TYPES OF FORMS ESL STUDENTS FOCUS ON IN CLASSROOM GROUP INTERACTION: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

By

ALEXANDER B. POOLE

Bachelor of Arts
Augsburg College
Minneapolis, Minnesota
1998

Master of Arts
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa
2000

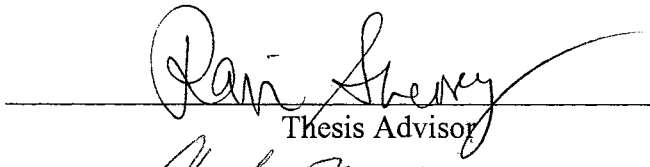
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
May, 2003

TYPES OF FORMS ESL STUDENTS FOCUS ON IN

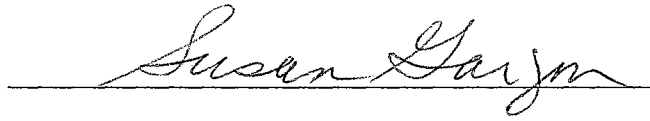
CLASSROOM GROUP INTERACTION:

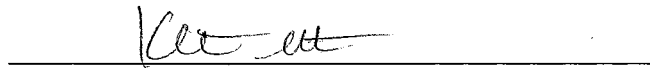
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Advisor





Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

Writing a dissertation has been something that has occupied my thoughts for a number of years. Most of the time, I wondered if I was capable of engaging in such a monumental task; I found out that I was. Although it took an incredible amount of intellectual effort and emotional stamina, I have arrived, happily.

This study could not have occurred without the help of the students who graciously volunteered to participate in the study. Without them, none of this would have happened. However, this dissertation is a tribute not only to ESL learners, but to all who embark on learning a second language. By doing this research, I hope to make learning easier for learners and teaching easier for teachers. I also hope to add a little insight into the phenomena of language learning which is, in and of itself, interesting and significant to the study of human language and psychology.

My interest in second language learning stems from the rich linguistic repertoire of members of my own family, many of whom were conversant in half a dozen languages. The subject always fascinated me and continues to do so. I imagine that it won't ever stop.

Many people have also helped me cultivate my interest in language, and I would like to thank all of them. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Carol Moder, Dr. Susan Garzon, and Dr. Kouider Mokhtari for their commitment to my academic and intellectual well being and success. All have helped me become not only a better researcher, but also a much better thinker. Special thanks go out

to my advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Ravi Sheorey, for his constant availability, energy, and mentoring. Without exaggeration, he was available all the time; no day or hour was too busy that he couldn't spend any time working with me. Words cannot express my gratitude.

I would also like to thank my mother and father, Richard and Marcia Poole, and my brother, Gerald Poole, for their unending encouragement, in spite of everything. Thanks for putting up with my kvetching. Special thanks go out to my loving wife, Doris, for her incredible support and words of wisdom during all of my academic challenges; as someone who knows the difficulties of both learning a second language and going through graduate school, her support carries extra meaning for me. I also want to thank my good friends, Luti, Quadis and Company, and Sammy J. for being the friends that Aristotle talked about. You guys challenged me and were there for me. What else is friendship about?

A.B.P
Spring 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The history of second/foreign language teaching goes back thousands of years. According to Kelly (1969), ancient philosophers and theologians expounded various teaching methods and theories. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine, for example, asserted that learning second languages was a matter of learning the signs and symbols of words. Up until the latter half of the 20th century, at least in the West, Kelly showed that the learning of second/foreign languages was concerned with reading and writing skills. Most foreign language instruction was aimed at the memorization of Latin and Greek grammar and vocabulary in order to read liturgical works and Classics. Virtually no energy was devoted towards oral skills. With few exceptions, this type of teaching continued until the middle of the 20th century (the Direct Method being one exception). However, after World War II, the need for developing oral skills was recognized by scholars and political leaders in Europe. One of the major results of this realization was the development of the Audiolingual Method (Richards & Rogers, 2001). In large part, this method emphasizes the gradual learning of grammatical structures, the memorization of vocabulary, and an almost singular fixation on comprehension and speaking (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

By the 1970s, the Audiolingual Method had fallen out of favor. Chomskyan linguistics had stripped the Audiolingual Method of its theoretical underpinnings. In addition, traditional methods, although still frequently employed, lost theoretical support, while the newly emerging Communicative approach emphasized the use of language, rather than its discrete parts (Brown, 1994; Littlewood, 1981). In the spirit of this new approach, other teaching methods without any form of traditional grammar instruction also appeared. One such approach was the Natural Approach (Terrel & Krashen, 1977), which shuns direct instruction in favor of implicit grammar acquisition via comprehension. Based on Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, the Natural Approach employs no grammatical terminology or rote grammatical exercises, and little, if any, memorization. Instead, instructors are to make exercises and activities which students will understand and, through understanding, automatically acquire the necessary grammar. By "acquire," Krashen means that grammar will be incorporated subconsciously into a long-term L2 system; traditional grammar exercises employing memorization, repetition, and rote exercises will only lead to learning. Learning, according to Krashen (1983), is a process in which parts of the L2 are incorporated into short-term memory and are not available for retrieval without great effort. In short, learned language lacks the automaticity of acquired language.

While Krashen (1981) and Terrell and Krashen (1983) received great attention and acclaim, at least in the academic world, they were never without critics. While few argued with the necessity for emphasizing the communicative nature of language, many soon recognized that learning grammar implicitly, as children do, was not as simple as claimed to be. Swain (1985), for example, conducted a long-term study of native-

speaking adolescents in French immersion programs. Most notable among her findings was that the lack of form-based instruction produced non-target like grammars, even after years of immersion. Even though learners' receptive skills were quite developed, their control of French grammar was, in general, quite limited.

Others also found that more than comprehension was needed in order to learn L2 grammar. Schmidt and Frota (1986), for instance, found that the former's ability to produce L2 grammatical forms was not only directly related to the grammar that he had received as input, but also that he had noticed. By "noticing," Schmidt and Frota mean that the former had consciously registered the appearance of forms that later appeared as output in his interlanguage. Schmidt (1990) later refined his claims into what is now known as the *noticing hypothesis.* In it, he claimed that noticing is the obligatory and causal prerequisite for L2 acquisition, not only regarding morphosyntax, but also for vocabulary and pragmatics. In order to notice, learners must attend to the specific areas of the L2. With regards to morphosyntax, learners must attend to such areas in addition to the overall meaning of a message. Learners may attend to such forms via an intentional will to do so, or their attention may be drawn to such forms in the process of completing a task or understanding a message. Yet, learners must not only attend to such forms, but they must be aware of them and note their uses and the contexts in which they appear. When these two components are present, learners will integrate the new L2 forms into their existing system and will then be able to produce them. However, some forms may not appear as output for quite some time due to their complexity. In addition, Schmidt claimed that some forms may not be noticed until learners are developmentally ready to

do so, thus eliminating the possibility that noticing can bypass natural acquisition sequences.

In terms of the classroom, Schmidt (1995) is still a supporter of communicatively-centered approaches instead of direct instruction, which is not of much use. He claimed that students should be encouraged to notice L2 forms while engaged in meaningful, communicatively-driven activities and assignments. In addition, learners should approach input situations with the intention not only to comprehend L2 messages, but also to note how grammar is used within them (see Poole & Sheorey, 2002 for a critque).

While the noticing hypothesis has been looked upon skeptically by some (see Krashen, 1994, 1999; Truscott, 1998), others have incorporated Schmidt's (1990) claims into wider teaching agendas. One such person is Long (1991), who represents a middle position between direct grammar instruction and more Krashinist (1981) positions. While intensely committed to the centrality of language as communication, he asserts that occasionally, explicit focus on discrete elements of language is necessary for learners to build L2 competence. This position is contained in an instructional approach known as *focus on form instruction.* Focus on form instruction involves a communicative classroom in which form (grammar/vocabulary) is directed to when the need come about. The need to focus on L2 forms is subjectively determined by teachers and other students when they perceive that a particular form is troubling or will trouble individual learners or large groups. Teachers and learners may then take time out from the communicative event in order to address the form. An example of this could include a learner committing an error with the simple present. In this case, the teacher may directly correct the student and explicitly discuss why the student's utterance is an error. For instance, many students,

even advanced ones, use erroneously third person singular forms: "My brother eat a lot of ice cream." In this case, the teacher could directly correct the learner and model the form's correct use.

According to Long (1991), the main benefit of such an instructional optios is that it still maintains communication as the focal point of the class; however, it addresses grammar, but on a need-to-know basis. In other words, if the situation calls for it, teach grammar; if it doesn't, leave it alone. Therefore, students do not receive grammar in pre-determined teaching sequences, nor are they forced to learn L2 forms in the isolated environments typically seen in textbooks. Instead, learners' needs are immediately addressed in the class. According to Long, issues arising during communication have a real-life need not generally accounted for in pre-packaged teaching materials. In addition, the local nature of addressing L2 forms enables learners to negotiate with teachers and other learners until they understand. Such negotiation is almost never allotted for in pre-packaged teaching schemas.

Long (1991) would soon come to compare focus on form instruction from two other options for instruction: traditional grammar instruction and *focus on forms* instruction. As mentioned above, traditional grammar instruction involves rote exercises, memorization, and the isolated focus on grammar. Focus on forms instruction, on the other hand, emphasizes the interactive component of second language learning, thus showing a great deal of commonality with focus on form instruction; however, unlike focus on form instruction, focus on forms instruction is not spontaneous instruction and specific forms are emphasized within activities and texts.

Few have examined Long's (1991) claims (classes should be communicative, grammar lessons should not be planned, errors and perceived problems should be addressed on a need-to-know basis). To the best of my knowledge, Long himself has never conducted a study dealing with his claims. Most studies have been, in fact, concerned with focus on forms instruction. Leow (1998), for example, examined how different amounts of exposure to the Spanish third-person singular morpheme and plural preterit of stem changing – ir verbs affected retention of such forms. Using four groups, two were exposed to the forms though direct instruction, while the other two received instruction via tasks. Leow found that learners who received multiple exposures performed better than those with fewer exposures. However, those who were exposed to the forms during tasks performed the best, leading Leow to conclude that teachers should select texts and activities that encourage student noticing in the sense that Schmidt (1990) defined noticing.

Yet, the most problematic issue about focus on form research is that most studies have not even described the forms that learners and teachers focus on spontaneously and on a need-to-know-basis, as Long (1991) stipulates, nor have they described how learners and teachers focus on form spontaneously and on a need-to-know-basis. Williams (1999) carried out one of the only studies that attempted to describe spontaneous focus on form. Her purpose was not to determine if focus on form instruction fostered second language acquisition; rather, her purpose was to describe classroom-based spontaneous focus on form, the rationale being that one can neither advocate, nor oppose focus on form instruction until more is known about what happens when form is focused on. More specifically, she wanted to describe the frequency with which learners (not teachers)

attended to form, the types of forms they attended to, the ways in which they attended to forms, and the content of the forms learners attended to. In addition, she wanted to see if task type and proficiency level affected the number of forms learners attended to.

In order to carry out the study, Williams tape recorded the group work interactions of eight learners at a variety of proficiency levels studying at an intensive English program in the United States. While Williams tape recorded them, the learners were engaged in a variety of activities. The results of her study revealed that learners did not frequently attend to form, but that this differed according to proficiency level and task. Advanced learners focused on form more than did beginning learners, and all learners focused on form more during structured rather than communicative activities. Finally, the content of the forms learners focused on were frequently focused on word meaning and usage, rather than the form a grammatical item.

In addition to being one of the first major studies to describe spontaneous focus on form, Williams' (1999) study was valuable for three reasons: (1) It provided some idea of the types and content of L2 forms that learners can focus on. Such information is important because it can help instructors and curriculum designers determine whether or not focus on form instruction is something that could help their students to address the L2 forms they (the former) consider to be important. If, for example, an individual instructor or program were searching for a teaching schema that would provide students with large amounts of explicit grammar, then focus on form instruction may not be the best option, based on the results of Williams' study. (2) It provided some idea of how L2 learners focus on form. While this in and of itself is interesting, such knowledge is also useful because it is a first step towards eventually discovering the role that factors such as

proficiency level, personality, and L1 culture play in how learners focus on form. Such insight could help instructors determine if focus on form instruction is appropriate for their students. If, for example, an instructor has a particularly shy class or is in a context in which teacher guidance is expected, then focus on form instruction that lends itself to student initiative and autonomy may not be the best option. (3) It showed that task type could be something that affects the types of forms focused on by learners. Again, this factor could be very significant to instructors and curriculum designers in determining if and when focus on form instruction is appropriate. For instance; if an instructor wanted students to focus on grammatical forms, then, as seen in Williams' study, purely communicative activities—which Long (1991) claims are integral to focus on form instruction--may not achieve this goal.

Although Williams' (1999) study has been one of the few attempts to look at how learners focus on form instruction in the classroom, its scope is limited. First of all, Williams' choice of setting makes it difficult to give a thorough description of spontaneous focus on form. Intensive English institutes and programs are language-centered, address a multiplicity of second language skills, and generally contain at least some degree of explicit grammar-centered instruction. Williams even reported that structured grammar activities were part of the classes she recorded. Such activities are oftentimes designed to have learners focus on specific forms, thus making it questionable that certain forms were even spontaneously attended to. In addition, if focus on form instruction is ever to be evaluated, one must describe spontaneous focus on form in communicative tasks, since Long (1991) is opposed to highly structured grammatical

activities. Focusing on communicative tasks may provide more knowledge about the phenomenon that occurs under Long's schema.

Moreover, the choice of participants presents some difficulties. First of all, Williams (1999) stated that these participants were found in an intensive program that promotes autonomy and group participation. Such a selection of participants does not represent a wide range of ESL/EFL learners, many of whom have neither experience with group work, nor do they come from cultures where group work and student input are valued or even acceptable. Moreover, although researchers are limited by the composition of intact classes, the small number of participants in the study limits the amount of data that can be generated. Finally, the participants came from a variety of proficiency levels. This is problematic because it prohibits researchers from seeing if focus on form varies even within learners from a similar proficiency level. It is also problematic because it may prohibit researchers from identifying non-linguistic factors which influences students' decisions concerning the forms they focus on. Williams acknowledges these criticisms, yet claims that the study was not meant to generalize.

Broadly speaking, the purpose of the study reported here was to expand on Williams' (1999) original study, yet in a more specific context and with a greater number of learners. More specifically, the aims of this study were to see whether or not variation in the frequency of forms attended to existed among groups of a similar proficiency level; to describe the kinds of forms learners of a similar proficiency level attended to; to describe how learners of a similar proficiency level attended to form; to see whether or not task affected the number and types of forms attended to; and to describe the content

of the forms that learners of a similar proficiency attended to. The specific questions used to investigate the above stated areas were as follows:

(1) Do groups significantly differ in terms on the number of forms they attend to?

(2) What second language forms do learners most commonly address?

(3) In what ways do learners address forms?

(4) Does task type affect the number and types of forms learners attend to?

(5) What do the forms learners attend to consist of in terms of their content?

In order to do this, I tape recorded an advanced ESL college writing class while they were doing communicative activities in small groups. After recording was completed, I analyzed all tapes and noted the instances in which students had attended to form. In addition, at the beginning of the class, I gave students a questionnaire about students' previous English instruction and learning experiences (see Appendix A).

The carrying out of this study will further describe the types of forms advanced learners attend to under Long's (1991) formulation of *focus on form* instruction. Doing this is valuable because it can inform teachers about the types of forms learners may be able to attend to on their own, allowing them to plan lessons and activities that focus on forms that learners are not focusing on, but nevertheless need to learn. In addition, it will provide data from which future debates about the practical and theoretical merits of focus on form instruction can be made.

This study, however, did not attempt to establish the value of focus on form instruction in terms of its effect on long-term acquisition. Determining causality requires a much more extensive and intensive study than will be presented here. Moreover, parametric measures require larger numbers than were available here ($N<30$). In

addition, this study limited itself to one proficiency level in one type of setting, thus restricting its generalizability to similar learners in different settings with different proficiency levels. However, I did speculate on possible reasons for certain results, as a way of generating possible ideas for future studies. Finally, a few general terms used throughout the study must be defined, more specific terms being defined and elaborated on within the review of literature and methodology.

Form. In this study, I restrict the use of "form" to mean morphosyntax, vocabulary, and punctuation. I do this because such elements of language are often discrete and readily identifiable.

Grammar/morphosyntax. I use the term "morphosyntax" in this study to mean morphology and syntax. Some authors use the word "grammar," which is essentially the same thing. When referring to the study conducted here, I use the term "morphosyntax"; however, when referring to another study in which the author (s) used the term "grammar", I do not deviate from the author's original terminology.

Vocabulary. "Vocabulary" concerns the meaning and use of words, including their pronunciation and spelling. Even though Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen (2001b) classified phonology as something different from vocabulary in focus on form instruction, the latter deals with the former in this context, thus making it superfluous to establish a third category.

Punctuation. "Punctuation" refers to all sentence level mechanics such as the comma, semicolon, colon, period, exclamation point, question mark, dash, slash, parenthesis, brackets, and hyphens.

Learning vs. acquisition. A much more complicated problem concerns the distinction

between "learning" and "acquisition." The distinction is one originally devised by Krashen (1981), yet far from universally agreed upon by SLA researchers. For the purposes of this study, I use the term "acquisition" to refer to the phrase "second language acquisition research" and when specific reference is made to Krashen and his writings. In all other situations, the term 'second language learning' is used in order to refer to the process of incorporating a language other than the native one. Since this study is essentially descriptive, the question of learning vs. acquisition is not of central importance.

The rest of this dissertation consists of four chapters. In chapter two, I review the literature on focus on form and its theoretical support provided by Long (1991) and Schmidt (1990), with the *noticing hypothesis*. In addition, I discuss in-depth Williams' (1999) findings and methodology. In chapter three, I elaborate on the methodology and procedures used in order to carry out the study; more specifically, I define the terms used in the study, and I present the statistical and qualitative methods used to collect and analyze data. In chapter four, I discuss the results of chapter three. In addition, I discuss the pedagogical implications of the results and discuss future research possibilities. In chapter five, I conclude the study, reviewing the major findings and the methods used in order to obtain them.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Focus on form instruction is a relatively new area in second language acquisition research; nevertheless, there is a considerable body of research on the subject. In this chapter, I review the theoretical foundations of focus on form instruction and the major empirical studies conducted in this area. In doing so, I hope to show how focus on form instruction has evolved and to point out the theoretical and practical issues that have arisen in the process.

