

## Preemptive and Reactive Focus-on-Form Instruction: Effect on learning parallel grammatical structures

### Abstract:

The present study set out to investigate the differential effect of focus-on-form (FonF) instruction. Two research questions were raised: 1) Does FonF instruction, both preemptive and reactive, have a differential effect on learners' interlanguage? 2) Are short-term gains, if at all, maintained in the long-term? Fifty one (51) third-year LMD university English language learners are divided into two groups: a FonF group (N=27), and a Control group (N=24). Parallel structures were selected as the target form. A Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) was used to measure accuracy of the target form over the short- and the long-term; therefore, three similar but not identical tests were administered at three temporal times: a pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed post-test. The results of the present study showed that FonF instruction had a differential effect in language learning in both the short- and the long-term. Recommendations for both research and pedagogy are discussed.

**Key words:** Instruction – focus on form – input enhancement – feedback – consciousness-raising.

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### ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة أثر استعمال مقارنة التدريس بالتركيز على الشكل، وأثير سؤالين بحثيين هما: (1) هل لهذا النوع من التدريس، سواء كان وقائياً وتفاعلياً، تأثير عليلة المتعلم؟ (2) هل يمكن المحافظة على مكاسب المدى القصير في المدى الطويل؟ واحد وخمسون (51) متعلم للغة الانجليزية في السنة الثالثة جامعي (نظام LMD) قسموا إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة الخاضعة للتجربة (27 مشارك) ومجموعة التحكم (24 مشارك). تم اختيار التراكيب النحوية الموازية كهدف للتعلم، كما تم استخدام اختبار الحكم النحوي (GJT) لقياس دقة النموذج الهدف نحويًا على المدى القصير وعلى المدى الطويل. ولذلك سلمت ثلاث اختبارات مماثلة ولكنها غير متطابقة في ثلاث مراحل زمنية: اختبار قبل التجربة، فوراً بعد التجربة، وآخر شهرين بعد التجربة. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن مقارنة التدريس بالتركيز على الشكل كان له أثر في تعلم التراكيب المدرسة على المدى القصير والطويل. نتهي الدراسة بمناقشة بعض التوصيات لفائدة كل من البحث العلمي و تعليمية اللغات.

### Introduction:

Let it be stressed that the ultimate aim of language teaching/learning is to produce functionally competent performers who are not at a disadvantage, or short, of grammatical equipments. Yet, undue *focus on meaning* (FonM) or communicative skills at the cost of *forms* (FonFs) or grammatical accuracy results in learners who stop developing at a grammatically inaccurate level of proficiency.

Evidence from several immersion studies suggests that, in a purely communicative context, some L2 forms do not develop to target-like accuracy in spite of years of meaningful, comprehensible input and interaction [1]. This justifies, then, the motivation for formal instruction, i.e. the inclusion of grammar, an issue that constitutes the cornerstone of the endless debate in L2 teaching methodologies: should we teach grammar at all?

It is our contention that *focus-on-form* (**FonF**) instruction should be adopted as a mediator between **FonFs** and **FonM** by teaching grammar in situations where the focus is primarily on meaning and communication [2; 3], an alternative which has, certainly, consequences for language learning and instruction. *Focus on form* can be practised either *pre-emptively* such that exposure to and use of linguistic forms are determined in advance, or *reactively* in the form of feedback.

### **1. Grammar On/Off the Defensive**

The debate over grammar seems a war that never ends. Whether or not grammar should be taught is a question that has been continually debated in second language acquisition (henceforth, SLA). Researchers like Krashen [4] argued that grammar is acquired naturally and second language (L2) learners need only be exposed to rich comprehensible input; as such, to the question of whether grammar should be taught the answer is in the negative because with the provision of comprehensible input it is believed that grammar will look after itself.

Other researchers held quite the opposite view, a view in favour of the inclusion of formal grammar instruction. According to White [5], given that mere exposure to L2 input does not guarantee the acquisition of all grammatical forms, it follows that grammar should be taught. Likewise, Larsen-Freeman [6] argued that granting that grammar is acquired naturally, it does not mean that grammar instruction is not necessary. This is so because teaching grammar can enhance its acquisition and speed up the learning process.

### **2. Instruction**

For the purposes of the present study, it is worth our while to define what formal instruction is. Cadierno [7] defines it as follows: “*any attempt by teachers to intervene directly in the process of interlanguage construction by providing samples of specific features for learning*” (p.179). As a matter of fact, the importance of teacher intervention, or say instruction, cannot by any means be denied. Instruction is likely to secure provision of, mainly, input that is not, say, enhanced, and an environment for *focus-on-form* instruction [8].

