Effects of Combining Isolated and Integrated Form-focused Instruction on Developing Students’ Productive Skills

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Meaning-based Instruction

- Advocated due to the failure of intensive grammar to improve language proficiency
- Primarily focuses on content
- Students are provided ample amount of input for comprehension and acquisition purposes
Form-focused Instruction

- Focuses on teaching grammar/language
- Long (1991) proposed *focus-on-form* (i.e., incidental teaching of linguistic forms) and *focus-on-forms* (i.e., explicit teaching of linguistic forms via isolated and intensive treatment)
- Spada and Lightbown (2008) proposed *isolated FFI* and *integrated FFI*. 
Integrated FFI

- Attention to form is embedded within a communicative practice
- Linguistic items may have been anticipated, have been planned for, or have occurred incidentally during actual communication
- Meaning is still the primary concern of integrated FFI
- Allows learners to fully integrate language form to communicative interactions and allows learners to spontaneously attend to language form contextually
Isolated FFI

• Attention to form is separated from meaning-based portions of the lesson
• Does not refer to meaningless drills, presentation and practice of discrete point grammar rules, and mechanical repetition
• Supported by skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 1998) which states that there is a need to explicitly teach grammar to achieve a maximum of understanding
Related Studies

- Some studies focused on learner preferences (e.g., Ansarin, Abad, & Khojasteh, 2014)
- Others focused on determining the effects of each of these two forms of instruction on language development (e.g., Elgün-Gündüz, Akcan, & Bayyurt, 2012; File & Adams, 2010; Spada, Jessop, Tomita, Suzuki, & Valeo, 2014).
Theoretical Support of the Distinction

- Anchored on transfer appropriate process (TAP) which claims that learners access knowledge best in a condition similar to how they were inputted or learned (Franks, Bilbrey, Lien, & McNamara, 2000; Segalowitz & Gatbonton, 1995)
- TAP takes its roots from information processing theory (VanPatten, 1996; 2007) which states that human mind has limited attentional capacity
Context and Participants

- 41 ESL learners
- 11 were assigned to the control and the other 30 to the treatment group
- Enrolled in an English Communication Arts
Instruments

- Israeli National Oral Proficiency Test
- Pretest and posttest in writing
Israeli National Oral Proficiency Test

- a multi-format oral proficiency testing model which covers oral interview, group discussion, reporting task, and role-play
- analytic marking scheme rating scale was used to determine the level of students’ oral performance during the pretest and posttest (Weir, 1993)
- Carroll’s 9-band interview assessment scale was adopted to determine the specific band level and description of the students’ performance (Weir, 1993, p. 44)
Pretest and Posttest in Writing

- Writing performance was measured through essay writing
- Participants were given one and a half hours to write a 200-word essay
- Mark Scheme 2: TEEP Attribute Writing Scale was used (Weir, 1993) to determine the level of students’ writing performance during the pretest and posttest
- Carroll’s global impression band scale was adopted to determine the specific band level and description of the students’ performance (Weir, 1993, p. 44)
# Results

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of pretest-posttest in speaking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Gain</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (n = 30)</td>
<td>5.922</td>
<td>6.576</td>
<td>+5.689</td>
<td>1.597</td>
<td>2.354</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group (n = 11)</td>
<td>6.576</td>
<td>9.757</td>
<td>+3.181</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>1.999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of pretest-posttest in writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Writing Performance</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (n = 30)</td>
<td>Mean (n = 11)</td>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Control Group (n = 11)</td>
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</table>
## Results

Table 6. Participants’ overall gains by paired t-test.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>58</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
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<td>-14.0836</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-2.7388</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

Table 7. Difference between the posttest performance of treatment group and control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3.9183</td>
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<td>0.0065</td>
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Discussion

- The findings suggest that combining isolated and integrated FFI can significantly improve the speaking and writing performances of students.
Reasons for the Improvement

- Amount and type of input students are exposed to
- Use of parallel syllabus that promoted noticing and form-meaning connection
- Additive effects of combining isolated and integrated FFI
Pedagogical Implications

- Two separate courses (i.e. isolated FFI and integrated FFI) be offered as basic English course for college students.
- This type of integration would address the individual differences of students through its differentiation techniques such as mixed-level grouping, diagnostic task, and self-assessment.
- This study provides support for striking a balance in exposing students to productive, receptive, and linguistic tasks if the aim is to develop the macro skills of students.
Conclusion

• The present study revealed the complementarity of isolated and integrated FFI in developing the productive skills of students especially when these two types of FFI are combined.

• The significant improvement in students’ writing and speaking performance can be attributed to noticing, form-meaning connection, exposure to various forms of input, and additive effects of simultaneously implementing isolated and integrated FFI.
Recommendations

- Experimental design with three different groups being compared (i.e., isolated FFI only, integrated FFI only, and combined isolated and integrated FFI)
- More wide-ranging experiment that uses a larger number of samples in multiple instructional and proficiency levels be conducted
THANKYOU!