This review of literature is divided into five sections. In section one, I review the noticing hypothesis, the major theoretical support for focus on form instruction. In section two, I present an overview of the major points and implications of focus on form instruction, in addition to how it is distinguished from other types of form-based instruction. In section three, I discuss different interpretations of focus on form instruction, such as those by Doughty and Williams (1998) and Ellis (2001). In section four, I review the studies that have dealt with focus on form instruction in Long's (1991) original definition of the term. Finally, in section five, I summarize the contents of this review of literature.

Noticing Hypothesis

In the previous chapter, I reported that many were opposed to Krashen's (1981, 1982, 1985) claims of subconscious L2 acquisition. Some have even formulated alternative hypotheses; one of them is Richard W. Schmidt. Schmidt (1990) argued that the "noticing" of L2 forms is the causal and obligatory action for L2 learning to have occured. Schmidt defined noticing as the explicit knowledge of L2 forms previously not learned. This position is known as the *noticing hypothesis*. According to Schmidt, the idea of implicitly learning the formal aspects of a second language is riddled with problems. Most notable is the lack of evidence that such learning leads to a substantial amount of L2 learning. Alternatively, he proposed that conscious understanding of L2 forms is needed for the majority of L2 learning to occur. In order for this to happen, learners must attend to L2 grammar while receiving what Krashen (1981) calls "comprehensible input". Schmidt (1990) defined attention as the phenomenon of focusing on specific L2 forms during times in which L2 input is available. Learners attend to such forms in two ways: (1) through paying attention to L2 forms, which requires a high degree of metacognitive planning and intentionality; (2) by having their attention drawn to L2 forms during interaction with speakers of the L2 or L2 texts. During such episodes, learners must attend to L2 grammar in order to be active and successful interloculars and/or to complete tasks. Schmidt notes that attending to several forms simultaneously is unfeasible due to the inability to divide attention between

structure and content. Additionally, learners may attend to a form, yet may not be developmentally ready to acquire it, thus rendering such effort unproductive.

While attention is a key component of the noticing hypothesis, it is not the only one. In essence, attending to forms is crucial, as it prompts learners to notice L2 forms. When learners notice, they become conscious of the appearance of an L2 form. Schmidt (1995) pointed out that for some noticing is not that same as detection due to the fact that the former does not require conscious registration while the latter does. From Schimdt's point of view, noticing is a subjective occurrence in which learners are aware of the presence of L2 forms. Learners are often times able to explicitly express awareness of an L2 form, although not necessarily in the form of a grammatical rule and its accompanying jargon. Nevertheless, awareness, in and of itself, does not guarantee acquisition, seeing as though learners are oftentimes aware of an L2 rule, yet are unable to use it appropriately.

Awareness can take many routes. First of all, learners may become aware that they cannot produce a certain form. On some occasions, this can lead to immediate understanding of the form, which then transforms the form from input to intake. Such instant comprehension is not probable and learners are more apt to recognize that they cannot produce a certain form. This is known as "noticing the gap." Noticing the gap pushes learners to address the item during input receiving scenarios in order to achieve conscious understanding of the form in question. The form is then ready to be acquired, yet this process may take considerable time. In addition, it may not be produced until long after it has been noticed and understood (Schmidt, 1994, 1995).

The backbone of his views comes from an analysis of his own acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). During the 1984-1985 academic year, Schmidt participated in a Fulbright program in Brazil. In addition to his obligations as a teacher and researcher, Schmidt formally and informally studied Portuguese. Schmidt and Frota tape-recorded the former's performance in such situations and noted the appearance of 21 verbal constructions in his speech. In addition, Schmidt kept a diary of his learning in which he recorded the grammatical and vocabulary items he noticed. After analyzing the data, the authors found that Schmidt was more likely to produce forms that had repeatedly occurred as input. Moreover, forms which he rarely, if ever, produced were not available as input or appeared infrequently. Schmidt and Frota therefore argued that a correlation existed between what was recorded in the Schmidt's diary and his production.

Schmidt also (1990) explained that certain forms appeared in the speech of his interlocutors, yet were not noticed because focal attention was not centered on them. This was due to the inability to notice some forms before others. In other words, certain forms are more central to basic L2 learning than others due to their frequent usage. Thus, some forms must be attended to before others.

While the majority of L2 forms require noticing in order to be acquired, Schmidt (1990) has not excluded the presence of implicit adult L2 acquisition. Such a mode of acquisition, however, is not commonplace and accounts for a small percentage of L2 acquisition. Similarly, learners may notice forms, yet not remember doing so. However, forgetting is often confused as implicit learning, which it is not. Similarly confused as implicit learning is that L2 forms can appear many times before appearing in

a learner's IL. In addition, learners may be aware of a form for quite some time, yet choose to remain silent until they have enough conscious understanding of it.

It is important to point out that Schmidt's (1990) stance does not encourage a return to the days of direct grammar instruction. Such instruction frequently ends in explicit knowledge of a rule with learners not knowing how to apply it. Additionally, explicit rules taught in such traditional classrooms are more often than not vast generalizations. However, there are occasions when particularly difficult forms should be presented directly in order to facilitate noticing, thereby speeding up acquisition. In addition, Schmidt encourages instruct to instruct learners to pay attention to L2 forms, especially those that they cannot yet produce. Moreover, learners should devise plans that promote noticing L2 grammatical forms. These forms should come in small doses during meaning-driven situations and should be easily recognizable by learners. Although some learners will notice more than others, repeated treatments may have the potential to be beneficial to the majority of learners. Problematically, Schmidt does not specify how such forms should be systematically chosen.

For individual learners, Schmidt (1995) encourages paying attention to forms. This does not mean trying to catch everything in a single instance; on the contrary, learners should focus on the L2 forms (morphology, phonology, etc.) they are most preoccupied with acquiring. This necessitates self-initiative and a take-charge attitude on the part of learners. Moreover, learners should evaluate their use of forms with those of target language speakers in order to generate hypotheses. In addition, learners should look at the linguistic variation exhibited by TL speakers.

Although Schmidt's (1990, 1994, 1995, 2000) ideas may be intuitively appealing, they are not without their competitors. Tomlin and Villa (1994), for instance, have taken issue with the claim that learners' attention can be drawn to form unintentionally. The processes by which input becomes intake is another issue that is insufficiently explained for them. Moreover, they argue that the amount of exposure to a form does not affect whether or not it is acquired, due to the fact that L2 processing occurs instantaneously.

Where Tomlin and Villa (1994) differ most from Schmidt concerns their treatment of attention. While Schmidt (1990) only gave a basic definition of the term, Tomlin and Villa (1994) specified three components of attention: *alertness, orientation*, and *detection*. Alertness is the first component of attention and is concerned with learners' capacity to accept input. More specifically, alertness is the basic psychological condition in which register L2 form. Once alertness is present, learners may orientate themselves to the appropriate stimuli. Orientation is a process by which focus on some aspect of L2 input. Once learners have orientated themselves to some aspect of L2 input, they are ready to detect it. Detection is a process by which learners become consciously aware of the L2 input, and thus is much the same as Schmidt's (1990) conceptualization of noticing. For Tomlin and Villa (1994), however, detecting a form does not necessarily encompass remembering or understanding it, making it of questionable value for L2 learning. Similarly, for them the link between detection and awareness is hard to specify and may not be present. Therefore, the level of explicitness and metacognitive knowledge Schmidt (1990) prescribes is not useful for L2 learning.

While interesting, Tomlin and Villa's (1994) conceptualization of attention seems to be grounded more in general learning than in second language learning. Furthermore,

they give few concrete examples of how their conceptualization of attention actually works, nor do they provide many studies that lend credit to their claims. Finally, they make no mention of how their ideas are to be applied in instructional settings.

Others have criticized the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) on more general grounds. From a cognitive psychology viewpoint, Truscott (1998) reports that the concept of attention is disputed and few can agree about its role in general human learning. Measuring it is, likewise, a dubious task, due to difficulties in determining where and how it manifests itself. Similarly, Truscott claims that consciousness is a controlled process, thus invalidating Schmidt's (1990) claim that one's attention can be unintentionally drawn to a form.

Another problem with the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) can be seen in the empirical evidence on which it is based. As previously discussed, the noticing hypothesis is the result of Schmidt and Frota's (1986) study of the former's own L2 development. The use of one study to develop a hypothesis raises serious reliability and validity issues. Scientific hypotheses should be based on a substantial amount of empirical data, and one study certainly does not fulfill this requirement. In addition, the fact that a professional linguist--some might say a leading linguist-- based his conclusions on his own performance is highly problematic, for his knowledge of second language acquisition research makes him an atypical and privileged learner (Krashen, 1997).

In spite of the difficulties associated with the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), it is appealing to both researchers and teachers. First of all, it provides a theoretical framework in which practical research can be done. It also promotes the idea that the learning of forms is crucial to successful second language learning; yet, such

forms must be contextually presented. I believe this gives most teachers what they want: A justification to balance both form and meaning within their classrooms.

Focus on Form Instruction: An Overview

In spite of the problems associated with the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), it has had a major influence on recent pedagogical innovations. Rather than developing as a method in its own right, the concept of noticing has been used to support Long's (1991) concept of *focus on form* instruction. Focus on form instruction "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long, pp. 45-46). Long and Robinson (1998) furthered the concept to encompass Schmidt's (1990) conceptualization of the term 'noticing': "Focus on form refers to how focal attentional resources are allocated...Focus on form consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features—by the teacher and/or one or more students—triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (p. 23). The inevitable goal of such "an occasional shift of attention" is noticing as conceived by Schmidt (1990). However, while Schmidt deals with how learners' attention can be drawn to forms by external cues and their own will inside and outside of the classroom, Long and Robinson (1998) are singularly focused on classroom materials and activities that shift learners' attention to forms and thereby enduce noticing.

Focus on Forms and Focus on Meaning

Long and Robinson (1998) provide support for focus on form instruction by comparing it with the two other options for dealing with L2 forms: focus on forms and focus on meaning. The first choice, focus on forms, refers to the traditional synthetic syllabus, still the most "popular syllabus the world over". In it, the goal is to teach certain grammatical forms sequentially with the intention that learners will internalize them for use in communicative situations. Ironically, such syllabi are wholly concerned with L2 forms rather than communication. Nonetheless, learners are expected to be able to use L2 forms at some point, although little, if any, context is provided and opportunities for practice are limited, if they exist, at all. Prior to the Wilkin's (1976) creation of the notional-functional syllabi, all major methods incorporated this type of syllabus (Audiolingual Method, Silent way, Total Physical Response, etc.) and "most classrooms still use it" (Noted: Citations in *all sections* first cited by *sections' authors*).

Long and Robinson (1998) state that there are a variety of problems with this approach to L2 forms. First of all, learners do not learn a form and move on to the next. Learning (or acquisition, to use Krashen's (1981) term) is not linear, with one form cleanly and easily coming before the next. Second, research has shown that learners follow a relatively fixed sequence of acquisition that is usually not in line with the order in which L2 forms are presented in the synthetic syllabus. Finally, some forms are more difficult to learn than others, necessitating unequal amounts of classroom instruction and exposure time. In contrast, the synthetic syllabus frequently gives L2 forms more or less equal amounts of attention.

According to Long and Robinson (1998), some have tried to alleviate these problems. Sharwood Smith (1991, 1993), for instance, developed the concept of *input enhancement*. Here students are made implicitly aware of forms, yet receive some sort of communicative input while doing so. While this is an improvement, Long and Robinson (1998) note that lessons are still planned around L2 forms instead of meaning. Additionally, lessons used to make learners aware of forms may not coincide with what students actually become aware of.

Focus on meaning instruction, in contrast, makes no provision for form and concentrates only on meaning. Here Long and Robinson (1998) explain that learners incidentally learn L2 forms while in the process of understanding meaning. Likewise, positive evidence alone is sufficient for L2 learning, seeing as learning is seen as largely the non-conscious work of underlying L2 learning mechanisms. This position, frequently associated with Krashen (1985), Terrell & Krashen (1983) and Prahbu (1987), allows no place for error correction, direct instruction, and explicit learner analysis, the claim being that such practices rarely have any long-term effect on the L2 learning and can sometimes be harmful.

Although more acceptable to Long and Robinson (1998) due to its strong theoretical underpinnings, this non-interventionist position is still problematic, beginning with the position that L2 forms can be learned implicitly. While research has shown that this process occurs in children, there is an abundance of evidence that L2 learners with a wealth of comprehensible input available to them never obtain grammatical accuracy, (Schmidt, 1983) even when they start during late childhood and early adolescence (Swain, 1991). Similarly, there is evidence that positive evidence is not helpful for

particularly difficult structures (White, 1991). Finally, advantages have been shown in the rate of learning for instructed learners, at least in the short term (Ellis, 1994).

Although both focus on forms and focus on meaning based instruction are inadequate, Long and Robinson (1998) see no reason to do away with the critical elements that both address, namely, communication and grammar. They propose that learners, while engaging in meaningful tasks, will naturally attend to forms out of communicative need. It is during this time that forms should be addressed. Typically, negotiation of meaning is the catalyst for such attending, although tasks that focus learners' attention may also have the same effect. Additionally, teachers can notice that students engaged in group work are struggling with certain forms, at which time they may want to interrupt for a short time and directly (explicitly) elucidate the forms and their correct uses. Finally, teachers (and learners) may offer implicit negative feedback to individual learners who are experiencing problems with a certain form. Instead of addressing the whole group, they may decide to recast the learner's utterance with the hope that it will be used as uptake or mentally noted. Uptake and noticing may help speed up acquisition of the particular form.

Thus, Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998) assert that focus on form should only come about during communicative activities when problems are noticed by either teachers or learners. In this way, instruction responds directly to what students want or need to know, instead of what curriculum planners and teachers think students should know. An example of this could come from a listening and speaking class at an intensive English program. A student, for example, is discussing a hypothetical situation and uses the simple present instead of the subjunctive. In this case, the teacher would

elect to explicitly point out the error to the student and give an explanation of the correct form, followed by an example. However, the teacher would not plan the next lesson with the specific intention to focus on the subjunctive.

Focus on Form Instruction: Expanded Definitions and Interpretations

In essence, focus on form instruction takes a half-way position: It does not entail a syllabus with no grammar instruction--as would be the case for Krashen (1981)--yet neither does it advocate a return to the dark days of grammatical explanations and sentence-level drills. Instead, it conforms to a communicative syllabus, but includes provisions for addressing learners' needs without implementing an archaic and largely unproductive form of L2 grammar instruction.

While focus on form instruction has gained acclaim from many, (DeKeyser, 1998; Ellis, 1993, 1994, 2001; Lightbown, 1998; Swain, 1998; Williams, 1999, 2000) others have expanded the definition to involve several components. Leow (2000), for example, shows that focus on form instruction can be comprised of direct or indirect instruction on the L2 form to be mastered, and techniques to draw students' attention to form (s). Such instruction, however, is often carried out via dissimilar routes. For example, some (Leow, 1998; Trahey & White, 1993) have looked at implicit focus on form. Frequently, such cases involve input flooding in which researchers investigate whether or not the nature of the lesson points learners' attention to the forms in question. Input flooding is an instructional technique in which learners typically receive oral or written input which frequently uses certain forms, the rationale being that learners are more likely to become

aware of them while engaging in some meaning-driven activity. In reality, however, such treatment is not identical to Schmidt's (1990) conception of task complexity as a source of drawing learners' attention to form, the reason being that the latter usually involves seeding treatments with forms, instead of letting the natural complexity of the task take hold. In addition, the use of the term 'implicit' defies the explicit and conscious nature through which Schmidt claims that acquisition occurs.

Others, according to Leow (2000) have looked at the effects of explicit focus on form instruction. The logic here is that explicit knowledge of rules can, at times, speed up acquisition and help make more difficult structures more salient. Direct explanation, rule presentation (oral or written), and structured output activities are the usual routes through which this type of instruction takes place. Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989), for example, claim that negative explicit feedback makes learners aware of the need to take notice of their output. Van Patten and Cadierno (1993), likewise, have discussed a technique known as 'processing instruction' in which second language rule are directly treated and proceded by lessons that necessitate the form's use. Leow (1998) shows that the line between such instruction and traditional grammar instruction is indeed significant. Regardless, the types of focus on form instruction Leow presented differ greatly from Long's (1991) original definition of the term. While he explains that studies on explicit focus on form instruction have been shown to be effective in the short-term, their long-term effects are still questionable.

Doughty and Williams' Interpretation of Focus on Form Instruction

Instead of focusing on the types of focus on form instruction, Doughty and Williams (1998) discuss the issues that are involved in deciding whether or not to carry-out focus on form instruction. They claim that there are six issues involved in focus on form instruction: whether or not to focus on form; reactive versus preemptive focus on form; the choice of linguistic form; explicitness of focus on form; sequential versus integrated focus on form; and the role of focus on form in the curriculum (197-261).

The first issue, "whether or not to focus on form" (p. 201), involves deciding which forms merit attention and which forms seem to be learned with relative ease. Doughty and Williams (1998) claim that since some forms may be a part of universal grammar, teachers have to make choices as to where to allocate time and instructional attention. Forms such as basic word order, for instance, may be easily learned by learners, thus casting them lower on the list of priorities. The English article system, in contrast, presents great difficulties for most learners and thus should be given more instructional priority. However, Doughty and Williams claim that regardless of what research findings report, teachers will have to make such decisions based on their observations of individual classes.

"Reactive versus preemptive focus on form" (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 205) concerns the spontaneity. Reactive focus on form is spontaneous, occurring when a problem is noted. Preemptive focus on form, on the other hand, is premeditated, usually involving lessons embedded with forms the teacher feels learners need to notice. The first option may be desirable because it does not necessarily obligate teachers to pick forms to

focus on. Yet, it can be problematic because the form focused on may not be affected by instruction. In addition, the learners may not be prepared to integrate it into their interlanguage. The second option, preemptive focus on form, may also be attractive, but for a different reason: It allows instructors the opportunity to address problems in detail. If, for instance, an instructor notices that a group of learners are having problems with a particular form, they may elect to create communicative lessons that make that particular form salient. The form, however, usually is presented in a communicative context, rather than singularly highlighted and directly explained. Nonetheless, this approach may be beneficial due to the probability that learners may generalize the form's use, thus leading them to apply it when appropriate (Doughty & Williams, 1998). It is not clear why reactive focus on form could not also lead to the same problem. Yet, it seems preemptive focus on form, like reactive focus on form, could be problematic because of the learnability of the form and learners' developmental readiness to integrate it into their IL.

