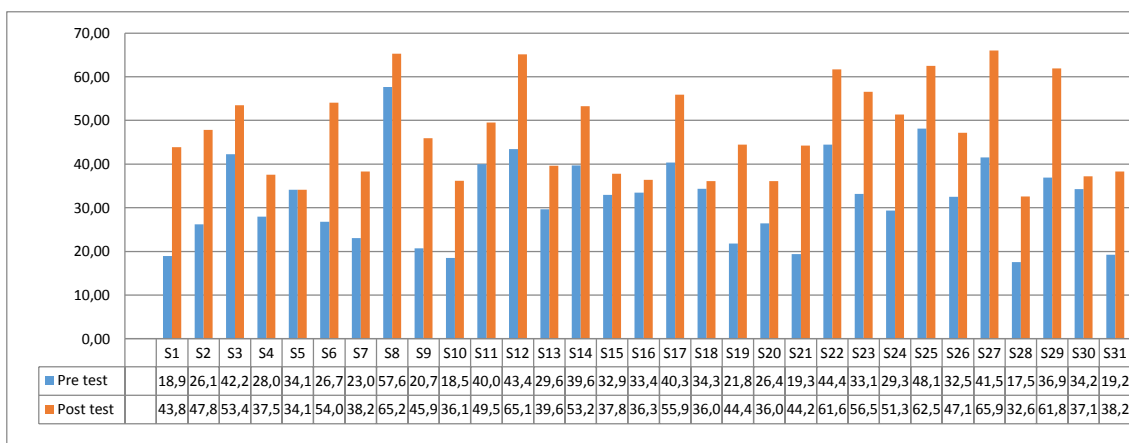
Figure 01. Key English Test results: grammatical component of writing section



Source: Student's answers to KET exam

The effects of PToF on the learners' skill, the results demonstrated that the mean of results increased 68%. Moreover, the improvement in the general results of KET exams is significant (appendix 02).

Figure 02. Key English Test results: pre test and post test



Source: Student’s answers to KET exam

Regarding the effects on the learners` skills, the results shows that PToF produce positive and significant effect in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Table 01. T student test applied to means of the component in pre and post KET test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-.82387	1.86221	.33446	-1.50694	-.14081	2.463	.020	
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	7.08871	6.89551	1.23847	-9.61800	4.55941	5.724	.000	
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	1.22581	2.36234	.42429	-2.09232	-.35929	2.889	.007	
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	6.22581	5.61373	1.00826	-8.28494	4.16667	6.175	.000	

Source: Student’s answers to KET exam

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of this research demonstrated that PToF generates positive influence in learning of grammar in A2 levels. These results are in relation with Nourdad and Aghayi, (2014) found about the positive effects of FoF in learning passive voice. Also, it has been demonstrated that PToF affects positively English skills such as reading, listening, speaking and writing. These results are in relation to Rahimpour, Salimi, and Farrokhi (2012) findings, where they demonstrated that students who received PToF obtained better results in accuracy in oral narrative tasks.

We consider that the significant effect that PToF possesses over grammar and English skills is produced because this kind of methodology uses a variety of techniques and resource (Farrokhi & Talabari, 2011), which integrates the ability of learners to increase their grammar awareness while they are immersed in communicative activities.

### **CONCLUSION**

We strongly believe that similar research should be done with students from different universities to determine in a wide range the effects of PToF on their knowledge of grammar. Moreover, since this methodology seems to have positive effect on A2 levels, it could be a great advantage in EFL area to research about its effect on higher levels of English knowledge.

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APPENDIX 01

Grammatical components in writing section in pre and post KET tests

	PRE TEST: WRITING SECTION						POST TEST: WRITING SECTION					
	ORGANIZAT ION	STRUCTU RE	VOCABUL ARY	GRAMM AR	SPELLI NG	TOT AL	ORGANIZAT ION	STRUCTU RE	VOCABUL ARY	GRAMM AR	SPELLI NG	TOT AL
S1	2	2	2	2	2	10	3	3	3	3	3	15
S2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	3	11
S3	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	3	11
S4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	2	3	12
S5	1	1	2	1	2	7	2	2	2	1	3	10
S6	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	2	3	13
S7	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
S8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
S9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
S1 0	1	1	1	1	2	6	1	1	1	1	1	5
S1 1	2	2	1	2	2	9	4	4	3	3	4	18
S1 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	3	2	12





S2													
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2													
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2													
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2													
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2													
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2													
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S3													
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S3													
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Each aspect is scored with 5 marks.