Now, is grammar instruction all that necessary? In point of fact, as Baars pointed out, and N. Ellis [9] quoted: “*The more novelty we encounter, the more conscious involvement is needed for successful learning and problem-solving*” (p. 306). In addition, N. Ellis argued that implicit processes alone do

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not guarantee full acquisition for the mere reason that various aspects of a L2 are unlearnable. In case of a communication breakdown, for example, we tend to negotiate meaning and we come to learn a lot about form. In this way, grammar is necessary for meaning construction.

Over the years, there has been a growing concern among researchers, theorists and teachers alike about the effect, if at all, of formal instruction on SLA. Put another way, does formal instruction make a difference in L2 acquisition?

**2.1. Effect of Instruction**

Formal instruction is at the very heart of the debate in SLA and has been subject to controversy among researchers for years [10; 11]. Looking back at the debate over the past 30 years or so, L2 instruction research seems to have raised two major questions – among others. These are the issue of whether formal instruction has any effect on SLA and whether it is beneficial, an issue seemingly controversial [12].

As indicated by Long [10], the question of whether instruction makes any difference at all can be answered by a number of comparisons. Reviewing research findings and making comparisons between twelve studies exploring the effects of instruction, Long held that there is ample evidence showing that instruction does make a difference (though he pointed out that this runs contrary to the claims advanced by Krashen's Monitor Theory). Long also added that such findings, being based on the studies he reported, are worthy to be discussed for they have implications and yield supporting or disconfirmatory evidence for theories – such as Krashen's Monitor Theory – which make predictions about SLA with the provision or withholding of L2 instruction. They are worthy to be discussed also because, as he put it, these findings speak to the efficacy or utility of instruction (and/or exposure).

**2.2. Reviewing the Experimental Research on Effects of Instruction**

In what follows, I attempt to review briefly two experimental studies on the effect of instruction on learners' interlanguage. The selected studies compared instructed learners who received experimental treatment to other learners with no focused instruction.

Harley [13] demonstrated that formal instruction contributes to SLA. His study investigated the acquisition of French tense-aspect, namely the distinction between 'passé composé' and 'imparfait' by immersion students in Canada. The effect was lasting for the experimental group who did not lose ground, which was not the case for the control group. Harley, thus, pointed out that instruction was effective in both planned (written composition, cloze test) and unplanned language use (oral interview).

Pushing further on these lines of thought, the lines that hold evidence for the benefit of formal instruction, White [14] conducted an experiment about adverb placement with Canadian French learners of English. Again, the

experimental group performed better on different tasks. Yet, their accuracy faded in the delayed post-test. This provides ample evidence that formal instruction, in spite of the fact that it may have short-term effects, helps foster language accuracy.

### 3. Focus-on-Form Instruction

Ever since Long [10] demonstrated that instruction makes a difference in SLA, as opposed to simple naturalistic exposure, a research agenda has emerged in L2 instruction (see below) prompting the adoption of grammar instruction while coupling it with communicative language use, the thing that would make it possible for learners to hit two birds with the one stone: hitting language use and language accuracy altogether. The major concern of such research has eventually shifted from whether instruction, in formal contexts, has the potential to affect L2 acquisition to what types of instruction are most effective. Studies on types of instruction assume that instructional treatments should aim at effecting change in learners' focal *attention* during L2 processing [15]. In this way, certain L2 forms are likely to be *noticed* [16] and therefore acquired.

According to Long [17], it is inadequate to teach grammar out of context just as it is to teach language in a purely communicative fashion. This is so simply because the former approach tends to handicap L2 learners in their use of grammar forms communicatively and because the latter gives little, if any, importance to grammar instruction. Given that this is so, Long proposed a third approach called *focus on form* (henceforth, **FonF**) which would match communicative language use with grammar instruction in context, an approach that is task-based in instruction.

**FonF** instruction (also termed **FFI**, an acronym standing for form-focused instruction) [18; 12], which presents the linguistic form, as it arises *incidentally* or in a *planned* way (see below), in a lesson within a meaningful context, is said to secure a balance between a **FonF** and a **FonM**, thus bridging the gap between traditional formal instruction (with a **FonF**) and the full communicative use of language or **FonM** (see the study of Ellis et al [19] which is an indication that **FonF** can take place with no risk of disturbing the communicative flow of a classroom). **FonF** instruction has at least two advantages in that it makes positive evidence more salient, and it provides essential negative evidence through direct or indirect negative feedback [20].