The "choice of linguistic form to focus on" (Dougthy & Williams, 1998, 211) revolves around the difficulty of certain forms. However, forms, in and of themselves, are not the difficulty; rather, their applications complicate learning. Some have claimed that such difficulties cannot be altered via instruction, while others claim that instruction can aid learning, at least in the short term. Other issues of difficulty involve the salience and communicative function of the form and the influence of the L1 on learners. The teacher's task, thus, is to consider these factors when deciding on which forms to focus on. Such decisions can be based on informal observation and/or a knowledge of the order of acquisition sequences.

"Explicitness of focus on form" (Doughty and Williams, 1998, 228) concerns the degree of directness used in attending to specific forms. They differentiate between two choices: implicit focus on form and explicit teaching. The first is one in which "The aim is to *attract* learner attention and to avoid metalinguistic discussion always *minimizing any interruption* to the communication of meaning" (p. 232). The second, in contrast, aims "... to *direct* learner attention and to *exploit pedagogical grammar*" (p. 232). Typical examples of the former include input flooding and embedding structures in activities whose completion demands manipulation of them. Typical examples of the latter include highlighting, fill-in-the-blank activities, and direct negative feedback in the form of explanations and modeling. As of today, the ruling is not yet in on which is more effective, seeing as both have been found to be beneficial in certain circumstances based on evidence from several studies. When making decisions about which type to employ, Doughty and Williams (1998) advise instructors to try a combination of both, seeing as both have been found to lead to positive results.

"Sequential versus integrated focus on form" (Doughty & Williams, 1998, 244) involves decisions about whether or not to isolate forms in order to promote more assessable noticing or to integrate them within larger communicative environments. They assert that the former is more desirable, as it allows learners to grasp the function of such forms, while the latter does not. They acknowledge that this can be disruptive; it need not be. For example, paralanguage such as facial expressions can be used to signal that a certain form has been incorrectly used (Lightbown, 1998). Teachers can also use rising intonation on the problematic form (s) (see Doughty & Varela, 1998; Williams & Evans, 1998). DeKeyser (1998) asserts that in order to turn knowledge about form into

knowledge about how to use a form, learners need a great deal of focused practice with the form in question. Therefore, he recommends that forms be presented in sequences and practiced sequentially; however, such practice must be embedded within meaning-driven contexts and the overall aim of the lesson must be communication.

"The role of focus on form in the curriculum"(Doughty & Williams, 1998, 251) concerns the amount of focus on form to be used. They point out that focus on form instruction can be one component of instruction, used according to perceived learner needs. However, they encourage its extensive use, because short-term use with little follow-up tends not to produce lasting results. In addition, focus on form must be used when learners are most receptive to it. Thus, using focus on form to reinforce a form learners are not developmentally ready for will most likely result in little in the way of gains. Yet, Doughty and Williams do not specify criteria for such readiness. Moreover, while they use the term "noticing", they do not state whether or not it is used exactly as Schmidt (1990) defines it.

Ellis' Taxonomy of Focus on Form Instruction

While Doughty and Williams' (1998) taxonomy of focus on form instruction is thorough and based on recent research findings, it is largely prescriptive in that it tells instructors the factors they will need to consider. In addition, Leow's (1998) description of focus on form instruction does not focus in on Long's (1991) original conceptualization of the term. Ellis (2001), on the other hand, thoroughly reviews the three types of form-focused instruction that currently exist: focus on forms, planned focus

on form, and incidental focus on form. He uses the term *form-focused instruction* due to the recognition of the divergence from Long's (1991) original definition.

The first kind, focus on forms instruction, is related to traditional grammar instruction, in that teachers' emphasis on form is the main objective. According to Ellis (2001), this can be presented explicitly or implicitly. Explicit instruction frequently centers around a direct and focused presentation of a rule. How this differs from traditional grammar instruction is the degree of practice and contextualization, which are arguably much greater than in past times. Implicit instruction, on the other hand, does not incorporate direct instruction. Such instruction presents the rule within meaning-driven situations with the hope that learners will discover it and inductively learn it with or without conscious awareness in the sense that Schmidt (1990) uses the term. However, focus on forms instruction can involve rule generation regardless of its kind according to Ellis, (2001).

Furthermore, Ellis (2001) claims that focus on form instruction usually can involve production practice. Production practice generally involves context-rich activities in which learners have to use or at least understand the forms in question. However, practice can sometimes be highly controlled, thereby diminishing its communicative value. Nevertheless, Ellis (2001) claims that some positive results have been found. While not discussed at length by Ellis, Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1999), for instance, assert that explicit negative feedback can be beneficial. In two studies, they examined teachers who explicitly corrected students' flawed utterances via examples and rule presentations. They assert that such techniques are useful, because they give students

awareness of L2 forms and their usages. However, it is questionable whether or not this will effect long-term communication.

In addition, some researchers have examined the concept of processing instruction, which simultaneously involves traditional instruction of form and sequences, and situations which promote the use of the forms in question. Using a group of teenage language learners, they created different groups which engaged in teacher explanation, practice or a processing activity. Not suprisingly, those groups which only engaged in direct instruction on rules did not make significant gains on various measures designed to examine oral and written progress as seen on post-treatment examinations of the techniques' effect on learner gains. Significantly, the students who engaged in practical activities showed positive evidence of growth. (Van Patten & Oikkenon, 1996).

Other studies have attempted to promote consciousness to form. Although not cited by Ellis (2001) Fotos and Ellis (1991), for example, gave a group of students tasks focusing on dative verb forms . Students were then required to complete written grammar exercises that necessitated the correct dative use of the given verbs. Those who had received purely communicative instruction did noticeably worse than the two treatment groups, suggesting that learners may not notice forms on their own. Surprisingly, when later required to engage in tasks, the differences between the treatment groups and those engaged in direct, teacher-led instruction were not significant.

In planned focus on form, the emphasis is on exposing learners to forms within communicative tasks, thereby encouraging incidental learning. One way of doing this, according to Ellis (2001), is through enriched input. While tasks are seeded with forms, noticing them is purely incidental and largely the task of the individual learner. In

addition, the core of the task is to decipher meaning, thus noticing the forms comes in the process of overall comprehension. Another approach to planned focused on form comes in the form of focused communicative tasks. Here, learners are expected to carry out a certain productive task in which the use of the form (s) is obligatory. This differs from traditional practice activities seen in structural syllabi in that the purpose of the task is purely communicative, with learning being incidental (Ellis, 2001).

A plethora of studies have been published in support of planned focus on form. Leow (1997) studied planned focus on form in a university-based foreign language class. In essence, he wanted to determine whether there were differences between students who received direct instruction and those who were involved in tasks. In order to do this, he equally divided 88 first-semester students of Spanish into four groups, all of whom were presented with the third-person singular morpheme and plural preterit forms of stem-changing verbs. Group four was presented these forms via crossword puzzle tasks, which they repeated three weeks after the initial day of exposure. Group two was given the same task, yet did not engage in any follow-up activities. The third group engaged in the crossword puzzle activity and received follow-up exposure three weeks later. However, they received exposure via direct instruction. The first group received one-time, direct instruction. Acquisition was measured three months after exposure in the form of a verb-recognition test. Leow reports that groups who received several exposures did significantly better than those groups who received a single exposure. However, those exposed to forms via tasks performed the best.

Another study was conducted by Lee (1998), who studied morpheme acquisition in a first-year college Spanish class. Seventy-one students were presented with reading

texts containing subjunctive forms, infinitive forms, and invented forms. After reading the text, students wrote a brief summary of the story in English. They then completed a morpheme acquisition activity that required them to note the forms they noticed in the text. Interestingly, Lee found that those who noticed more morphemes generally sacrificed comprehension and vice-versa.

The third and final type of form-focused instruction discussed by Ellis (2001) is incidental focus on form, which is nearly identical to Long's (1991) original conception of focus on form instruction. The major difference between this type of form-focused instruction and those previously discussed lies in its use on a need-to-know basis. Here specific forms are not intentionally focused on, but are attended to spontaneously by teachers and other learners within meaning-driven contexts. While Long (1991) claims that focus on form is purely reactive, Ellis (2001) claims that it comes in two forms: preemptive focus on form and reactive focus on form. Preemptive focus on form occurs when teachers or learners temporarily suspend an activity to attend to a form that appears to be troubling the students. Reactive focus on form, on the other hand, involves teachers explicitly giving negative feedback when they note errors/problems with particular forms. This can come in the form of implicit and explicit negative feedback. Feedback is given implicitly in the form of negotiation and recasts, while it is given explicitly via direct instruction/explanation, commentary on the students' use of a form, and efforts to get learners to produce the form correctly. Such feedback is almost exclusively given by teachers.

In conclusion, Ellis (2001), like Leow (1998), summarizes the various types of focus on form instruction. Also like Leow, Ellis (2001) presents a wealth of studies to

support his analysis. Nonetheless, Ellis is neutral as to which type of focus of form instruction is most desirable, leaving teachers with little direction. Most problematic, however, is the absence of a discussion on the logistical difficulties of measuring incidental focus on form and the practical difficulties of creating opportunities for it in everyday coursework.

Studies on Focus on Form Instruction

Doughty and Verela: Incidental Focus on Form

In spite of Ellis' (2001) discussion of incidental focus on form, relatively little attention has been given to incidental focus on form. This is not entirely surprising, for most classroom settings incorporate a pre-planned syllabus. In addition, Schmidt (1990) claimed that incidental noticing, although occasionally present, accounts for very little L2 acquisition. Doughty and Varela (1998) studied the use of corrective recasts in a communicative classroom. Using 34 intermediate-level adolescent ESL students from two different classrooms, they assigned students science tasks in oral and written from. During several weeks, the treatment group received corrective recasts while engaging in the tasks. Such recasts consisted of the teacher giving students contrasting forms and repetition. The control group, on the other hand, was only given direct science instruction. The forms they looked at were concerned with tenses. Students were first provided with a pretest, then instructional lessons, a post-test occurring directly following instruction, and a follow-up test several months after the initial exposure. The authors

found that significant and lasting gains were made by the treatment group, yet not months after initial exposure.

Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen: Uptake and Preemptive Vs. Reactive Focus on Form

Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a) also studied spontaneous focus on form. However, Ellis et al. were concerned with the concept of learner "uptake," which they claim is one of the few ways in which spontaneous focus on form can be measured (they do not mention other possibilities). Among other things, they wanted to see the rate of uptake on forms spontaneously attended to. Although originally conceived of by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as a student's response to teachers' corrective feedback on a specific student utterance, Ellis et al. conceive of it to include occasions when learners or teachers preemptively focus on forms which students later use. In addition, uptake occurs when use of the form is not obligatory and when there is an apparent gap in students' knowledge, it is student-initiated, and it is a reaction to implicit or explicit feedback given by another learner or teacher. Although there is no guarantee that uptake will lead to acquisition, Ellis et al. claim that it can be useful in pushing students to use forms in order to force them to analyze their meanings and functions, as claimed by Swain (1985, 1995) in her comprehensible output hypothesis.

In order to do this, Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a) studied two groups of twelve learners in an intensive English institute in New Zealand, one beginner, one intermediate. Both groups were represented by five different native languages. Both groups were tape-recorded for a total of fourteen hours during which time they engaged

in communicative activities. Before beginning the study, they established two types of uptake: responding and initiating. The latter occurs when unsolicited feedback is given to learners and can occur in three forms: acknowledgement, repair, and needs repair. Acknowledgement involves a verbal signal that the feedback has been noticed by the learner. Such acknowledgement can be signaled by responses such as 'yes' and 'oh.' Repair is when a learner correctly utters the feedback as originally given by the teacher or another student. Needs repair occurs when the learner tries to utter the feedback, but does so incorrectly.

Initiating uptake, on the other hand, occurs when learners have solicited feedback on a form from the teacher or other learners. There are three ways in which students can engage in this type of uptake: recognition, application, and needs application. Recognition occurs when learners verbally respond to the solicited feedback, signaling that they have noticed it. Recognition, like acknowledgment, can be signaled by responses such as 'yes' and 'oh.' Application is when learners have correctly used the solicited feedback. Needs application is when learners erroneously use feedback, indicating that they need further explanation. Regardless of the type of uptake students initiated, Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a) only counted the last uptake initiation towards the total amount. They justify this by claiming that the final move shows the most understanding, while the other uptake initiations may be signs of simply working out meaning. Additionally, only episodes in which uptake was possible were counted; that is, when there was a gap of time between the interlocutors utterance and the next speaker's utterance. However, no specific criteria were given for what constitutes sufficient time.

The results showed that of the 429 opportunities to initiate uptake, learners did so 73% of the time. Of those, 74.1% were taken up correctly; that is, learners revealed understanding of the form and did not incorrectly recast the utterance. Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a) also claim that, in their opinion and in that of the teachers,' communication was not impeded by such uptake nor did focus on form disrupt the flow of classroom interaction. In addition, the vast majority of uptake involved form rather than meaning. Finally, uptake usually followed explanations and examples rather than simple recasts and corrections.

Ellis, Basturkman, and Loewen (2001b) later went on to study preemptive versus reactive focus on form. As previously mentioned, preemptive focus on form involves students asking questions or requesting help for a form before a problem actually arises. Reactive focus on form, in contrast, is the process by which a form appears and is reacted to after its appearance. Using two intermediate classes consisting of twelve adult learners from five different L1s, Ellis et al. recorded twelve hours of student group work consisting of communicative tasks and non-communicative structured activities. They found that almost half of all student-initiated focus on form episodes were preemptive.

Williams: Focus on Form in Group Work

Even though the studies reviewed in this chapter have claimed to examine focus on form instruction, none have actually followed Long's (1991) original criteria. To my knowledge, Williams' (1999) descriptive study of focus on form in group work—which forms the basis for the current study--is the only one that has attempted to follow Long's

(1991) definition. In it, she described the frequency with which form was attended to, the types of forms attended to, the way in which forms were attended to, and the content of the forms attended to. In addition, she wanted to see if task type and proficiency level affected the number of forms attended to.

The participants were eight students between the ages of 18 and 28 studying at an intensive English program in the United States. They were divided into dyads according to proficiency level. In total, there were four dyads ranging from beginning to advanced. Williams tape recorded all of the dyads while they were engaging in a variety of communicative and non-communicative tasks. She tape recorded students during 45 minute intervals (approximate length of one class period) over a period of eight weeks. In Williams' (1999) study, the term "form" meant discrete morphosyntactic and vocabulary items that could be clearly identified in students' taped interactions and were thus quantifiable. In other words, the types of forms Williams was interested in looking at could include number, verb tense, preposition use, definitions, pronunciation, and so on.

In order to describe how learners focused on form, Williams (1999) first had to operationalize focus on form, and did so via Swain's (1998) concept of language-related episodes (LREs). LREs concern "...discourse in which the learners talk or ask about language, or question, explicitly or implicitly, their own language use or that of others. Language use might include the meaning, spelling, or pronunciation of a word, the choice of grammatical inflection, word order, and so on" (Williams, 1999, p. 595). Thus, for Williams, the appearance of an LRE signified that form has been focused on; whether or not the form was learned was not the issue.

Williams (1999) went on to classify five types of LREs found in the students' group interactions: learner-initiated requests to another learner; learner-initiated requests to teacher; metatalk; negotiation; and other correction. The first, learner-initiated requests to another learners, occurs when learners pose direct questions to their peers, as seen in the dialog below of a student conversation about ballads in which one participant, sensing another's confusion, questions the other's knowledge of the word:

L: ___ Just like a ballad. I like *ballad.*

M1: __ *Ballad*? What?

L: ___ Do you know that?

M1:__ Help please.

L: ___ Song. A story

M1: __ Oh. You like? (p. 597)

Learner-initiated requests to teacher are the same, except that this time, the learner poses direct questions to the teacher. In the following example, a learner cannot figure out the meaning of 'treat,' and thus turns to the teacher for clarification:

R2: __ (reads to self) How did the people in the store treat Charlie? What is? Excuse me, what means *treat?*

T: ___ *Treat* means how did they act towards him.

R2: ___Mm...maybe they think Charlie...that Charlie not find this dollar (Williams, 1999, p. 597).

The third category, metatalk, involves metalinguistic conversation in order to be able to mutually build meaning and attain mutual understanding of a form or some larger L2 concept. Such discussion typically centers around a singular form. Thus, metatalk

chiefly differentiates itself from learner-initiated requests to other learners and teacher, in that there is no direct request about the meaning or use of a form. In the following conversation, the word 'close' is focused on in order to share information about a supermarket's opening and closing hours:

R2: __ What time close?

L: ___ Close?

R2: __ About nine. They …because supermarkets close. I think we can start: *Usually-usually they close.*

L: ____No: *They usually close*. Like that.

R2: ___Oh, OK. *They usually close* at nine o'clock.

L: ___ *Usually close* at nine o'clock (Williams, 1999, pp. 599-600).

Negotiation, in contrast, is the process by which learners regain understanding proceding a failure to effectively communicate caused by a grammatical form or vocabulary item. In the following example, the breakdown is caused by a pronunciation difficulty that results in one learner mistaking 'then' for 'dead':

P3: ___When I met him, he said to me, "da da da" and *then*

L: ___ He *dead*?

P3: __ What?

L: ___ He *dead*?

P3: ___No.

L: ___ He *died*?

P3: ___*Dead*? No, I said and *then.*

L: ___ Oh *then*, I thought you said and *dead.* Sorry (Williams, 1999, p. 598).

Finally, other correction occurs when a learner has committed an error that is corrected without request by another learner or the teacher. The instance below shows how one learner corrects another's incorrect use of the third-person singular:

O2: __ OK, next one. Could you tell me where the nearest bank is? ...Do you know how much a hamburger *cost?*

L: ___ *Costsss.*

O2: __ Oh yes. *Costs* (Williams, 1999, p. 600).

Williams (1999) was able to derive such categories by revisiting the data several times in order to recognize trends that were occurring. However, there was no explanation on how she determined the beginning and the end of individual LREs, nor was there much discussion about how she dealt with instances in which a form's LRE type was ambiguous, other than the fact that she eliminated most of them from her data set.

Williams (1999) found that the total number of LREs advanced two-fold from the lowest proficiency level (42 LREs) to the highest (96 LREs). Regardless of proficiency level, however, all groups overwhelmingly focused on vocabulary (80%). The remaining 20% of forms were focused on grammar. In terms of LREs initiated, there were differences among proficiency levels. The beginning group, for example, initiated most LREs via learner-initiated questions to teacher (52%), followed by learner-initiated requests to another learner (19%), negotiation (19%), other correction (7%), metatalk (2%). For the advanced group, the majority of their LREs came in the form of learner-initiated requests to other learners (36%), followed by other correction (13%), metatalk (10%), and negotiation (5%). In addition, highly structured textbook activities were more likely to evoke grammar-centered LREs than purely communicative activities, with their

being marked differences in this specific area of Williams' study. Groups three and four, however, were engaged in similar, yet a broader range of activities than groups one and two, due to different needs and perhaps program requirements. Interestingly, she speculated that decisions on whether or not to focus on form were largely based on students' opinions that communicative activities do not necessitate focusing on form, while structured activities do.

