
Focus-on-Form Instruction from Elementary
School to Junior and Senior High School:
Theory and Practice

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Issue in Grammar Teaching

Ellis (2006) claims “[a]lthough there is now a clear conviction that a traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication” (p. 102).

Definition

While focus on forms refers to traditional grammar teaching, “where the students’ primary focus is on form,” focus on form “entails a focus on meaning with attention to form arising out of the communicative activity” (Ellis, 2006, p. 100).

Model of Grammar Teaching: Focus-on-form instruction (FonF)

According to Lee & VanPatten (2003)

Input → intake → developing system → output



input-based
instruction



output-based
instruction

Two Types of FonF

Planned FonF “requires a focused task and is intensive,” while incidental FFI “is typically extensive (i.e., addresses a wide range of linguistic features)” (Ellis, 2008, p. 827).

Planned FonF: Three stages

1. Input

- Step 1: focusing on meaning
- Step 2: focusing on form

2. Noticing: connecting form and meaning

- Step 3

3. Output

- Step 4

2007年1年生 定期考査 平均点の推移 (点)

		前 期		後 期	
クラス	グループ	中間考査	期末考査	中間考査	学年末考査
1	A	74.1	56.7	55.2	57.3
	B	78.9	65.1	55.9	59.8
2	久代	78.5	65.2	61.4	70.8
	B	81.5	67.3	54.5	64.3
3	A	75.0	63.0	52.6	59.0
	B	77.2	53.0	44.8	52.9
4	A	76.3	64.7	56.2	61.9
	B	79.3	63.7	53.6	56.8
5	久代	83.7	69.9	68.8	73.9
	B	82.5	67.9	61.1	62.5
6	A	70.7	60.5	46.1	58.3
	B	74.7	61.1	44.7	50.4

Summary: Ellis (2006)

1. The grammar taught should be one that emphasises not just form but also the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures.
2. Teachers should endeavour to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be problematic to learners rather than try to teach the whole of grammar.
3. A focus-on-forms approach is valid as long as it includes an opportunity for learners to practice behaviour in communicative tasks.
4. Use should be made of both input-based and output-based instructional options.

Summary: Ellis (2006)

5. An incidental focus-on-form approach is of special value because it affords an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems (in contrast to the intensive treatment afforded by a focus-on-forms approach).

6. Corrective feedback is important for learning grammar. It is best conducted using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based. (for a complete summary, see pp. 102-103)

Conclusion

“A person demonstrated grammatical competence by using a rule, not by stating a rule” (Savignou, 1997, p. 41).

Performance Tests

According to Brown (2007),
“assessment is an integral part of the
teaching-learning cycle” (p.482) .

Performance Tests

Brown (2007):

Performance-based assessment implies productive, observable skills, such as speaking and writing, of content-valid tasks...Because the tasks that students perform are consistent with course goals and curriculum, students and teachers are likely to be more motivated to perform them, as opposed to a set of multiple-choice questions about grammaticality or reading comprehensions” (p. 481).

愛知県立高校の実践結果

Result of Mock Tests

N=240

month (2013)	July	November	January
Average T scores (偏差値)	46.7	46.7→	47.4 ↑
numbers of students over 50	59	64↑	74 ↑
numbers of students under 45	106	104↓	92 ↓

year	2010	2011	2012	2013
numbers of students over 50	56	56	34	74 ↑
numbers of students under 45	144	103	136	92 ↓

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