#### 3.1. Types of Focus-on-Form Instruction

A number of L2 researchers hold that communicative instruction should draw learners' attention to linguistic forms so as to build a well-balanced communicative competence [21; 22; 23; 3]. This approach has come into vogue notwithstanding the diversity in terminology use and practice of the approach. Doughty et al [23] argued that it is timely now to account for and

clarify terminology and research issues relating to **FonF** studies, mainly because of the disagreement and diversity in handling such a construct.

### **3.1.1. Preemptive vs. Reactive FonF Instruction**

Long et al [3] distinguished between *preemptive* **FonF** and *reactive* **FonF**. In a *preemptive* approach to **FonF**, exposure to and use of linguistic forms are determined in advance: the teacher or the learner attempts to attend to a linguistic form, with the use of structured or enhanced input for example, because it might prove problematic later. The latter type comes into play when a learner uses a linguistic form that appears to be erroneous and a participant reacts to the error by requesting clarification (a kind of feedback), for example.

### **3.1.2. Planned vs. Incidental FonF Instruction**

Pushing further on the terminology pertinent to different types of formal instruction, and without losing sight of Long's [2] definition, Ellis [11] distinguished between *planned* **FonF** and *incidental* **FonF**. He defined **FonF** as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form" (pp. 1-2). In the former type, **FonF** takes the form of prior *planning* on the part of the researcher or teacher [24; 25], prompting the learner to attend intensively to preselected forms [11]. In the latter, learners attend, extensively, to a number of forms but none is preselected for subsequent instructional treatment [26; 11; 27; 28].

### **3.1.3. Implicit vs. Explicit FonF Instruction**

Researchers such as DeKeyser [29], Harley [30], Lightbown [31] defined **FonF** in broader terms; there is, according to them, room for, among other things, explicit positive/negative evidence and metalinguage. Spada [18] accounted for the construct in both *implicit* (e.g., use of recasts) and *explicit* terms (e.g., metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, etc.).

Central to the discussion on **FonF**, then, is the notion of *feedback*. An important issue addressed by research studies, along the **FonF** perspective, is the positive role of *corrective/negative feedback* and its impact on interlanguage development. In this perspective, **FonF** is seen as being *reactive* in approach (i.e., teacher provision of feedback in reaction to students' utterances that contain a linguistic error) and can take place either *implicitly* (e.g., the use of recasts) or *explicitly* (e.g., the use of explicit correction).

It is worthy to mention that such differences add welcome new data to the bulk of information at hand but as it is customary we share the view that operational definitions of these distinct types of **FonF**, and so labels, are urgently in order.

## **3.2. Reviewing Experimental Research on the Effect of FonF Instruction**

**FonF** research has, as yet, put theories of instructed SLA to the test by tracking the linguistic progress of different learners exposed to different instructional types or techniques. This explains very well why specific

pedagogical techniques have been investigated and compared in these last decades. Let us now review the bulk of the research into the effects of different types of L2 instruction to date.

Lightbown et al [22] observed the development of spoken English of French elementary school students in Quebec receiving five months of intensive English as a second language (ESL) communicative instruction. They concluded that **FonF**, might well yield to accurate linguistic proficiency and performance. Similar results were found in a Canadian study conducted by Spada et al [32] on the effects of **FFI** and corrective feedback on the development of several English structures by young (10–12-years-old) learners in an intensive **ESL** course.

Another study on the very effects of type of instruction on L2 acquisition is Doughty's [33]. She concluded that formal instruction, or **FonF**, in which saliency and frequency of the target form were enhanced, was optimal for L2 acquisition. The pedagogical implication may be that teachers can direct learners' attention to language forms effectively within meaning-oriented instruction if saliency and abundance of forms are made use of.

Harley [30] conducted a study on **FonF** instruction and its effect on young L2 French immersion learners having as a target French gender. The experiment yielded results very much in keeping with the aforementioned, that participants focusing on form outperformed those having no focus and even had a metalinguistic knowledge of French gender.

In the same perspective, Sharwood Smith [15] held that language learners' consciousness can be raised by using *enhanced input* which is possible by way of typographical modifications of target forms in a written passage. Leeman et al [34] investigated the effects of **FonF** on the use of the Spanish past and imperfect in a communicative classroom. No wonder, again, type of instruction, namely **FonF**, did make a difference.