Finally, more than half of these LREs dealing with vocabulary, at least for the most advanced group, concerned definitions (62%), followed by pronunciation (26%), word form (8%), and preposition choice (4%). For grammar, the most frequent category viewed in the advanced group was tense choice (37.5%), followed by word order (15.5%), articles (15.5%), tense form (10.5%), agreement (10.5%), and other (10.5%). Although there was some variation according to proficiency level, tense was the numerically the largest grammatical category for all levels.

Summary

As seen from the discussion above, focus on form instruction, as originally conceived by Long (1991), has spread out and evolved in several ways. However, the efficacy of such a pedagogical technique has yet to be established, and there are many problems associated with it. First of all, the lasting effects of such instruction cannot be shown. According to Truscott (1998), most studies are no longer than a few weeks, with only a handful lasting longer. Claims about acquisition can hardly be made from such short-term studies.

Krashen (1994, 1999) has been one of the most outspoken critics of focus on form instruction. According to him, claims of success from focus on form instruction involve learning rather than acquisition. Noteworthy is his claim that learned knowledge can be remembered for several months before forgetting begins. In addition, Krashen points out that learners expect grammar instruction in class, and thus are quite adept at doing well in such exercises. Yet, such instruction in no way reflects what they may do outside of the classroom context.

In addition, Sheen (2000) points out that most focus on form instruction is incompatible with much of the curriculum design and course organization found in second/foreign language teaching. More specifically, Long's (1991) fundamentalist stance that forms should be focused on spontaneously makes testing and evaluation of such forms extremely difficult, if not impossible. If not grammar, what will students be tested over? What will they do for homework? If grammar testing is instituted, will it be customized to each student based on the forms they spontaneously attend to? Such problems perhaps can be dealt with in small classes in institution with good facilities. Yet, such facilities and small classes are not common, especially in developing countries like India, where hundreds of students can be enrolled in the same class (see, e.g., Sheorey & Nayar, 2002). Thus, second language researchers and teachers must realize that large classes represent the norm outside of Western countries.

Moreover, in the case of Long's (1991) original definition of focus on form instruction, success depends on learners' willingness or ability to spontaneously attend to form. Therefore, outgoing, extroverted learners who are not afraid to make mistakes are

needed for this type of instruction. Likewise, such a definition ignores cultures where teacher-centeredness is valued and student talk is discouraged or forbidden.

Another significant problem involves defining what exactly focus on form instruction constitutes and how to carry it out. As Sheen (2000) points out, focus on form instruction can have a range of meaning, ranging from very communicative to less communicative. Such confusion about terminology and methodology makes the task of developing a unified research agenda dubious and renders the term itself utterly meaningless. The most daunting problem with focus on form instruction has been, nevertheless, the lack of studies that describe spontaneous focus on form in communicative contexts. This is a fundamental issue, for evaluating the efficacy of this instructional approach cannot be done until there are examples of how it works.

Because of these problems, few studies have actually been devoted to studying Long's (1991) original definition of the term, with the exception of Williams' (1999). This is not surprising since most second and foreign language classrooms are still more or less centered on direct grammar instruction, making it difficult for researchers to find purely communicative classrooms in which to evaluate Long's claims.

In spite of its problems, focus on form instruction has shown some promise in terms of its ability to help students learn L2 forms, at least in the short-term. Since most language classes last no more than a few months to a year, short-term learning may be the most realistic goal. In addition, focus on form instruction can take many forms, ranging from negative feedback to input flooding. This variety provides teachers with various routes of incorporating focus on form into their classrooms, even if they focus on form in ways not advocated by Long (1991).

To sum up this chapter, I have discussed the theoretical support for focus on form instruction in Long's (1991) original use of the term; in other words, Schmidt's (1990) *noticing hypothesis.* Its bases and problematic areas were also highlighted. In addition, I gave an overview of focus on form instruction as Long (1991) and then later, Long and Robinson (1998), originally conceived of the term, along with its justifications, classroom application, and theoretical and practical problems. Furthermore, I reviewed the alternative interpretations and applications of focus on form instruction and some selected studies that have resulted from such interpretations. I also discussed the problems and difficulties of such approaches and those from their adjoining practical studies. Finally, I reviewed the few studies that have been carried out using Long's (1991) original definition of focus on form instruction. Although Doughty and Verela (1998) and Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a, b) produced noteworthy studies, Williams (1999) is the most extensive and sticks most closely to Long's (1991) definition; thus, this study was reviewed in detail, its implications, problems and areas of promise being discussed at length Williams' (1999) study was also thoroughly reviewed because it forms the theoretical and practical basis for the study that I will describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

Methods and Procedures

The purpose of the study reported here was to expand on Williams' (1999) study, yet in a more specific context and with a greater number of learners. More specifically, the aims of this study were to see whether or not variation in the frequency of forms attended to existed among groups of a similar proficiency level; to describe the kinds of forms learners of a similar proficiency level attended to; to describe how learners of a similar proficiency level attended to form; to see whether or not task affected the number and types of forms attended to; and to describe the content of the forms that learners of a similar proficiency level attended to.

Setting

The setting of this study was an advanced college ESL writing class I taught at a large university in the Midwestern United States. The class is the first semester of a two-semester sequence of required writing classes for all incoming non-native international students. The class is offered by the Department of English of the university and meets three times a week for 50 minutes each. Students must be regularly matriculated into undergraduate university classes in order to enroll in it. In addition, all entering students

must submit a minimum TOEFL score of 500 to enroll without any language-related restrictions. Although students were of a "similar proficiency level" because of their matriculation status, TOEFL scores, and participation in the course status, they vastly differed in the amount of English they had been exposed to, as I will show later in this chapter.

I should note that this class did not revolve around focus on form instruction. In fact, the course is designed to prepare students for the academic writing that they will encounter in during their respective degree programs. In it, I devoted most of my time to the basic areas of writing necessary for collegiate success. More specifically, I gave attention to areas such as developing thesis statements, body paragraphs, topic sentences, conclusions, unity, coherence, and vocabulary usage. I did this in a variety of ways, including lectures on basic writing components, analyses of sample essays, and exercises requiring students to improve parts of sample essays. Because it was a writing class, the focus was not primarily on grammar exercises. However, I introduced sentence-level grammar exercises when needed; that is, when students were frequently using certain forms incorrectly. I rarely used such exercises, however.

In addition to writing, the class is also designed to foster vocabulary development and to improve reading skills. I tried to reach those two goals by requiring students to read and analyze texts, participate in group discussions about these texts, and write in-class responses to these texts. I hoped that such an approach would also increase the students' cultural knowledge of the United States and other countries.

The core focus of the class, however, is on five to six major writing assignments. The first is a diagnostic writing test that took place over a two-week period, the first week

being devoted to the development of the rough draft. After preliminary grading and teacher commentary, the students then spent another week outside of writing the final paper. After this first essay, students wrote three outside compositions, ranging from three to four pages in length. For each of these essays, students wrote two drafts, A and B. On the A drafts, I made comments on the areas that needed improvement. Such comments were focused on three areas: (1) comprehensibility of global and individual ideas; (2) structural elements of the essays (thesis statements, body paragraphs, conclusion, etc.); (3) grammatical and mechanical errors. In general, I was explicit in that I told students what the problems were and what they needed to do to repair them. A small portion of students' final grade came from the A drafts. Each B draft, on the other hand, counted for ten percent of each participant's final grade; students typically had one week to write this draft after I returned their A drafts.

All of the above coursework occurred in addition to the focus on form activities that the current study was comprised of, which I detail in the materials discussion that occurs later in this chapter. These activities were designed to help achieve the goals of the course, yet in a group format.

Participants

Nineteen ESL learners (7 females, 12 males) participated in the study over a period of twelve weeks while engaging in a variety of group activities (see appendix one). During the second week of the semester, participants completed a questionnaire about their demographics (age, years of residency in the United States, country of origin),

English language learning histories (years of study, type of instruction received, access to spoken and written English), English using habits (use of English in family and social situations, amount of interaction with native speakers, utilization of English in everyday life) (see Appendix A). I requested this information because such information may reveal a great deal about the linguistic, cultural, and personality factors that could affect students' decisions concerning whether or not to focus on form. The results of the questionnaire revealed that participants were between the ages of 18 and 33, the average age being 21. In addition, it revealed that participants had studied English between one and ten years or more, the average being seven years. The average participant, however, had only studied in the United States for less than one year, the longest being for two years. Participants spoke a large variety of languages including: Japanese (3), Taiwanese (1), Turkish (1), Korean (3), Nepali (3), Urdu (2), English (1), Chinese (1), Hindi (2), Malay (1), and Arabic (1). I divided participants into five groups consisting of four to five members each. I based the criteria for each group on a desire to equally distribute males and females across groups and secondly and to distribute the different L1s across groups instead of having students in the same L1 cluster together. Gender was a consideration due to my desire to have a variety of perspectives and viewpoints in groups. The different perspectives of males and females would inevitably provide such variety. Attempting to divide participants according to first language was purely practical: If they all spoke the same L1, then there would be the temptation to use it instead of English. In group five, however, two participants spoke the same L1 (Japanese), yet they did not use it because the other three students came from different L1 backgrounds and did not speak Japanese. Below is a brief profile of each student in their

respective groups, their names having been changed to maintain confidentiality. A summary of each participant can be found on Table 3-1 on page 68.

Group One

Barbara: Barbara is a 33 year-old female from China. She has been studying English for six years and she is majoring in accounting. She has studied in the United States for less than one year, but arrived in the United States in November of 1997. She reports that most her English study in China was conducted in Chinese and that she almost never had any contact with native speakers of English, nor did she have access to English media prior to coming to the United States. She reports spending one to three hours a week reading and speaking to native speakers, respectively. She states that her strongest skill is probably reading and that her weakest skill is writing. She rates her overall English ability at three, but claims that speaking fluent English is quite important for her career. The language that she speaks at home and with her friends is Chinese.

Yumi: Yumi is an eighteen year-old female from Japan. She has studied English for five years and is majoring in aerospace engineering. She has studied in the United States for less than a year and has been in the United States for that same amount of time. She reports that most of her English study in Japan was devoted to grammar and memorization, during which time she did not have any contact with native speakers of English or access to English media. She reports spending one to three hours a week reading in English and less than one hour a week interacting with native speakers of

English. She claims that her strongest skill is reading and that her weakest skill is speaking. She rates her overall English ability at one, but claims that English is extremely important for her major/career. The languages she uses at home and with friends are English and Japanese.

Vipul: Vipul is a 25 year-old Indian male majoring in computer science. He has been in the United States for three years, but has been studying in the U.S for two years. He has studied English for ten or more years and reports that most of his English study in India was done in English, due to the fact that he studied in an English-medium boarding school where use of local languages was forbidden and students were fined for breaking this rule. While in India, he had access to a variety of written and spoken English media, including CNN and BBC, although he rarely interacted with native speakers of English. He reports spending more than ten hours a week reading in English and four to six hours a week interacting with native speakers of English. He claims that speaking is his strongest skill and that writing is his weakest one. He rates his overall English ability at a five and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for his career/major. The language that he usually uses with friends and at home is Hindi.

Rashid: Rashid is 24 year-old male from Oman majoring in computer science. He has been in the United States studying English for one year. He has studied English for five years and reports that most of his English study consisted of rote grammar drills, with little opportunity for practice. While in Oman, he had very little access to English media and never came into contact with native speakers of English. He reports that he

both reads in English and interacts with native speakers for about six hours a week, respectively. He claims that speaking is his strongest skill while writing is his weakest skill. He rates his overall English ability at a three and claims that fluency in English is very important for his career/major. The language that he usually uses with friends and at home is Arabic.

Group Two

Young: Young is 25 year-old Korean male majoring in management information systems. He has been in the United States for two years and has studied in the U.S for the same amount of time. He has studied English for eight years and reports that his English study in Korea consisted of lots of grammar instruction, vocabulary memorization, and lecturing. Little conversation took place. While in Korea, he sometimes watched English media, mostly in the form of news, but very rarely had interaction with native speakers of English. He reports spending seven to ten hours a week reading in English and one to three hours a week speaking with native speakers of English. He claims that understanding spoken English is his strongest skill and that speaking is his weakest skill. He rates his overall English proficiency at four and claims that fluency in the language is quite important for his major/career. The language that he normally uses with friends and family is Korean.

William: William is a 22 year-old male from Cameroon majoring in computer science. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year, but

has studied English for ten or more years. He claims that he mostly studied English grammar while in Cameroon, but also that all of his education was in English. While in Cameroon, he had frequent access to English media such as CNN, BBC, VOA, and the Discovery Channel, to name just a few. In addition, he occasionally had interaction with native speakers of English. He reports spending more than ten hours a week reading in English (seeing as he has recently arrived in the US, he did not comment on how many hours a week he spends on interaction with native speakers of English). He claims that his strongest skill is understanding spoken English and his weakest skill is speaking. He rates his overall English proficiency at four and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for his major/career. The language that he normally uses with friends and at home is English.

Alperin: Alperin is a 21 year-old Turkish male majoring in industrial engineering and management. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than a year, but has been studying English for four years, most of which has consisted of the teacher talking about English via Turkish. While in Turkey, his only access to English media consisted of pop songs, yet he never met a native speaker until he came to the United States. He reports spending one to three hours a week reading in English and seven to ten hours a week interacting with native speakers. He claims that his strongest skill is understanding spoken English, while his weakest skill is writing. He rates his overall English ability at four and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for his major/career. The languages that he most frequently uses with friends and at home are English and Turkish.

Shashi: Shashi is a 19 year-old female from Nepal. She is majoring in electrical engineering and has studied English for ten or more years. She has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. In Nepal, her English instruction consisted primarily of grammar study and heavy amounts of reading. She reports having access to a variety of English media such as CNN, BBC, MTV and National Geographic and occasional interaction with native speakers of English. She reports spending four to six hours a week reading in English (hours speaking w/NS not reported). She claims her strongest skill is reading, while writing is her weakest. She rates her overall English proficiency at three and claims that fluency in English is quite important for her major/career. The languages that she normally uses with friends and at home are English, Nepali, and Hindi.

Group Three

Yasu: Yasu is a 19 year-old male from Japan majoring in aviation sciences. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for less than one year, most of which has consisted of grammar instruction. In Japan, he did not have access to English media and had no or almost no interaction with native speakers of English. He reports spending one to three hours a week reading in English and four to six hours a week interacting with native speakers. He claims that his strongest skill is reading, while his weakest one is speaking. He rates his overall English proficiency at three and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for his

major/career. The languages he normally uses at home and with friends are English and Japanese.

Risa: Risa is a 19 year-old female from Japan whose major is undecided. She has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. She has studied English for seven years, most of which has consisted of grammar instruction. In Japan, she rarely had access to English media, but had occasional contact with native speakers of English. She reports reading in English and speaking with native speakers for one to three hours a week, respectively. She claims that reading is her strongest skill, while understanding spoken English is her weakest skill. She rates her overall English proficiency at three and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for her major/career. The language she normally uses with friends and at home is Japanese.

Askar: Askar is a 19 year-old male from Pakistan majoring in computer science. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for ten or more years, most of which has consisted of grammar. In Pakistan, he had ample access English media, including radio, TV, and newspapers and frequently interacted with native speakers of English. He reports reading in English for one to three hours a week and speaking with native speakers for seven to ten hours a week. He claims that his strongest skill is speaking and his weakest skill is writing. He rates his overall English at three and says that fluency in English is extremely important for his major/career. The languages that he normally uses with his friends and at home are Urdu and English.

Pooya: Pooya is a 19 year-old female from Nepal majoring in biology. She has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. She has studied English for ten or more years, most of which has consisted of grammar and lectures. However, she reports having read alone, without the help or encouragement of teachers. In Nepal, she had access to a variety of local and international English media, such as the BBC, CNN, and MTV, yet rarely came into contact with native speakers of English. She reports reading in English for more than ten hours a week (no comment on contact with native speakers of English). She claims that her strongest skill is writing, while her weakest one is speaking. She rates her overall English proficiency at four and claims that fluency in English is extremely important for her major/career. The language she normally uses with friends and at home is Nepali.

Group Four

Bruce: Bruce is 26 year-old male from Taiwan majoring in food engineering. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for three years, most of which has been grammar taught in the local language. In Taiwan, he had access to English media in the form of television and newspapers. He reports reading in English for ten or more hours a week and speaking with native speakers of English for one to three hours a week. He claims that understanding spoken English is his strongest skill, while writing is his weakest one. He rates his overall English proficiency at three and says that English is extremely important for his major/career. The language he normally uses with friends and at home is Taiwanese.

Kim: Kim is an 18 year-old female from South Korea who was enrolled in this course, but was actually a high school senior on an exchange program. She has been living and studying in the United States for one and a half years. She has studied English for six years, most of which has consisted of grammar instruction via Korean. She reports that she had access to English media while in South Korea and had frequent contact with native speakers of English. She reports reading in English and speaking with native speakers for ten hours a week, respectively. She claims that understanding spoken English is her strongest skill, while writing is her weakest one. She rates her overall English proficiency at four and says that fluency in English is extremely important for her major/career. The language that she normally uses with friends and at home is Korean.

Asit: Asit is a 19 year-old male from Nepal majoring in computer science. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for six years, most of which has been grammar instruction taught in the local language. He reports that English T.V was widely available in Nepal, but that he very rarely had contact with native speakers of English. He reports reading in English for one to three hours a week (didn't comment on speaking with natives). He claims that understanding spoken English is his strongest skill, while speaking is his weakest skill. He rates his overall English proficiency at two and says that English is extremely important for his major/career. The language he normally uses with friends and at home is Nepali.

Adeel: Adeel is an 18 year-old male from India majoring in finance and computer science. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for ten or more years, most of which consisted of reading, rote memorization, and listening to lectures. He reports that English media was readily available in India—mostly in the form of newspapers and television programs—and that he occasionally had contact with a native speakers of English. He reports reading in English for one to three hours a week, and spending seven to ten hours a week conversing with native speakers. He claims that writing is his strongest skill, while reading is his weakest one. He rates his overall English proficiency at four and says that English is quite important for his career. The language that he normally uses with friends and at home is Urdu.

Group Five

Park: Park is a 26 year-old male from Korea majoring in aviation education. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for ten or more years, most of which has consisted of grammar instruction and memorizing vocabulary. He reports that US military news and English-language newspapers were available to him in Korea, yet he rarely had any interaction with native speakers. He reports reading in English and interacting with native speakers for one to three hours a week, respectively. He claims that his strongest skill is reading, while his weakest one is speaking. He rates his overall English proficiency at two and says that

English proficiency is extremely important for his career. The language that he normally uses with friends and at home is Korean.