Mean of grammatical component of writing section of pre test and post test

	Pre test	Post test
Mean	0.45	1.45

T student test of grammatical component of writing section  
of pre test and post test

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Paired Sample 1 Pretest	.4516	31	.72290	.12984
Posttest	1.4516	31	1.15004	.20655

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Paired Sample 1 Pretest & Posttest	31	.629	.000

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Paired Sample 1 Pretest - Posttest	-1.00000	.89443	.16064	-1.32808	-.67192	-6.225	30	.000

Appendix 02

Pre test and post test results of KET English test

	Pre test					Post test				
	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	TOTAL	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	TOTAL
S1	7.73	1.25	5	5	18.98	8.64	6.25	8	21	43.89
S2	8.18	0	6	12	26.18	9.09	13.75	6	19	47.84
S3	7.73	12.5	8	14	42.23	7.73	18.75	8	19	53.48
S4	5.00	0	6	17	28.00	9.54	0	8	20	37.54
S5	5.91	1.25	6	21	34.16	5.91	1.25	3	24	34.16
S6	9.54	1.25	5	11	26.79	11.82	16.25	6	20	54.07
S7	6.82	1.25	7	8	23.07	7.27	0	7	24	38.27
S8	10.91	13.75	10	23	57.66	9.54	23.75	10	22	65.29
S9	7.73	0	8	5	20.73	8.18	13.75	5	19	45.93
S10	7.27	1.25	5	5	18.52	10.91	1.25	5	19	36.16
S11	7.27	8.75	6	18	40.02	10.00	12.5	6	21	49.50
S12	10.45	10	4	19	43.45	10.91	21.25	10	23	65.16
S13	8.64	0	4	17	29.64	8.64	0	8	23	39.64
S14	8.18	7.5	7	17	39.68	7.73	17.5	8	20	53.23
S15	7.73	1.25	6	18	32.98	6.82	0	6	25	37.82
S16	5.45	0	5	23	33.45	6.36	0	8	22	36.36

S1	7	8.64	8.75	2	21	40.39	10.91	15	9	21	55.91
S1	8	4.09	6.25	8	16	34.34	9.09	0	6	21	36.09
S1	9	6.82	0	6	9	21.82	7.73	8.75	9	19	44.48
S2	0	5.45	0	6	15	26.45	6.82	6.25	4	19	36.07
S2	1	6.36	0	3	10	19.36	7.73	17.5	5	14	44.23
S2	2	10.45	10	11	13	44.45	8.18	22.5	11	20	61.68
S2	3	5.91	1.25	5	21	33.16	9.54	15	8	24	56.54
S2	4	9.09	1.25	6	13	29.34	9.09	16.25	8	18	51.34
S2	5	10.91	11.25	7	19	48.16	10.00	22.5	7	23	62.50
S2	6	7.27	1.25	6	18	32.52	8.18	15	8	16	47.18
S2	7	9.54	0	9	23	41.54	7.73	21.25	14	23	65.98
S2	8	4.55	0	6	7	17.55	6.36	1.25	6	19	32.61
S2	9	10.91	10	9	7	36.91	8.64	21.25	9	23	61.89
S3	0	7.27	0	7	20	34.27	8.18	0	9	20	37.18
S3	1	7	0	5	7	19	7.27	0	7	24	38.27

T student test applied to KET results in pre test and post test

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Paired Sample 1 Pretest	32.0645	31	9.88243	1.77494
Posttest	47.3548	31	10.57213	1.89881

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Paired Sample 1 & Posttest	31	.698	.000

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Paired Sample 1 Pretest - Posttest	-15.29032	7.97577	1.43249	-18.21586	-12.36479	-10.674	30	.000