Doughty et al [35] examined the effect of **FonF**, in a communicative context, on the acquisition of the simple past and the conditional past by 34 ESL *content-based* science class learners in a middle school. The science reports which the students wrote and presented in class included both target forms. Instruction targeted planned and unplanned use of the simple past and the conditional past. In the oral reports, the subjects in the **FonF** group (21 in number) achieved a significant increase in the use of the forms under study. As for the control group (13 subjects in number), no improvement took place.

Day et al [36] investigated the instructional effectiveness of **FonF** in Canadian French immersion programmes. They conducted an experiment on the use of the conditional. The study yielded findings indicating that the participants of the experimental group bettered their performance, and their gains were maintained in the post-tests. Again, this is consonant with the

hypothesis that formal instruction affects positively L2 acquisition in general and learners' production accuracy in particular.

To summarize, it has been demonstrated, so far, that research on instructed SLA provides diverse examples of the positive influence that **FonF** instruction has on the development of learners' interlanguage.

### **3.3. Factors Interacting with FonF**

Yet, as the saying goes, language learners are not all of a kind; the preceding discussion, however, might have given, so far, the reverse impression – the impression that they are. In spite of evidence to the contrary, several studies dealt with learners as one body in that they paid little attention to individual differences (see the studies reported by Williams [1]). The following are some of the most important variables believed to be at work in **FonF** instruction: developmental readiness (or say internal status of a learner's interlanguage) and natural orders of acquisition, the nature and complexity of target structures, individual differences like age, the affective filter, the Monitor, aptitude, attitude, learning styles – to name but a few. Yet, Rod Ellis [12] maintained that it is difficult to bring the discussion on the variables that have an impact on success to a consensus; in spite of this, his analysis of the eleven studies, he assured, was suggestive of what these factors might be.

### **4. Method**

For reminder purposes, to determine the role of **FonF** instruction in the acquisition of English parallel structures, this paper has addressed two research questions:

1. Does instruction through **FonF**, both preemptive and reactive, make a difference in the short-term learning of target structures?

2. Does **FonF** instruction maintain its effects in the long run?

Having advanced the research questions, let us specify the comparisons to be conducted by translating the afore-stated research questions into workable hypotheses.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

I hypothesize that instruction makes a difference in that the **FonF** instructed group would have differential effects on the short-term-learning of parallel structures, i.e. the **FonF** subjects who receive a focused treatment would outperform the uninstructed participants of the control group – those who receive no focused instructional treatment. The *null hypothesis* would be that instruction does not make a difference or that there is no difference in the short term learning of parallel grammar structures between the two groups.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

I hypothesize that short-term gains will be maintained in the long-term for the **FonF** group. The *null hypothesis* would be that the gains of instruction will not be maintained in the long-term.

#### **4.1. Sample:**

The subject sample of this study consisted of 51 third year LMD university English language learners from the University Centre of Mila, selected randomly from the parent population; intact classes, that is, were assigned to different groups. Of note, only the participants from the 2 classes who were present in all temporal phases of the experiment were accounted for.

Two groups have been compared: one experimental group and one control group. An intact class was randomly selected by the researcher as the experimental group. Subjects in this condition received focused input, targeting parallel grammatical structures.

To test whether or not instruction makes a difference, an intact class was randomly selected by the researcher as the control group. It followed its normal instruction according to its prescribed syllabus. It did not receive any particular focused instructional treatment. It was used so as to find out whether L2 learners make their way to native-like grammatical knowledge without instruction specifically focused on the targeted structures. Given that this is so, the hypothetical differential effect of focused instruction is checked against unfocused instruction.

#### 4.2. Instruction

Instruction took place in the regular class hours, with 4 sessions, sixty-minutes each, over a period of time equalling 4 sequential weeks (i.e. a full month), and it was given by the researcher who happened to be their teacher.

Participants in the control group followed their regular syllabus without receiving additional input specifically focused on target forms. Subjects of the experimental group, three days after the pre-test (see below), received their experimental treatment which consisted of formal instruction on the target linguistic structures – this is respectively the **FonF** condition in which positive evidence was made more salient (preemptive**FonF**), and essential negative evidence (reactive **FonF**) was provided.

Instruction followed the spirit of the three Ps (the presentation, practice, and production stages). The **FonF** subjects were first presented with an overview of parallelism through formal instruction. All along the instruction, they were exposed to a preemptive**FonF** with intensive attention to preselected forms while processing input for meaning. They received a reading on three themes (choosing a career, cloud types, and diet and exercise) with comprehension questions: they were required to answer the questions such that they used the forms under focus. Target forms were *enhanced* typographically, through the reading text, by way of underlining and the use of bold characters to draw learners' attention to both meaning and form at the same time. For reminder purposes, (preemptive) enhancement is claimed to foster learners' noticing of targeted structures.