Daniel: Daniel is a 23 year-old male from Malaysia majoring in computer science. He has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. He has studied English for one year, most of which has consisted of grammar. He reports that English media were available to him in Malaysia, yet did not specify the nature of them. In addition, he reports having almost no interaction with native speakers while in Malaysia. He reports reading in English for one to three hours a week and interacting with native speakers for four to six hours weekly. He claims that his strongest skill is reading, while his weakest one is speaking. He rates his overall English proficiency at three and claims that proficiency in English is extremely important for his career. The language that he normally uses with friends and at home is Malay.

Neru: Neru is 19 year-old female from Zambia majoring in electrical engineering. She has been living and studying in the United States for less than one year. She has studied English for ten or more years, most of which has consisted of grammar instruction. She reports that since English is the official language of Zambia, a plethora of English media were available to her in print as well as in television. She reports reading in English and interacting with native speakers for more than ten hours a week, respectively. She claims that her strongest skill is understanding spoken English, while her weakest one is reading. She rates her overall English proficiency at five and claims

proficiency in English is quite important for her career. The languages that she normally uses with friends and at home are Hindi and English.

Table 3.1

Description of Learners

Group	Country	Age	Major	Yrs Study	Yrs US	Hrs Week NS	+ Skill	- Skill
1	China	33	Accounting	6	5	1-3	R	W
1	Japan	18	Engineering	5	1	1	R	W
1	India	25	Computer science	10	3	6	S	W
1	Oman	24	Computer science	5	1	6	S	W
2	Korea	25	MIS	8	2	rarely	S	W
2	Cameroon	22	Computer Science	10	1	-	L	S
2	Turkey	21	Engineering	4	1	7-10	L	W
2	Nepal	19	Engineering	10	1	-	R	W
3	Japan	19	Aviation	1	1	4-6	R	W
3	Japan	19	Undecided	7	1	1-3	R	L
3	Pakistan	19	Computer Science	10	1	7-10	S	W
3	Nepal	19	Biology	10	1	-	W	S
4	Taiwan	26	Engineering	3	1	1-3	L	W
4	Korea	18	Undecided	6	1.5	10	L	W
4	Nepal	19	Computer Science	6	1	-	L	S
4	India	18	Finance	10	1	7-10	W	R
5	Korea	26	Aviation	10	1	1-3	R	S
5	Malaysia	23	Computer Science	1	1	4-6	R	S
5	Zambia	19	Engineering	10	1	10	L	R

Materials

The group activities described below were designed to improve the basic reading (global, analytic, and vocabulary building) and writing skills (thesis, body paragraphs, conclusion, grammar, mechanics, vocabulary usage). However, the main difference between these activities and the others used in class was the format used. Whereas the other activities were either teacher-centered or individualistic, the activities used for the current study were group based. In addition to improving basic reading and writing skills, group work enabled an environment in which form could be addressed as Long (1991) originally conceived of it: spontaneously and on a need-to-know-basis.

The activities that students engaged in revolved around readings from *Applying Cultural Anthropology: An Introductory Reader* (Podolefsky and Brown, 2001), the required text, and group simulations, an instructional tool used in the course curriculum. The readings from Podolefsky and Brown involved two components: a comprehension section requiring students to report on information contained directly in the text and a second section asking students to reflect upon the themes mentioned in the readings. In this section, students, as a group, wrote expository answers to these questions. In the simulations, students were given particular readings in which they were required to analyze various readings and do at least one of the following: answer comprehension questions, write a group essay/story about the topic contained in the readings, and/or prepare a presentation on a certain topic. For each activity, groups elected one member to write answers to questions and record the essay/story. Frequently, though not always, the sections of each activity were divided into sections labeled "tasks."

While both the readings and the group simulations had the same objectives in mind--e.g., improving basic reading and writing skills—the former were more complex, due to the fact that such readings were made for native speakers in an introductory anthropology class, in addition to being much longer in length. The latter, however, were made specifically for ESL students, were shorter, and did not contain the complex ideas and vocabulary seen in the former. Thus, they were simpler in nature. Yet, neither the readings nor the simulations were designed in order to encourage students to attend to specific forms, thus allowing both to be represented as communicatively-based activities as conceived of by Long (1991). Finally, as I explain below, some activities required more time than others. However, length of activities had nothing to do with their inherent complexity, and thus I did not have reason to believe that longer tasks would necessarily produce more attendance to form.

In total, I had students engage in a total of eight activities, four of which (3, 4, 6, 7) revolved around readings from Podolefsky and Brown (2001), and four of which (1, 2, 5, 8) were simulations. Although some of the activities were designed to take three class periods to complete-e.g., activity one-most activities lasted no more than one day, with the exception of activities four and eight, which lasted two days each. Thus, activities two, three, five, six, and seven lasted only one class period each. The duration of each activity was solely based on the time that I perceived students would need to complete them. A brief description of each activity is given below, in the order in which they were completed:

Activity One

Activity one was a simulation in which students were required to read two different version of "The Three Little Pigs," answer comprehension questions on them in task one, and write a new ending to the end of one version in task two (see Appendix B). The purposes of this activity were to increase reading comprehension skills, get students accustomed to comparing/contrasting text, and encourage the creative use of vocabulary.

Activity Two

The second activity was a simulation requiring students to create a fictional family. The activity took place over two class periods. In the first part, students were required to answer basic questions about their family (nationality, language, number of family members, wedding customs, etc.). In the second part, students wrote a group essay based on the questions in the first part. Finally, students wrote individual essays describing their roles in their families; this part was done individually (see Appendix C). The purpose of this activity was two-fold: (1) to encourage creative use of vocabulary; and (2) to give students writing practice with familiar subjects.

Activity Three

In activity three, the first part required students to answer comprehension questions on the essay "Crack in Spanish Harlem" from Podolefsky and Brown (2001),

while task two required students to reflect on how this essay has changed their perceptions on drug addiction and poverty (see Appendix D). This activity aimed at encouraging students to formulate thesis statements and argumentative skills, in addition to supplying them with specialized vocabulary concerning illegal drugs in the United States.

Activity Four

This activity took place during a single class period and had two sections that revolved around two readings from Podolefsky and Brown (2001), "African Polygyny: Family Values and Contemporary Changes" and "Law, Custom, and Crimes Against Women: The Problem of Dowry in India". The first part required students to answer comprehension questions about both essays, while the second part required students to reflect on the concepts of polygamy and monogamy (see Appendix E). This activity aimed to help students formulate and articulate clear ideas on the concept of marriage. It also aimed to promote dialogue and understanding among the students about their different cultures and customs.

Activity Five

Activity five took place during one class period and revolved around the essays "Chinese Table Manners: You are *how* you eat" and "Ritual in the Operating Room" from Podolefsky and Brown (2001). In the first part, students were required to answer

comprehension questions over the essay, while in the second part, they were required to write about daily rituals/habits in American life (see Appendix F). I designed this activity to help students learn how to compare/contrast objects, ideas, etc., in order to prepare them for one of the essays that we did in class.

Activity Six

This activity, which took place during one class period, was an extension of activity five in that it required students to reflect upon the ritualistic habits/behaviors of Americans and whether or not they would be acceptable in their cultures. Here, students were required to discuss such habits/behaviors in their country and then write individual responses (see Appendix G). Since this was an extension of activity five, its purpose was the same.

Activity Seven

This activity, which took place over two class periods, revolved around the essay "Advertising and Global Culture" from Podolefsky and Brown (2001). In task one, students were required to answer comprehension questions; in task two, students wrote a short response to a statement about the effects of advertising and local traditions and values (see Appendix H). The purpose of this activity was two-fold: to expose students to vocabulary related to globalization, and to give students more practice with comparison/contrast types of writing.

Activity Eight

Activity eight took place over two class periods and revolved around a simulation about the pros and cons of whaling (*English 1123: International Freshman Composition, Oklahoma State University Department of English*, 2002). Each group was assigned a country that was to represent either a pro or con whaling position. After reading two essays about whaling, students were to write a position that would be represented their country's views at an international whaling conference. This activity aimed at promoting argumentation skills and increasing knowledge of the vocabulary used when discussing environmental issues.

Pilot Study and its Results

Before setting up the present study, I conducted a pilot study on a similar, although numerically much smaller, group of participants (Poole, 2001). I wanted to see whether or not there were differences between males and females in terms of the frequency with which they attended to form, the types of forms they attended to (morphosyntax vs. vocabulary), and the LREs that occurred in order to attend to form. In addition, I sought to discover whether or not the participants in this group differed from Williams' (1999) in terms of the types of LREs initiated and whether or not there were individual differences among participants.

Using ten students (five males, five females) between the ages of 18 and 31 from four different L1s, I divided the participants into two groups of five, one of which

consisted of three males and two females, the other of which consisted of three females and two males. Next, I recorded two hours of group interaction over five class periods using activities from readings in Podolefsky and Brown (2001). The results showed that there were no differences between males and females in terms of the frequency with which they attended to form and the kinds of forms to which they attended. However, there were differences in the kinds of forms (morphosyntax vs. vocabulary) participants attended to, vocabulary accounting for the bulk of forms attended to (92%). In terms of the kinds of LREs participants initiated, there were differences. As previously reported, advanced learners in Williams' (1999) study most frequently initiated LREs in the form of learner-initiated requests to another learner (36%), while the second most frequent kind was learner-initiated questions to teacher (35%). In contrast, the participants in my study most frequently initiated LREs in the form of metatalk (39%), followed by learner-initiated requests to other learners (25%), negotiation (19.4%), other correction (11.1%), and learner-initiated questions to teacher (5.5%). In addition, I found that there were individual differences, with a small group of students accounting for the bulk of LREs. One student, for instance, accounted for 33.3% of all LREs made, another accounted for 28%, while a third accounted for 19.4%. All together, these three participants originated 81% of all LREs made.

This study was valuable, first and foremost, because it showed that Williams' (1999) results could not be generalized to this group, leading me to consider a more extensive study. Second, I learned that factors such as gender may not be very significant concerning LRE use. Finally, and most importantly, it showed me where the gaps were.

For example, I noticed that punctuation, which I did not officially count, was frequently attended to and concluded that it should be taken into account in future studies.

Data Collection

Data were collected over a period of ten weeks. During this period, students typically engaged in group activities on a weekly basis, although there were no activities during weeks five and eight because of other class requirements. In total, nine hours of data were collected from twelve 45-minute sessions. As noted earlier, the class met three times a week for 50 minutes each period. Recordings were limited to 45-minutes each; I needed 4-5 minutes to set up my recording equipment. Prior to recording, tapes were labeled with the group number and the date during which they were recorded in order to keep track of the order in which data were collected.

Data Treatment and Analysis

Types of Forms, Language-Related Episodes (LREs), and Content of Forms

In Chapter I, I define 'form' as meaning morphosyntax, vocabulary, and punctuation. This is the same as Williams' (1999) definition, except that mine includes punctuation. While in the process of identifying LREs—which I describe below—I identified the type of form which it contained.

All classroom data were analyzed for language-related episodes (LREs) after each class was completed. In transcribing the LREs, I used Swain's (1998) conception of the term to guide my study. Williams (1999) defines an LRE as "...discourse in which the learners talk or ask about language, or question, implicitly or explicitly, their own language use or that of others. Language use might include the meaning, spelling, or pronunciation of a word, the choice of grammatical inflection, word order, and so on" (p. 595). More specifically, I divided the LREs into four of the five categories established by Williams and used them to identify how students attended to form: (1) learner-initiated questions to teacher; (2) negotiation; (3) metatalk; (4) and other correction. The fifth category, learner-initiated requests to other learners, is the same as learner-initiated request to another learner; however, the former, in my opinion, is more specific because when a learner initiates a request to another learner, he/she may be requesting information from more than one party. Using Williams' LREs allowed me to continue and add to her research and by extension, help gather more information on spontaneous focus on form using one set of criteria.

In order to identify Williams' (1999) LRE categories, I listened to the tapes and transcribed those sections in which I thought that they had appeared. The tapes were not transcribed from beginning to end; rather, individual LREs were recorded verbatim. Then, two to three days later, I would return to the transcription to confirm that I had correctly identified the categories for that particular day. I felt that not looking at the data for two to three days would allow me enough distance from the data to objectively analyze it again. If I had incorrectly identified an LRE the first time, I would try to correctly identify it and then return to it two to three days later. If I was not confident in

my identification after returning to the data two times, I would eliminate the LRE from the data set. In such cases, the data were so ambiguous that I felt that I could continue to analyze and not find clarity.

Other data that were excluded involved those potential LREs that were marginally intelligible due to excessive background noise, student pronunciation, or recording problems. I erred on the side of caution: If I could not comprehend a section of a tape the second time I listened to it, I stopped trying out of fear that I may be erroneously interpreting the data. Problems with comprehension on the first listen could happen because of a number of factors (background noise, concentration level, etc.); however, such problems were usually eliminated the second time I listened to the tape in question.

I identified the content of forms at the same time when I identified their LRE type. By "content," I mean the specific lexical, grammatical, or mechanical aspect of a form. This definition includes the meaning, understanding, and usage of words and morphosyntactic items.

Finally, I should note that individual appearances of LREs were counted, not how many students participated in LREs. If, for instance, three or more students participated in one LRE, it would still only be counted as one LRE.

Research Questions

(1) Do groups differ in terms on the number of forms they attend to?

(2) What second language forms do learners most commonly address?

(3) In what ways do learners address forms?

(4) Does task type affect the number and types of forms learners attend to?

(5) What do the forms learners attend to consist of in terms of their content?

Analysis

Frequencies were tallied to answer the above research questions. Since this was a descriptive study, finding significant differences was not the focus; describing focus on form during communicative activities was. In addition, the student information questionnaire (see Appendix A) given at the beginning of the semester—and described earlier in this chapter—was utilized, as were my classroom observations as the teacher, in order to add insight to the numerical analysis. Finally, during the last day of the group work, I asked students to fill out a questionnaire regarding their feelings about their individual groups, group work in general, and the content of the group work they had been assigned (see Appendix I). I did this to both improve my teaching and gain insight to the numerical analysis. Students returned the questionnaires to me during the next class period (two days later). No grade was given for doing the questionnaire, yet points were to be taken off for those who did not complete it. Fortunately, all students returned their questionnaires.

More specifically, the student information questionnaire, my personal observations, and the end-of-the-term questionnaire illuminated students' feelings, group relationships, self-perceived language proficiency, and were used to help explain or contradict the numerical analysis.

CHAPTER IV

Results

In this chapter, I address the five research questions stated in chapter three. I report the results of the study in the form of responses to each of the research questions and compare my results to Williams' (1999). As stated in the previous chapter, data were analyzed using frequencies, the student information questionnaire, classroom observations, and end-of-the term questionnaire. The following is a list of the questions to be addressed by this study:

(1) Do groups differ in terms of the number forms they attend to?

(2) What second language forms do learners most commonly address?

(3) In what ways do learners address forms?

(4) Does task type affect the number and types of forms learners attend to?

(5) What do the forms learners attend to consist of in terms of their content

(1) Do groups differ in terms of the number of forms they attend to?

Learners attended to a total of 108 LREs. Group 1 had substantially more LREs than the other groups (LRE=40). Group 4 had the second most (LRE=23), followed by group 5 (LRE=19), group 3 (LRE=14), and group 2 (LRE=12). The difference between

group 1 and group 2 in terms of the number of LREs they initiated was vast (see Table 4.1). However, the difference between seems to be attributable to two different factors: ability to participate and activity recorder.

Table 4.1

Number of Forms Attended to by Groups

Group	Number of LREs
1	40
2	12
3	14
4	23
5	19
Total	108

In Group 1, which had the greatest number of LREs (N=40), there was a certain level of dominance exhibited by Vipul. First of all, he was involved in all LREs, usually giving answers to questions and giving unsolicited information on forms. In the following example, Vipul asks a question about the word "karat," without prompt from any of the other three group members. His point was to highlight an error he had seen on one of the handouts:

Vipul: What is karat? K-A-R-A-T?

Barbara: Ya, I think.

Vipul: What is that?

Barbara: It's a karat, you know to adjust a gold.

Vipul: The unit of gold, but it's spelled C-A-R-A-T.

Barbara: No, this is for, for gold is how, how, how many-

Vipul: Ya, but the gold thing is called C-A-R-A-T. Carat. C-A-R-A-T, this is what you use for gold.

Barbara: C-A-R-A-T, ah.

Vipul's ability to assert himself seemed to be due to the fact that he had much more experience learning and using English than any of the other members of his group. As reported in Chapter 3, Vipul had studied English for 10 or more years, as opposed to Barbara, who had studied English for six years, and Yumi and Rashid who had both studied English for five years. The length of study in and of itself does not guarantee better English; however, in Vipul's situation, the length of study did make a difference due to the immersion setting that he had experienced. In a conversation we had after the final examination, he reported to me that he had studied in an English-medium boarding school in his home state in India. During that time, he was not allowed to use his native language, neither in class, nor in social situations. This was a rule that the school held in order to minimize tensions among students of different first languages, and to facilitate fluent use of English. Students who broke it were subject to demerits and monetary fines.

Thus, Vipul was much more experienced and comfortable using English than the other three participants. In addition, he was frequently sought out when forms were addressed. This exclusivity was due in large part to Barbara--the recorder for each activity, who was thus forced to deal more directly with the forms attended to than Yumi and Rashid—who turned to Vipul when problems occurred. Barbara did this non-verbally by simply making eye contact with Vipul, but also did so verbally, such as in the following example in which Yumi and Barbara are debating on the meaning of the word 'world' and Barbara turns to Vipul in order to resolve the matter:

Yumi: Finally, they got world

Barbara: World

Yumi: World

Barbara: World

Yumi: World, W-O-R-L-D

Barbara: W-O-R-L-D

Yumi: War

Barbara: I think this is, in the world.

Yumi: Ya, ya, ya, I want to say world.

Barbara: Yes, world, world.

Yumi: World

Barbara: This one is world, right?

Vipul: World.

Barbara: Oh, ya.

While Vipul had a dominant position in terms of the number of LREs initiated and his role in resolving them, Yumi, on her end-of-the-term questionnaire, noted that she felt insecure about her ability to speak: " I always annoyed my poor English skills. I want to talk more, but I cannot speak well. I'm afraid of speaking in my group." It is significant to note that Yumi did not initiate a single LRE, nor did she participate in many. The bulk of LREs, as previously noted, were initiated and resolved by Vipul and Barbara.

The ability to participate and the activity recorder—the group with the fewest number of LREs—manifested themselves differently for group 2 than for group 1. First,

although there were differences in the amount of exposure the members had to English, there was no one individual in particular who appeared to have the kind of proficiency in spoken English that enabled him/her to dominate the group. In fact, this group was particularly active, many of its members arguing and debating points. The members were quite friendly with each other, so much so that Shashi noted their out of class interactions: "I had very good relations with other members. We had conversation outside of class, and we did also other class' homework together." Nevertheless, high levels of individual participation seem not to have produced individuals who could assert themselves and whom other group members could request help regarding the resolution of LREs. Moreover, members rarely followed directions for the selection of a recorder for the activities; instead, several different members would record answers and they would hand-in all work at the end of the activity. Typically, the answers to the questions would be their own and not those the group had formulated. Finally, all members of the group talked so much that several parts of the tapes were incomprehensible. When this occurred, there probably was not a lot of opportunity for addressing individual forms.

(2) What second language forms do learners most commonly address?

The analysis revealed large differences between the number of forms concerning morphosyntax (97 of 108-89.8%) and vocabulary (11 of 108-10.2%). There were no LREs devoted to punctuation, so this category was not included (see Table 4.2). As seen in Table 4.2, this high number of vocabulary-based forms was not limited to one group in particular, but rather to all groups--group 1 (90%), group 2 (83.3%), group 3 (85.7%),

group 4 (91.3%), and group 5 (94.7%). In general, these results mimicked those of Williams (1999) whose study revealed that 80% of all forms were vocabulary centered, as opposed to 20% which focused on morphosyntax. Although not based on conclusive findings, Williams speculated that students attended to forms on the basis of task appropriateness. This could be the issue here also, since neither task type was highly structured in the sense that the tasks necessitate focusing on morphosyntax. This issue is discussed later in this chapter at some length.

Table 4.2

Types of Forms

Group	Morphosyntax	Vocabulary	Total
1	4	36	40
	10%	90%	100%
2	2	10	12
	16.7%	83.3%	100%
3	2	12	14
	14.3%	85.7%	100%
4	2	21	23
	8.7%	91.3%	100%
5	1	18	19
	5.3%	94.7%	100%
Total	11	97	108
	10.2%	89.8%	100%

(3) In what ways do learners address forms?

The LRE most frequently used by students was negotiation (35 LREs or 32.4%), followed by learner initiated request-other learners (15 LREs or 13.9%), other correction

(12 LREs or 11.1%), and metatalk (11 LREs or 10.2%) (see Table 4.3). Negotiation was the most numerically frequent, and this did not vary much from group to group. For groups one, two, and four, the LRE of negotiation represented the largest percentage of LRE episodes, 42.5%, 33.3%, and 30.4%, respectively. For group three, negotiation tied with learner initiated request-other learners (21.4%) for the most frequent LREs, while in group five, negotiation tied with metatalk (21.4%) (see Table 4.4). The reasons for such results appear to be tied with earlier in response to question one: proficiency in spoken English. As reported in Chapter 2, Williams (1999) defined negotiation as an attempt to resolve a communication breakdown. While such communication breakdowns can occur with native or near-native speakers, they seem much more likely to appear when there are large ability gaps present, as was the case with the students in this study. For example; every group had at least one student who had studied English for ten or more years and one student who had studied for five years or less.

While these categories constituted 67.6% of all LREs, they do not account for 32.4% of all the LREs initiated. Two operations need to be made here: (1) the absence of learner-initiated request to teacher, and (2) the presence of two new LREs and mixed LREs, which constituted the 32.4% of all LREs. The first one is somewhat difficult to account for, although I think three variables are responsible for it: (1) class size and (2) class format and (3) learner proficiency levels. The first one is significant because the class was fairly large compared to Williams's (1999) (N=19). During the activities, I typically went from group to group to see how they were doing, yet did not spend more than about a minute with each. When students noticed that I had other groups to attend to, I do not think that learners felt I was a reliable source to call on when problems arose.

However, students did sometimes request information from me, but such information was almost exclusively concerned with directions and other logistical matters.

Table 4.3

Types of LREs Initiated

LRE	Frequency	Percent
Negotiation	35	32.4
LIR	15	13.9
Metatalk	11	10.2
OC	12	11.1
LI	6	5.6
LI-Q	2	1.9
NEG+LIR	10	9.3
OC+NEG	3	2.8
LIR+MET	3	2.8
LI+MET	3	2.8
LI+NEG	3	2.8
LI-Q+MET	1	.9
NEG+LIQ-T	1	.9
LI+OC	1	.9
LI-Q+NEG	1	.9
LI+LIR	1	.9
Total	108	100

Key: LIR=Learner-initiated request; LIQ-T=Learner-initiated question-teacher; OC=Other Correction; MET=Metatalk; NEG=Negotiation; LI-Learner Interjection; LI-Q=Learner Interjection-Question

Table 4.4

Types of LREs Initiated According to Group

LRE Types	Group1 % in group	Group2 % in group	Group3 % in group	Group4 % in group	Group5 % in group
N	17	4	3	7	4
	42.5	33.3	21.4	30.4	21.1
LIR	6	0	3	4	2
	15	0	21.4	17.4	10.5
M	1	1	1	4	4
	2.5	8.3	7.1	17.4	21.1
OC	6	4	1	0	1
	15	33.3	7.1	0	5.3
LI	0	0	1	3	2
	0	0	7.1	13	10.5
LIQ	0	0	0	0	2
	0	0	0	0	10.5
N+LIR	5	2	3	0	0
	12.5	16.7	21.4	0	0
OC+N	1	1	0	0	1
	2.5	8.3	0	0	5.3
LIR+M	0	0	0	3	0
	0	0	0	13	0
LI+M	2	0	0	1	0
	5	0	0	4.3	0
LI+N	1	0	0	0	2
	2.5	0	0	0	10.5
LIQ+M	0	0	1	0	0
	0	0	7.1	0	0
N+LIQT	0	0	1	0	0
	0	0	7.1	0	0

Table 4.4 (continued)

LI+OC	0	0	0	1	0
	0	0	0	4.3	0
LIQ+N	0	0	0	0	1
	0	0	0	0	5.3
LI+LIR	1	0	0	0	0
	2.5	0	0	0	0
Total	40	12	14	23	19
	100	100	100	100	100

Key: LIR=Learner-initiated request; LIQT=Learner-initiated question-teacher OC=Other Correction; MET=Metatalk; NEG=Negotiation; LI-Learner Interjection; LIQ=Learner Interjection-Question

The second reason for students not initiating requests to the teacher is concerned with class format. As I pointed out earlier, Williams' (1999) class was part of an intensive English program which encouraged students to be active participants and to request assistance when necessary, in addition to promoting autonomy. In this class, in contrast, I did not encourage students to learn in any one specific way. As a result, students might not have felt comfortable asking me questions.

The third reason, learner proficiency level, was significant because students may not have felt the need to request information from the teacher. As previously reported in Chapter 3, a number of students had several years of formal and informal exposure to English; thus, requests may have been directed at more proficient learners instead of the teacher. The following instance exemplifies this point. In it, Asit, Bruce and Kim are discussing whether or not the verb *to globalize* should be active or passive. They disagree and seem not to be able to resolve it amongst themselves. However, instead of turning to the teacher, they ask Adeel, an Indian who had studied English for more than 10 years, and who studied primarily in English during high school:

Asit: Globalizing day by day

Bruce: Globalizing is

Kim: Isn't it passive?

Bruce: More folks globalizing

Asit: More folks are globalized

Kim: Is it active? I thought it was glo-

Bruce: This should be globa-

Kim: Because society is globalized

Bruce: No, because society, it keep working and you can see this

Asit: Whose idea is what?

Kim: I thought we're supposed to use passive voice: "Society's globalizing."

Adeel: Ya, has

Kim: Ya, it is with passive voice.

Adeel: Globalizing, okay. Present perfect, go ahead. Ya. Present continuous.

Other than the absence of learner-initiated request to teacher, the presence of two new categories and mixed categories was also significant. I have termed the new categories leaner interjection and learner interjection-question. The former occurs when a learner adds information that has not been solicited, but neither is an error apparent. Typically, learners appear to interject in order to help clarify a form when they sense that miscommunication or lack of understanding is present, as in the following example. Here, after initially being unable to hear the word "twisted" due to background noise, Yumi seems to be confused on some aspect of the word, whether it is meaning or

pronunciation. However, the problem is not explicitly apparent. In an attempt to clarify the term and to prevent a communication breakdown, Vipul spells out the term:

Vipul: Okay, it's a twisted version

Yumi: Twisted?

Yumi: Twisted

Vipul: Twisted

Yumi: Twisted

Vipul: T-W-I-S-T-E-D [Spelling out words, which they seemed to often do]

Barbara: T-W-I-S-T-E-D

In addition to interjections to help relieve communication breakdowns, learners occasionally ask questions in order to clarify whether or not their group members understand certain concepts in order for them to continue their discussion concerned with a particular form. I call this learner interjection-question. In the following conversation, Neru asks Park if he knows the word 'prejudice,' in order for her to continue using the word without a communication breakdown:

Neru: So, we shouldn't have prejudice. You know what prejudice is?

Park: Ya

Neru: Already thinking okay, take it back or ah

Finally, it became apparent that many forms were initially attended to using one type of LRE, but ended with another type. These could take many different combinations. For example: Pooya asks Askar how to pronounce the letter 'A,' thereby initiating a learner-initiated request to another learner; however, the question is followed by a discussion (metatalk) on how it should be pronounced:

Pooya: Askar, how do Americans say 'A'?

Askar: A

Pooya: A

Askar: A

Pooya: Are you sure?

Askar: Ya

Pooya: Whenever I say 'A,' they look at me. It happened several times. Whenever they ask me to spell my name I say P-O-O-Y-A, they write P-O-O-Y-E.

Askar: Hmm, it's spelled with 'A.'

Pooya: No, I always say 'A' and they write 'E.' Almost every time.

Askar: Maybe they get it confused with 'Y' double 'E.'

Pooya: I don't have 'E' in my name.

Askar: How do you spell your name?

Pooya: P-O-O-Y-A

While these other types of LREs constituted 32.4% of all LREs, none of them amounted to more than 5.6% of the total number of LREs: learner interjection (6 LREs or 5.6%), other correction + negotiation (3 LREs or 2.8%), learner-initiated request-other learner + metatalk (3 LREs or 2.8%), learner interjection + metatalk (3 LREs or 2.8%), learner interjection + negotiation (3 LREs or 2.8%), learner interjection-question (2 LREs or 1.9%), learner interjection-question + metatalk (1 LRE or .9%), negotiation + learner initiated question-teacher (1 LRE or .9%), learner interjection + other correction (1 LRE or .9%), learner interjection-question + negotiation (1 LRE or .9%), and learner interjection + learner initiated request-other learner (1 LRE or.9%). (see Table 4.3).

While Williams (1999) did not discuss mixed LREs, it does not mean that they did not occur, but rather that she concentrated on their initial form. In any case, given the relative complexity of oral discourse, it should not come as a surprise that learners address forms in more ways than one.

(4) Does task type affect the number and types of forms learners attend to?

I had the students engage in a total of eight activities, four of which (3, 4, 6, 7) revolved around readings from Podolefsky and Brown (2001), and four of which (1, 2, 5, 8) were simulations. Although some of the activities were designed to take three class periods to complete-e.g., activity one-most activities lasted no more than one day, with the exception of activities four and eight, which lasted two days each. Thus, activities two, three, five, six, and seven lasted only one class period each. There were 56 LREs during activity one, 15 during activity two, 10 for activity three, 12 for activity four, 4 for activity five, 1 for activity six, 3 for activity seven, 7 for activity eight. Of those that dealt with readings from Podolefsky and Brown (2001), there were 26 LREs; of those that dealt with simulations, there were 82 LREs. Clearly, simulations generated more LREs than readings, in spite of the fact that the readings would appear to offer more opportunities for focusing on form. However, a factor that may better explain the difference between these two types of tasks is the amount of time available. The first activity, which was a simulation, was responsible for more than half of all LREs (56 of 108); after activity one, all subsequent activities produced substantially lower numbers of

LREs, regardless of their task type. However, even if activity one were not counted, there would be equal amounts of LREs (26) for each task type (see Table 4.5).

Thus, if activity one is not included, there is no difference between task types as far as the number of LREs they generate is concerned. The reason for this is hard to speculate; nonetheless, it is interesting that LREs tended to decrease as time progressed. Although I did not measure students' level of enthusiasm, it seems that the students lost interest in the activities with the passage of time, perhaps causing them to attend less to form. Personally, I did not observe any classroom behavior that would indicate less enthusiasm for group work.

Table 4.5

Frequency of Task

Activities	Task Types	Number of LRES
1	Simulation	56
2	Simulation	15
3	Reading	10
4	Reading	12
5	Simulation	4
6	Reading	1
7	Reading	3
8	Simulation	7
Total	Simulations	82
Total	Readings	26
Total	Both types	108

(5) What do the forms learners attend to consist of in terms of their content?

Content refers to the morphosyntactic and lexical categories students to which students attended. As mentioned above, vocabulary was the type of form most frequently focused on. Out of 108 individual forms, 97 (89.8%) involved vocabulary, while 11 (10.2%) involved morphosyntax. Out of 108 individual forms, 54 (50%) were concerned with meaning, followed by pronunciation (19-17.6%), spelling (12-11.1%), comprehension (10-9.3%), noun-plural (2-2.8%), word choice (2-1.9%), adjective form (2-1.9%), agreement (1-.9%), and voice (1-.9%) (see Table 4.6 & Figure 4.1).

Table 4.6

Content of Forms

Content	Frequency	Percent
Meaning	54	50
Tense	4	3.7
Pronunciation	19	17.6
Noun-Plural	3	2.8
Spelling	12	11.1
Word Choice	2	1.9
Comprehension	10	9.3
Agreement	1	.9
Voice	1	.9
Adjective	2	1.9
Total	108	100

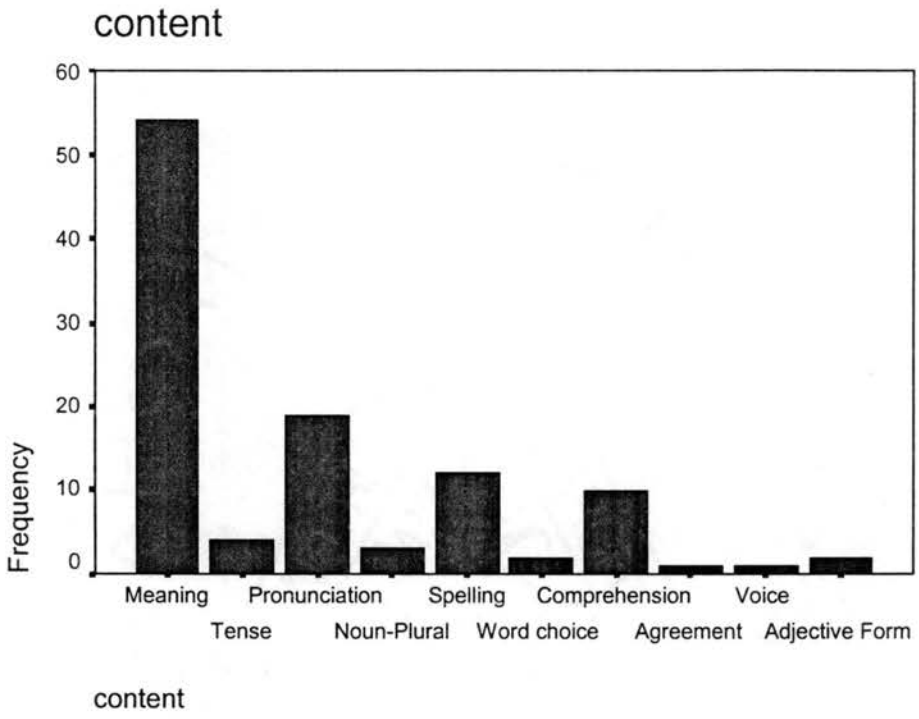


Figure 4.1. Content of forms.

In presenting the above analysis, I differentiate meaning from comprehension. In my opinion, meaning is concerned with the significance of a word; that is, what is represents. In the following example of a meaning LRE, Neru, and Park try to help Daniel understand the meaning of the word "tofu."

Neru: Tofu, do you know what Tofu is?

Daniel: Tofu?

Neru: Tofu

Park: Tofu, tofu

Neru: Tofu

Daniel: Tofu

Neru: TOFU. You know, ah, white, white. Tofu.

Park: Tofu

Daniel: White color?

Neru: Ya, white color

Daniel: Very soft?

Neru: Ya, it's made of ah soy beans

Park: Surely you do eat.

Neru: Ya.

Daniel: I don't know

Comprehension, on the other hand, involves situations in which a learner understands the meaning of a word, but appears not to be able to understand it in the form presented. In the following example, Yasu has difficulties comprehending the phrase "nine children," but eventually does:

Askar: Breeding nine children.

Yasu: What?

Askar: Nine children

Yasu: Nine children?

Pooya: Nine children

Askar: Ya

Pooya: Example?

Askar: For God's sake write this!

Yasu: Nine?

Askar: NINE, NINE, NINE

Yasu: Oh, nine.

Askar: Nine children

Yasu: Nine children

Although the results in this study were quite similar to those of Williams (1999), they yielded some additional information. In Williams' (1999) study, of those LREs in which vocabulary was the focus, the advanced group focused more than 50% of LREs on meaning, followed by pronunciation, word form, and word choice. None of the LREs at the advanced level in her study was concerned with spelling. Of the LREs that dealt with morphosyntax (tense, noun-plural, adjective, form, agreement, and voice), tense was discussed the most. In addition, all the LREs that concerned verb tense were initiated via other correction; that is, learners addressed tense by correcting the incorrect use of another learner. In her study, Williams also found that tense was discussed more than any other morphosyntactic form for advanced learners, with a total of seven LREs devoted to this type of form. None of the other types of forms were focused on more than three times. However, because the tasks in Williams' study and the present one were quite different, making direct comparisons between them is not entirely appropriate.