The training tasks (which included sentence correction, gap-filling, and sentence completion) were an attempt on the part of the researcher to focus the



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participants' attention on the use of parallelism in English. This was coupled with negotiation of meaning. Grammar instruction and meaning-based interaction merged through grammar consciousness-raising tasks. It was hoped that participants would develop knowledge of the target formal features for further communicative use.

Subjects were informed, right from the outset, to pay attention to the way parallel structures were used. All along the experimental training – where positive evidence was abundant – negative evidence for incorrect realizations of parallelism was provided for the subjects in the form of (reactive) explicit corrective feedback. That is, during the focused tasks, immediate feedback was provided to help learners notice the formal features of the target language. Feedback was often used explicitly, but the implicit type was also made use of in the form of recasts and clarification requests, notably.

#### **4.3. The structures:**

The present study set out to investigate whether **FonF** instruction affects L2 learning of parallel grammatical structures. We chose parallelism because after 20 years or so of teaching written expression, it seems that the best of students suffers still from this structural problem.

#### **4.4. Instruments:**

A small scale but intensive pilot study was then conducted, on 12 students who were not included in the final study, in order to assess the instruments utilized – namely, the three administered tests and to find out whether the selected structures were characteristic of learners' interlanguage. Upon analysis, nothing was apparently attractive, meaning that the test was both unambiguous and within the respondents' reach.

Three similar but not identical tests made up the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test. All administered tests consisted of an untimed Grammaticality Judgment Test.

##### **4.4.1. The Untimed Grammaticality Judgment Test**

The development of L2 grammatical parallel structures was measured by means of an untimed paper-and-pencil Grammaticality Judgment Test (**GJT**), targeting explicit knowledge of the structures under study.

As a matter of fact, **GJTs** require the L2 learner to indicate whether a particular item is grammatically correct or incorrect. The test-takers were given a number of sentences containing correct and incorrect realizations of the target structure, and were instructed to identify which was which. Eight sentence items were correct and eight incorrect, giving a total of sixteen sentences. There was no time pressure, meaning the respondents did not complete the tests under time constraints; they worked rather in their own time.

Why the **untimed GJT**? A number of considerations motivated the choice for a **GJT**. One reason may be the fact that the **untimed GJT** is designed to measure explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge tests, by

definition, call on one's explicit knowledge of a particular rule of grammar, prompt its use as a monitor, allow the test-taker some processing time, and focus attention on form. A second reason is that comprehension usually takes place before production and the **GJT** requires more passive grammar knowledge in comparison with other tests. One may conjecture a guess: why not test oral proficiency? The answer is that instruction is believed to affect written, before oral, proficiency; oral language use, being more time-constrained, requires higher degrees of automatization (Bialystok [37; 38]).

The **GJT** was administered at three different temporal points all along the experiment: one before the treatment (Test/Time 0), a second immediately after the treatment (Test/Time 1), and a third delayed two months after the treatment (Test/Time 2). As such, the experiment stretched over a period of almost four months (including the pilot test). It may be worth our while to note that, so as to avoid the likelihood of subjects completing the post-tests while drawing on some memorized input, no test sentence bore any resemblance to the sentences included in the treatment condition.

#### **4.4.2. The Pre-test**

The test, delivered in written form, consisted of 16 sentences, divided evenly between grammatical and ungrammatical and running hierarchically across different levels: the word, the phrase, and the clause levels, respectively. Test-takers were required to indicate in their own processing time whether each sentence was grammatical or ungrammatical by ticking where appropriate. The pre-test was meant to see if groups would reveal any statistically significant difference prior to instruction and to ensure that any possible comparative effects attributed to instruction would not be related to prior knowledge of any of the groups (see Appendix II).

#### **4.4.3. Post-tests**

For reminder purposes, the study set out to investigate both immediate and delayed effects of instruction; in this way, two post-tests were conducted at two different points in time right after instruction was secured: one post-test administered *immediately* after instruction and another *delayed* two months after the instructional treatment.

##### **4.4.3.1. The Immediate Post-test**

Regarding the immediate post-test, it was administered to the **FonF** group a week after instruction took place to investigate whether instruction in general, and **FonF** in particular, had different learning effects (see **hypothesis 1**). It was similar to the pre-test but not identical. It also contained an **untimed GJT** with 16 sentences, split evenly between grammatical and ungrammatical and running across the same levels of construction, but the test items were different. The subjects were given the same test direction as in the pre-test (see Appendix III).