At least 40% of the LREs in each group were concerned with meaning (see Table 4.7). However, of the 11 LREs that involved morphosyntax, 4 (3.7%) dealt with tense, 3 (2.8%) with noun-plural nouns, 2 (2.8%) with adjective form, 1 (.9%) with agreement, and 1 (.9%) with voice (see Table 4.7). Of those that dealt with vocabulary, 54 (50%) dealt with meaning, followed by pronunciation (19-17.6%), spelling (12-11.1%), comprehension (10-9.3%), and word choice (2-1.9%) (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Content of LREs within Groups

Group	M	T	P	NP	S	WC	C	A	V	AF	TO
1	21	2	7	1	3	0	5	1	0	0	40
% in group	52.5	5	17.5	2.5	7.5	0	12.5	2.5	0	0	100
2	5	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	12
% in group	41.7	8.3	16.7	8.3	0	8.3	16.7	0	0	0	100
3	6	0	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	14
% in group	42.9	0	21.4	7.1	7.1	0	14.3	0	0	7.1	100
4	10	0	4	0	5	1	1	0	1	1	23
% in group	43.5	0	17.4	0	21.7	4.3	4.3	0	4.3	4.3	100
5	12	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	19
% in group	63.2	5.3	15.8	0	15.8	0	0	0	0	0	100
Total	54	4	19	3	12	2	10	1	1	2	108
% of total	50	3.7	17.6	2.8	11.1	1.9	9.3	.9	.9	1.9	100

Key: M=meaning; T=Tense; P=Pronunciation; NP=Noun Plural; S=Spelling; WC=Word Choice; C=Comprehension; A=Agreement; V=Voice; AF=Adjective Form; TO=Total

In this Chapter, I have presented the results of the research questions, and have speculated on why these results occurred. I have also compared the results of this study to that of Williams' (1999) when appropriate. In the next chapter, I further discuss the results of the study, the study's implications for future research, and the study's possible impact on instruction.

Chapter V

Discussion of Major Findings

In this chapter, I discuss the results of the study in three ways: (1) I list each research question and comment on the results reported in the previous chapter, comparing them with Williams' (1999) findings where appropriate; (2) I arrive at conclusions about some of the areas and discuss possible pedagogical consequences; (3) Finally, I discuss areas that should be the subjects of future research in this area.

(1) Do groups differ in terms of the number forms they attend to?

Indeed, there were significant differences between groups in terms of the amount of LREs that occurred. As seen, Group 1 (LRE=40) had almost twice as many LREs as Group 2 (LRE=23), and far more than Group 2 (LRE=12), Group 3 (LRE=14), and Group 5 (LRE=19). As stated in Chapter 3, this difference in the number of LREs may have been due to the ability of group members to participate and the identity of the recorder. While empirical research will be necessary in order to address this issue with some certainty, it appears that having participants of different proficient levels helps to foster LREs. Because negotiation was the largest category of LREs, some tension between less and more proficient learners seems to promote LREs. However, just because

negotiation occurs, it does not mean that more learning of vocabulary or morphosyntax occurs. For that matter, attending to form does not necessarily lead to its learning or acquisition by any of the parties involved. A student may attend to form, yet may forget its meaning; similarly, if one is already familiar with a form, he/she may be attending to it in order to help another learner. In such a case, it is doubtful that any new learning would occur for him/her.

(2) What second language forms do learners most commonly address?

The overwhelming number of students focused on vocabulary instead of morphosyntax. These results are in line with Williams' (1999) study in which 80% of LREs revolved around vocabulary. The reasons for this, however, are not clear. I cannot say that students are necessarily more interested in learning vocabulary than morphosyntax; likewise, I cannot say that students are not concerned with morphosyntax. Krashen (1994, 1999), for instance, has claimed that explicit grammar instruction is so ingrained into students that they always expect to be present in second/foreign language instruction. Besides, one would be hard pressed to find ESL teachers who would say that their students are not concerned about grammar, at least on an explicit level.

However, the reason for students not focusing much on morphosyntax could be that they lacked opportunities to do so. For example, Williams' (1999), based on observations with her participants, claimed that students focused on morphosyntax more during highly structured, grammar-centered activities due to their observation that such activities represented the appropriate settings in which to focus on morphosyntax. In

addition, the majority of students reported that their English-learning experiences had consisted of substantial amounts of grammar, which, presumably, consisted of written grammar exercises. Moreover, many students reported that opportunities to use English when they were learning English back home were limited. Thus, it may not be appropriate to expect students to feel comfortable and/or have the skills to explicitly attend to morphosyntactical forms, for even though group work revolved around a text and a written assignment, most work took place in a spoken format, and only one student per day recorded answers to the activities. Finally, as previously noted, only one student per session was responsible for writing the content of the tasks. Perhaps, if all students had been required to record answers, more would have initiated LREs.

Other than the fact that students may be unable or unwilling to attend to morphosyntactic forms during in-class group work, the issue of whether or not L2 learners attend to morphosyntactical forms during informal conversation offers another possible explanation to this phenomenon. Evidence exists showing that neither L2 learners nor their interlocutors (native or non-native) attend to morphosyntactical forms during informal interaction to any significant degree (Markee, 2000). Studies have shown that L2 learners and their interlocutor are only concerned with morphosyntax when it impedes communication or when they are being formally examined (see Nikolov & Krashen, 1997 for a discussion). An example of this is Schmidt's (1983) study of Wes, a Japanese artist who had been residing in Hawaii for over a decade when Schmidt studied him. Although Wes was not a student, he explicitly stated that he had an interest in improving his English. While Wes would frequently ask for the meanings of words, he rarely explicitly inquired about morphosyntax with his native-speaking interlocutors. In

fact, Schmidt reported that Wes' English, as far as morphosyntax was concerned, seemed to have fossilized.

Another interesting finding in my study was that students did not focus on punctuation, a finding similar to that of Williams (1999) who also found that students do not focus on punctuation. One might have expected that in a writing class, some attention would have been given to such a significant part of writing. While only one student per group was engaged in actual writing on any given day, not a single LRE was involved this aspect of writing.

(3) In what ways do learners address forms?

The LREs most frequently used to attend to form were, in order of frequency,

negotiation (35),

learner-initiated requests to other learners (15)

other correction (12)

metatalk (11)

negotiation + learner-initiated requests to other learners (10)

learner interjection (6)

other correction + negotiation (3)

learner-initiated requests to other learners + metatalk (3)

learner interjection + metatalk (3)

learner interjection + negotiation (3)

learner interjection-question (2)

learner interjection-question + metatalk (1)

negotiation + learner-initiated question to teacher (1)

learner interjection + other correction (1)

learner interjection-question + negotiation (1)

and learner interjection + learner-initiated requests to other learners (1).

First of all, it is interesting to note that the most frequent LREs were those categories already established by Williams (1999). However, the similarities end at that point. As I have mentioned earlier, the advanced group in Williams' study—which is most comparable to the group in this study—used learner-initiated requests to other learners (36%), learner-initiated question to teacher (35%), other correction (13%), metatalk (10%), and negotiation (5%). Thus, the present study certainly shows a different pattern of performance. For example, Williams claims that such a high percentage of learner-initiated requests to other learners and low percentage of negotiation are due to more willingness and ability to ask questions and fewer incidences of communication breakdowns. Although I cannot explain why all such communication breakdowns occurred, to say that all were a matter of a lack of target language proficiency would be an oversimplification and a claim that essentially lacks a solid foundation. The opposite could be argued, in fact: Those with more advanced L2 skills may be more apt to negotiate complex breakdowns; asking direct questions, on the other hand, involves relatively straight-forward meaning and morphosytax that could be learned as the result of chunking (Brown, 1994). One factor that could have caused a high degree of negotiation was the degree of noise present during each activity. Even though the groups

were separated from one another, the acoustics in the room resulted in a high noise level that may have affected group work.

In addition to environmental issues, the students in this class came from very diverse backgrounds: Some had significant exposure to English-speaking environments. The students from India, Nepal, and Africa, for example, had significant parts of their primary and secondary education in English, and thus may have been more comfortable with actual use of spoken English in the classroom; also, some of the subjects had studied in the United States for more than a year. On the other hand, several students had not studied English for great lengths of time—many for less than two years—and thus probably did not have the proficiency that other students had, nor did they have the practical experience of speaking in English. In many countries, English classes do not include practice with speaking, thus leaving students with little experience with spoken English. All of these factors could have caused groups that were supposedly "advanced," to have to negotiate in order to circumvent communication breakdowns. Regardless of the status of negotiation, the LRE of learner-initiated requests to other learners does play a large role in both studies. Even though it was not the most frequent LRE in this study, it was second (13.9%). However, this is still vastly different from the 36% of LREs in Williams' (1999) study that took the form of *learner-initiated requests to another learner category.*

Other differences between Williams' (1999) study and the present study include the presence of the LRE category of learner-initiated requests to teacher in each. In Williams, this type of LRE was very prominent, yet it was absent in the present study, except in combination with negotiation. There could be several reasons for this outcome.

First of all, students in Williams' study were specifically in a language class in which their participation was encouraged; my class, on the other hand, was not in an intensive English program and the teaching was more traditional, thereby possibly making students feel less inclined to go directly to the teacher. Another reason for the difference between the two studies may have been the size of the groups. In Williams' study, there were only two participants in the advanced group; in the present study, in contrast, four of the five groups had four members and one had three. This larger number could have led students to rely on more proficient members of their groups rather than outside parties such as the teacher. Finally, many of the activities in her study were derived from ESL textbooks, which, in large part, are designed to promote attention to morphosyntax and vocabulary; in the present study, no such specific ESL texts or materials were incorporated.

In the area of other correction, in contrast, both groups were more or less similar in the percentage of LREs initiated through this area, Williams (1999) reporting 13%, while the present study had 11.1%. It is not clear if most of the LREs using other correction were concerned with morphosyntax, yet it seems to be the case given that both studies have comparable rates of attention to vocabulary and morphosyntax (Williams-80%/20%; present study-89.8%/10.2%). It seems then that morphosyntax is closely related to other correction.

The LRE of metatalk claimed 10% of all LREs in both studies. One might expect this number to be much higher in Williams' (1999) study because students were not only encouraged to express their ideas to one another, but also because they were in pairs, which would presumably make such a technique easier because only two participants were engaged in the conversation. In the present study, however, this was not the case:

Most metatalk-based LREs occured with all members taking on some role. Nonetheless, it is questionable whether or not this category has a significant effect on students' acquisition of new vocabulary and morphosyntax due to the level of knowledge already required to be able to use it; instead, metatalk can be used to refine students' understanding of a certain vocabulary item or morphosyntactic concept.

Finally, the new categories—that is, those not used by Williams (1999)—only accounted for 32.4% of the LREs. The rest consisted of those categories Williams had already established. In total, none of the twelve new categories occupied more than 5.6% of the total number of LREs. This demonstrates that while learners sometimes initiate and maintain LREs in multiple ways, the majority used not more than one type.

(4) Does task type affect the number and types of forms learners attend to?

From the results of the study, it does not appear that task type had an effect on the number of LREs that learners attended to. This was surprising because reading centered tasks seemed to be more complex simulation centered tasks. However, as mentioned earlier, the number of LREs decreased as time progressed, showing that task alone may not determine the number of LREs that students attend to. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I did not note any visible changes in learners' enthusiasm. However, could the activities possibly have made students less enthusiastic, and therefore, less apt to attend to form less? I suspect that the task types, the content of the task, the make-up of the group, or just the routine of doing the same types of activities for an extended amount of time all could have contributed.

In Williams' (1999) study, there were some differences, more structured tasks producing more LREs than less structured LREs. In the present study, however, neither of the task types was highly structured, thus direct comparisons between the studies is not appropriate, due to the different nature of the tasks in each study.

(5) What do the forms learners attend to consist of in terms of their content?

The results showed that half of all LREs focused on meaning. This should not come as a surprise considering that the bulk of the LREs were concerned with vocabulary. The next largest numerical categories--pronunciation, spelling, and comprehension--were the ones exclusively concerned with vocabulary. If L2 learners are concerned with understanding and being understood, as the Williams' (1999) and this study have suggested, then pronunciation and comprehension seem to be two critical ways of comprehending others and being understood by interlocutors. The emphasis on spelling, in contrast, is most likely a reflection of the written component of the students' group work. Interestingly, all episodes in which spelling was the singular focus of group work involved the student who actually did the writing for the day. Williams' (1999) results were quite similar, although differed in significant ways. In her study, of those LREs in which vocabulary was the focus, the advanced group focused more than half of their LREs on meaning, followed by pronunciation, word form, and word choice.

Of those LREs that dealt with morphosyntax (tense, noun-plural, adjective form, agreement, and voice), tense was discussed the most. Notably, all the LREs that concerned tense were initiated via other correction; that is, learners addressed tense by

correcting the incorrect use of another learner. In her study, Williams (1999) also found that tense was discussed more than any other morphosyntactic form by her advanced students, with a total of seven LREs devoted to this type of form. None of the other types of forms was focused on more than three times.

So What Can We Make of Focus on Form?

The results of this study show that when using communicative tasks, most L2 learners display a preoccupation with vocabulary. Thus, based on such results, Long's (1991) original perception of focus on form appears not to have encouraged students to explicitly attend to morphosyntax in this study. It appears that the practical result of Long's ideas is a situation that mirrors Krashen's (1981) thinking, namely, that if meaning is focused on, morphosyntax will come with it. Although Long (1991) rejects such a position as simplistic, in practice, this what seemed to have occurred in this study. Likewise, while the seeding of texts or attention-drawing activities may force students to explicitly attend to morphosyntax, both violate Long's condition that materials be authentic. Therefore, focus on form may not only be practically difficult to use, but it also may result in situations where a disproportionate amount of focus is on vocabulary to the almost total exclusion of morphosyntax.

If one adopts Krashen's (1981) position that morphosyntax is learned by route of comprehension, then focus on form may be an instructional tool worthy of classroom use. If one remains skeptical about the possibility for learning grammar subconsciously and still feels more comfortable with its explicit presence in the classroom, possibilities for

focus on form instruction still do exist. At a minimum, it appears to offer students ample opportunities not only for exposure to new vocabulary, but also for broadening their understanding of certain words, making them aware of problematic pronunciation, and improving listening comprehension. Moreover, focus on form instruction gives learners the opportunity to work with authentic texts and to learn content about specific areas. In the present study, for instance, participants were exposed to many elements of anthropology and current events. The significance of these benefits should not be undervalued; indeed, they are crucial components of successful second language learning.

Perhaps the ideal way of implementing focus on form would be group work, similar to that seen in the current study. Instructors could, for example, present students with authentic texts and give them writing and/or speaking assignments that would obligate them to use the language. In addition, such instruction seems to be especially valuable for English for specific purposes where the learning of specialized vocabulary is crucial. A group of foreign students studying business, for example, could read from a book of personal essays about internship experiences in the business world. Not only would students be exposed to a lot of general vocabulary, but they would also encounter terminology necessary for success in the business world.

Areas for Future Research

In spite of the conclusions here regarding the potential value of focus on form, more research is needed before a conclusion can be made about its efficacy on both theoretical and practical planes. First of all, the aspect of task types needs to be more

deeply investigated than it was here and in Williams' (1999) study. As stated earlier, only one student per group, per session recorded answers to tasks. Future studies should examine whether or not activities that require all students to record answers—or to actively use language in some capacity, whether those involve speaking or writing—would result in more focus on form, in general, and more of a specific focus on morphosyntax. Such studies could focus on writing, speaking, or both and could also analyze the similarities and differences between dyads and groups with more than two members.

Future studies also need to be of longer length than was seen here and in Williams' (1999) study. These studies were done during academic semesters; however, the problem with their length is that students' ability and/or desire to focus on form was not traced over an extended period of time. Doing so might allow researchers to see if there is some sort of interplay among factors such as personality, L2 competence, and task type. During this time, qualitative research in the form of interviews, and/or language-learning diaries could be used in order to help understand the causes for certain focus on form patterns and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the behavior of students while engaged in focus on form.

A particularly interesting element that could be investigated during long-term studies involves the effects of group work on the quantity and quality of LREs; in other words, the relationships among group participants and how this affects what they say, how they say it, and the frequency with which they engage in conversation. In addition, such research could help shed light on the role of individual participation and how various issues such as L2 proficiency, personality, and level of acculturation to American

education and culture if the study is conducted in the United States. All such factors cannot be discounted if a full picture of focus on form instruction is to be given. Even though such issues were addressed to some degree in this study, longer studies could be more promising.

In addition, it is possible that sheer boredom or lack of enthusiasm with group work leads students to put forth less energy while working together, which could have been the case in this study. After weeks of doing the same routine, students may have figured out that a certain level of effort was necessary for completing tasks and going beyond that level was not necessary. Likewise, students' interest in the content of the activities could also affect their participation. Again, future research would need to investigate this area more thoroughly.

In conclusion, the answer to whether or not focus on form is theoretically sound and practically workable is not bound to come soon. Before any decisive conclusions can be made, many questions need to be answered, among which those stated above are surely just a few. Until that time, the only conclusion that I can make is based on my knowledge of previous research and the current study: Focus on form is valuable for learning and using vocabulary and for improving listening comprehension and pronunciation. Focus on form, on the other hand, is not helpful for learning morphosyntax as far as the results of this study are concerned.

What Shall We do in the Meantime?

Although there are no conclusive answers at this time, some practical ways of approaching focus on form are necessary during the interim. Complete authenticity, however, may not be a necessity. If students, for example, are studying in an intensive English program in an English-dominant country, then they will have plenty of opportunities to engage in English; using class time to highlight the uses of certain forms might enable them to apply them and/or to later notice them. Thus, focus on forms instruction in somewhat authentic contexts might be the best option possible.

Concluding Remarks

I summarize here the contents of this dissertation and its findings. Chapter I, gives an historical overview of second language learning. In addition, Chapter 1 gives a synopsis of second language instruction, starting from the ideas implemented in the ancient world, up to the present time. After this, Williams' (1999) study is summarized, which was the main impetus for the present study. This summary is followed by a synthesis of the objectives of the present study and the research questions that would guide it.

Chapter II provides an overview of the past and current research on focus on form. It begins by discussing Long's (1991) conception of focus on form, which leads into a discussion of the noticing hypothesis (1990), its main theoretical support. Various typological approaches to focus on form, along with research studies on the topic, are

then summarized. The former include approaches by Doughty and Williams (1998), Ellis (2001), and Leow (1998); the latter, on the other hand, include studies by Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001b), and Lee (1998). Finally, a summary of Williams' (1999) study, citing its purpose, methodology, results and implications is provided. In addition, the gaps in the study are highlighted.

Chapter III explains the methodology used in the study. It begins with the research questions used, followed by the learners who participated in this study, and the type of instructional setting in which they were found. Moreover, the materials used in the study and clarified the procedures undertaken in order to collect the data are presented. Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative methods implemented to collect data are described. Finally, key terms for the successful implementation and completion of the study are clarified.

In Chapter IV, the results of the study are presented; more specifically, the quantitative and qualitative data that resulted from the student-led activities. In addition, the possible reasons for the results that occurred are considered.

Chapter V presents a more in-depth discussion of the study's results, and speculates on the possible reasons why they occurred. Moreover, the gaps of the study and the issues that future studies should address are discussed. In addition, I opined on the value of focus on form and gave recommendations to teachers regarding the steps they can take in order to use focus on form in a productive way.

References

Anderson, J. (1993). *Rules of the mind*. Hillsdale: NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Anderson, J. (1995). *Learning and memory: An integrated approach*. New York: Wiley.

Bourgois, P. (2001). Crack in Spanish Harlem. In (Eds.), *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (21-28). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Chomsky, N. (1964). *Syntactic structures*. The Hague: Morton.

Cooper, E. (2001). Chinese table manners: You are *how* you eat. In Podolefsky, A., & Brown, P. (Eds.), *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (pp. 68-74). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

DeKeyser, R. (1995). Learning second language grammar rules: An experiment with a miniature linguistic system. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19* (2), 249-297.

DeKeyser, R. (1998). Beyond focus on form: Cognitive perspectives on learning and practicing second language grammar. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 42-63). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Dougthy, C., & Verela, E. (1998). Communicative focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 114-138). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). Pedagogical challenges in focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 197-261). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. (1993). The structural syllabus and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly, 27* (1), 91-113.

Ellis, R. (1994). A theory of instructed second language acquisition. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit language learning* (pp. 79-114). London: Academic.

Ellis, R. (2001). Introduction: Investigating form-focused instruction. *Language Learning, 51* (1), 1-46.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001a). Learner uptake in communicative ESL lessons. *Language Learning, 51* (2), 281-318.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001b). Preemptive focus on form in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 35* (3), 407-432.

Ellis, N. (1993). Rules and instances in foreign language learning: Interactions of implicit and explicit knowledge. *European Journal of Cognitive Psychology, 5* (3), 289-319.

English 1123: International Freshman Composition, Oklahoma State University Department of English, 2002

Fotos, S., & Ellis, R. (1991). Communicating about grammar: A task-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly, 25* (4), 605-628.

Fries, C. (1945). *Teaching and learning English as a foreign language*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2001) *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Janus, N. (2001). Advertising and global culture. In Podolefsky, A., & Brown, P. (Eds.), *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (286-289). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Katz, P. (2001). Ritual in the operating room. In Podolefsky, A., & Brown, P. (Eds.), *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (pp. 262-272). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Kelly, L. G. (1969). *25 centuries of language teaching: An inquiry into the science, art, and development of language teaching methodology, 500 B.C.-1969*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Kilbride, P. (2001). African polygyny: Family values and contemporary changes. In A. Podolefsky & Brown, P. (Eds.), *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (209-217). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis*. London: Longman.

Krashen, S. (1994). The input hypothesis and its rivals. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages* (pp. 45-78). London: Academic Press.

Krashen, S. (1999). Seeking a role for grammar: A review of some recent studies. *Foreign Language Annals, 32* (2), 245-254.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lado, R. (1964). *Language teaching: A scientific approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Long, M. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. Harlow: Longman.

Lee, J. (1998). The relationship of verb morphology to second language reading comprehension and input processing. *Modern Language Journal, 82* (1), 33-48.

Leow, R. (1997). Attention, awareness, and foreign language behavior. *Language Learning, 47* (3), 467-505.

Leow, R. (1998). The effects of amount and type of exposure on adult learners' L2 development in SLA. *Modern Language Journal, 82* (1), 49-68.

Leow, R. (2000). Attention, awareness, and focus on form research: A critical overview. In J. Lee & A. Valdman (Eds.), *Form and meaning: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 69-96). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Lightbown, P. (1998). The importance of timing in focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams, *Focus on form in classroom second language* (pp. 177-196). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1993). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. (1990). The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain. *TESOL Quarterly, 24* (3), 649-666.

Long, M. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39-52). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Long, M., & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on form: Theory, research, and practice. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 15-63). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19* (1), 37-66.

Markee, N. (2000). *Conversation analysis*. NewYork, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum.

McLaughlin, B. (1987). *Theories of second language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (1998). *Second language learning theories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nikolov, M., & Krashen, S. (1997). Need we sacrifice accuracy for fluency? *System, 25* (2), 197-201.

Podolefsky, A., & Brown, P. (2001). *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.

Poole, A. (2001). Focus on form instruction for advanced ESL writers. Term paper, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.

Poole, A., & Sheorey, R. (2002). Sophisticated *noticing*: Examination of an Indian professional's use of English. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 28* (2), 121-136.

Prahbu, N.S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rivers, W. (1964). *Psychologist and the foreign language teacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, P. (1995). Aptitude, awarenss, and the fundamental similarity of implicit and explicit second language learning. In R. Schmidt (Ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (pp. 303-358). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Robinson, R. (1996). Learning simple and complex second language rules under implicit, incidental, rule-search and instructed conditions. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18* (1), 27-68.

Schmidt, R. (1983). Interaction, acculturation, and the acquisition of communicative competence: A case study of an adult. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 137-174). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Schmidt, R., & Frota, S. (1986). Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: A case study of an adult learner of Portuguese. In R. R. Day (Ed.), *Talking to learn: Conversation in second language acquisition* (pp. 237-326). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11* (2), 17-46.

Schmidt, R. (1994). Implicit learning and the cognitive unconscious: Of artificial grammars and SLA. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages* (pp. 165-209). London: Academic Press.

Schmidt, R. (1995). Consciousness and foreign language learning: A tutorial on the role of attention and awareness in learning. In R. Schmidt (Ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (pp. 1-63). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Schmidt, R. (2000). Personal communication.

Sharwood Smith, M. (1991). Speaking to many minds: On the relevance of different types of language formation for the L2 learner. *Second Language Research, 7* (2), 118-132

Sharwood Smith, M. (1993). Input enhancement in instructed SLA: Theoretical bases. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 15* (2), 165-179.

Sheen, R. (2000, July 22). Review: Doughty & Williams: Focus on Form in SLA-Part I. *Linguist List 11*.1598. Retrieved February 22, 2002, from http://www.emich.edu/~linguist/issues/11/11-1598.html.

Sheorey, R., & Nayar, P. B. (2002). Learning and teaching English in India: Looking in from outside. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 28* (2), 13-24.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Swain, M. (1991). French immersion and its offshoots: Getting two for one. In B. Freed (Ed.), *Foreign language acquisition: Research and the classroom* (pp.91-103). Lexington, MA: Heath.

Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics* (pp. 125-144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 64-82). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two adolescent French immersion students working together. *Modern Language Journal, 82* (3), 320-337.

Terrell, T., & Krashen, S. (1983). *Natural approach: Language in the classroom.* Oxford: Alemany Press.

Tomasello, M., & Herron, C. (1988). Down the garden path: Inducing and correcting overgeneralization errors in the foreign language classroom. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 9* (3), 237-246.

Tomasello M., & Herron, C. (1989). Feedback for language transfer errors. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 11* (4), 384-395.

Tomlin, R., & Villa, V. (1994). Attention in cognitive science and second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 16* (2), 183-203.

Trahey, M., & White, L. (1993). Positive evidence in second language acquisition: Some long-term effects. *Second Language Research, 12* (2), 111-139.

Towell, R., & Hawkins, R. (1994). *Approaches to second language acquisition.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Truscott, J. (1998). Noticing in second language acquisition: A critical review. *Second Language Research, 14* (2), 103-135.

Van Willigen, J., & Chana, V. C. (2001). Law, custom, and crimes against women: The problem of dowry death in Indian. *Applying cultural anthropology: An introductory reader* (pp. 218-228). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Van Patten, B. (1989). Can learners attend to form and content while processing input? *Hispania, 72*, 409-417.

Van Patten, B. (1990). Attending to form and content in the input: An experiment in consciousness. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 12* (3), 287-301.

Van Patten, B. (1993). Grammar teaching for the acquisition-rich classroom. *Foreign Language Annals, 26* (4), 435-450.

Van Patten, B., & Cadierno, T. (1993). Explicit instruction and input processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 15* (2), 225-243.

Van Patten, B., & Oikkenon, S. (1996). Explanation versus structured input in processing instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18* (4), 495-510.

White, L. (1991). Adverb placement in second language acquisition: Some positive and negative evidence in the classroom. *Second Language Research, 7* (2), 133-161.

Wilkins, D. (1976). *Notional syllabus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. (1999). Learner-generated attention to form. *Language Learning, 49* (4), 583-625.

Williams, J. (2001). The effectiveness of spontaneous attention to form. *System*, *29*, (3), 325-340.

Williams, J., & Evans, J. (1998). What kind of focus and on which forms? In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 139-155). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A

Student Information Sheet

Alex B. Poole
ENGL 1123
Student Information Sheet
Spring Semester, 2002

Please respond briefly to the following items and questions so I'll get to know you a little better:

Name: _____
(Last), **(First)**

Local Address: _____

Phone Number:_____

Your Age: _____ Major: _____

General questions about your study of English to date:

1. How many years have you studied English? Please circle one number:

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more years

2. Describe the type of English language instruction you received (e.g., lots of grammar study, lots of reading and memorizing, teacher-talking/students listening, more use of the local language than English by the teacher and students, etc.)

3. In your native country, did you have to *English* media (e.g., English radio Programs, English TV programs, English newspapers, etc.)? If so, please give details of what was available to you.

4. In your native country, how often did you interact with native English speakers?
   Frequent Occasional Very Rare none or almost none

   (weekly or more) (once a month or so) (1/2 time yearly)

5. Year in which you arrived in the United States?_____

6. For how many years have you studies in the United States? Circle one:

   Less than one year 2 3 4 5 or more years

7. How many hours a week do you spend **reading** in English (including study materials), on an average? Give a rough estimate:

   1-3 hrs 4-6 7-10 More than 10 hours (average per week)

8. How many hours **per week, on average**, do you spend speaking English with native English speakers (that is, Americans, including your professors, adviser, American friends or neighbors, etc.) in formal and informal situations? (*Leave blank if you arrived in the U.S. within the last month):*

   1-3 hrs 4-6 hrs 7-10 More than 10 hrs (average per week)

9. What, in your opinion, is your **strongest** skill in English? Circle one:

   Speaking Reading Writing Understanding spoken English

10. What, in your opinion, is your **weakest** skill in English? Circle one:

    Speaking Reading Writing Understanding spoken English

11. What language (s) do you normally use at home or with friends:_____

12. How would you describe your own overall proficiency in English? Please circle the number to indicate what you think of your own overall English proficiency on a scale of 1 to 6 (where 1=low proficiency and 6=high proficiency; numbers 2 through 5 indicate proficiency levels between "high" and "low"):

    High.....Low

    Circle only one number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

13. To succeed in life or the major/career you have planned, how important is it for you to be able to speak English correctly and well? (Check one):

    5)_____extremely important

    4)_____quite important

    3)_____somewhat important

    2)_____not too important

    1)_____not at all important

Appendix B

Activity One

English 1123 Simulation I

Instructor: Alex Poole February 4, 6, 8, 2002

On Friday, February 1, 2002, I gave you a sheet of paper with different versions of the "Three Little Pigs" story on either side. You were to read this story for today (Monday, February 4, 2002). In your groups, you are to complete two tasks.

Task I: Answer the following questions as a group. Choose one group member to write down the answers on a separate piece of paper. All group members' names should be noted so I can give everybody credit for participating.

1. Write a short (very short!) summary of each story. In general, you should tell me what happened in the story and who was involved.
2. What were the underlying philosophical messages in these stories?
3. Tell me the specific ways in which the two stories differed.
4. Which version did you like better and why? If all members do not agree on one version, then write down your reasons for both versions.

Task II: Pick one of the stories and write an additional paragraph that adds to or changes the story. This can be humorous or serious. Ideally, the same person should not record the questions in task one and write this paragraph. I expect you to do this on the same piece of paper (s) used for task one.

Schedule: On February 4th we will complete task one and get started on task two. On February 6th we will finish task two. On February 8th each group will read their paragraph to the class 4.

Appendix C

Activity Two

Class: International Composition
Instructor: Poole

Date: February 13, 2002
Task: Comprehension Qs over "Crack in Spanish Harlem."

Task I: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. One person should record answers on one sheet of paper. Make your answers fairly brief and to the point!

1. What is the main focus of the essay?
2. Was the writer a gang-member or was he an outsider?
3. Name three problems that the author claims contribute to drug dealing.
4. The author states that dealing drugs is part of the American dream. How is this so?
5. Where is the setting of the essay (be specific)?

Task II: Write a short paragraph on the following question: "Typically, we see drug addiction and poverty as consequences of poor socialization. As a result, we tend to look down on drug addicts and the poor as people who need to be taught 'the correct way' of living. Has this essay shown you another perspective on drugs and poverty? Explain why or why not." Note: A different person should record this paragraph. However, he/she should use the same sheet of paper used for task one.

Appendix D

Activity Three

Class: International Freshman Composition — February 25, 2002
Instructor: Poole — Family/Marriage Simulation

Part I: Family. In your groups, you are to make a family. You are to write three paragraphs on your family. In this activity, you must:

-Tell us the names of your family members and their ages
-Tell us where in the world you live
-Tell us the roles of each of your family members
-Tell us something about the professional lives of your family members

Note: You can basically create any type of family you want. It can be dysfunctional, traditional, multilingual, etc. Rule: The more diverse, the more interesting it is to read! However, you should know that this will be read to the whole class, so make it interesting!

Appendix E

Activity Four

Class: International Comp | Feb. 20, 22, 2002
Instructor: Poole | Chapters, 29, 30, 31

Task I: Comprehension questions. As usual, briefly answer the following questions, one person being the recorder. However, the person doing the writing should now indicate that they have done so by signing their name below the last question.

1. What is the common theme found in 29 and 30?
2. Name the types of marriages that Tibetan society allows.
3. What are two problems associated with having more than one wife or husband?
4. Do educated Kenyan women feel differently about polygyny than uneducated Kenyan women? Explain.
5. Why was Dowry made illegal in India? Give at least two reasons.

Task II: Writing task. Answer the following two questions. As usual, another person should write this section, putting their name below the last question to indicate that they have been the recorder. If there are multiple opinions and answers, record them. DON'T WRITE A NOVEL, HOWEVER!

1. "One common misconception in the West about polygyny is that its function is primarily one of sexual gratification." Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Discuss.

2. In an increasingly global world, do you think that monogamous marriages will

eventually drown-out other alternatives? Discuss.

Appendix F

Activity Five

English 1123 Question: Ch. 10, 37
March 13, 2002 Instructor: Poole

Task I: Briefly answer the following comprehension questions. As usual, one person should record all answers.

1. What food is the centerpiece of Chinese meals?
2. Is eating alone in Hong Kong good or bad? Explain.
3. How many deaths are annually caused in the United States by postoperative infections?
4. Name two elaborate rituals that take place in the operating room.

Task II: Give a brief answer to the following: Eating and surgery are two areas of life that are very ritualistic. Name one American ritual or routine you have observed. Describe it.

As usual, another person should record this task.

Appendix G

Activity Six

English 1123-Poole Mystery Activity
March 25, 2002

In your groups, discuss whether or not the following are acceptable behaviors and/or activities in your countries. Explain to your group members why they are or are not acceptable. Afterwards, as a group, decide whether or not each behavior/activity is acceptable in the United States and briefly (very briefly!) explain why you think this is so.

1. Men and women kissing in public

Your countries:

US:

2. Asking your friend how much his/her car cost

Your countries:

US:

3. Eating with your hands

Your countries:

US:

4. Working a manual labor job while in the university

Your countries:

US:

5. Wearing your shoes in someone's home

Your countries:

US:

Appendix H

Activity Seven

1123-Poole
April 7, 2002

Questions over "Advertising and Global Culture."

Task I: Briefly answer the following questions. As usual, one person should record!

1. What is "transnational" culture?
2. What did a 1981 study done in Mexico by the National Consumer's Institute show?
3. In a 1975 study done by Santaro, most of the "bad" characters Venezuelan children watched on television were of what background? What background were most of the "good" characters from?

Task II: Briefly respond to the following statement (1.5 pages handwritten). As usual, a different person should be the recorder. A good friend of mine once said: "Advertising is destroying local traditions and values!" Is this true or false? Take a position and give at least four concrete points to support your point of view.

Appendix I

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 11/1/02

Date: Friday, November 02, 2001 IRB Application No AS0225

Proposal Title: SPONTANEOUS ATTENTION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGES FORMS: A CASE STUDY OF ESL LEARNERS

Principal Investigator(s):

Alexander Poole
112 Morrill Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Kouider Mokhtari
248 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Appendix J

Consent Form Script

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT

To be read to the participants by the principal investigator prior to conducting the study

"You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted in our class. The purpose of this is to obtain information on how advanced ESL students spontaneously attend to English language forms. More specifically, I am interested in how different genders and cultures spontaneously attend to form. Obtaining such information will better help ESL teachers and researchers develop materials and techniques aimed at improving all ESL students' participation in ESL classroom activities and their knowledge of English language forms.

Participation in the study requires no additional work on your behalf. We will do our normal classroom activities. However, during group work, I will record your participation in the particular group work activity that we are doing.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, at any time while being recorded, you may decide to cease being recorded. There are no penalties for refusing to participate in this study. No class privileges will be denied you should you decline to participate or change your mind about participating.

Since your participation will be kept strictly confidential, feel free to participate as you normally do. Do you have any questions? If you have any questions about the laws and procedures of human subject research in the United States of America, you may contact me at 1-405-744-6151, my research advisor, Dr. Kouider Mokhtari, at 1-405-744-8044, or the Institutional Review Board office at 1-405-744-5700.

I have read the Informed Consent Form script to the participants. Completion of the survey instrument indicates consent of the subject to freely and willingly participate in the study.

_____ _____

Researcher Signature Date

VITA2

Alexander B. Poole

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: FOCUS ON FORM INSTUCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF ADVANCED ESL COLLEGE WRITING STUDENTS

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, June 28, 1976, son of Richard and Marcia Poole.

Education: Graduated from North High School, Sioux City, Iowa in May 1994; received Bachelor of Arts in English from Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 1998; received Master of Arts degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa in May 2000. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in English (TESOL/Linguistics emphasis) at Oklahoma State University in May 2003.

Professional Experience: Tutoring: Writing lab, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1995-1998; adult reading tutor, Tver State University, Tver, Russia, January 1995; reading tutor for immigrants, Franklin Learning Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, spring 1996, spring 1998; Elementary: kindergarten science instructor, Franklin Community School, Minneapolis, Minnesota, spring 1998; English instructor, Israeli Department of Education, Tiberius, Israel, summer 1998; University: English instructor, Culture Intensive English Program, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, January 1999-August 2000; English composition instructor, Department of English, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, August 2000-present.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages; American Association of Applied Linguistics