##### **4.4.3.2. The Delayed Post-test**

As regards the delayed post-test, it was administered to the subjects two months after the treatment so as to find out if the gains were maintained i.e. whether **FonF** instruction had long-term effects. The test-takers completed the test in the same conditions as they completed the two previous tests: the delayed post-test was similar in content to the pre-test and the immediate post-test, but in no way identical (see Appendix IV).

#### **4.5. Scoring the GJT**

It may be informative to note that the same scoring procedure was adopted in the pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests. Each test item was dichotomously responded to as grammatical or ungrammatical, and scored on a 0 to 1 point scale. The participants were awarded a score of 1 if they judged a sentence correctly, giving a maximum possible score of 16. Incorrect judgments were all scored 0 – all tests were worth at most sixteen points. There were no failures, whatsoever, on the part of the respondents to respond to a test item.

#### **4.6. Analysis**

A two-level between-subjects variable was adopted to define instruction (namely, **FonF** instruction and No instruction), and a three-level within-subjects variable (T0, T1, and T2) to operationalize temporal progress which included the pre-test and the two post-tests. Raw scores were entered and calculated for further use in the statistical analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (**SPSS**) software (version 17.0). In order to answer the two research questions, and thus put our hypotheses to the test, we submitted the raw scores for the **untimedGJT** to an Independent-Samples T-Test (a between-subjects design for testing hypothesis 1) and a Paired-Samples T-Test (a within-subjects design for testing hypothesis 2).

Why use the *Independent-Samples T-Test*? This is used to compare groups of participants that are not related and that are independent from one another. Why use the *Paired-Samples T-Test*? This test is sometimes called a *repeated measures design* where participants in the first group are the same as participants in the second group. It was used in the present study because our second research question called for the repeated measurement of the responses from the same individual. Data were collected on more than one occasion, that is, where subjects were followed over a period of time and asked similar questions at different times (i.e., comparing ‘before and after’ values).

#### **4.7. Results and Discussion**

Third year LMD university English language learners ( $N = 51$ ) took the **untimedGJT**. The *Independent-Samples T-Test* – a between-subjects design – conducted on the pre-test scores of both groups revealed no statistically significant difference prior to instruction between **FonF** subjects ( $M = 8.22$ ,  $SD = 1.423$ ) and the control group ( $M = 8.38$ ,  $SD = 1.345$ ),  $t(49) = -.393$ ,  $p \leq .05$  (see Tables 1a&b). Since the  $p$ -value denoted by "Sig. (2-tailed)" is .696, i.e.

greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the means. Therefore, these results indicate that any comparative, or say differential, effects attributed to instruction will not be related to prior knowledge of any of the groups.

#### **Hypothesis 1.**

In pursuit of our aims, and in order for us to answer our first research question and therefore test the first hypothesis, an *Independent-Samples T-Test* was conducted on the immediate post-test scores showing a statistically significant difference due to instruction between the **FonF** training condition ( $M = 14.56$ ,  $SD = 1.340$ ) and the comparison group ( $M = 8.78$ ,  $SD = 1.444$ ),  $t(49) = 14.785$ ,  $p \leq .05$  (see Tables 2a&b). What does this mean? Since the  $p$ -value is .000, i.e. less than 0.05 (or 5 percent), this suggests that there is a significant difference between the means. Therefore, we reject the *null hypothesis* that instruction does not make a difference or that there is no difference in the short term learning of parallel grammar structures between the two groups. Put another way, this indicates that the null is incorrect, that there is a relationship between **FonF** instruction and the learning of parallel grammar structures, and that the difference is not likely to be a result of chance.

#### **Hypothesis 2.**

In order for us to answer the second research question and as such test the second hypothesis, a *Paired-Samples T-Test*— a within-subjects design — was conducted on the post-test scores of the **FonF** group, comparing the immediate post-test scores ( $M = 14.56$ ,  $SD = 1.340$ ) and those of the delayed post-test ( $M = 14.00$ ,  $SD = 1.271$ ),  $t(26) = 5.701$ ,  $p \leq .05$  (see Tables 3a,b&c). Again, since the  $p$ -value is .000, i.e. less than 0.05 (or 5 percent), we can conclude, as hypothesized, that there are statistically significant gains in the delayed post-test comparable to those of the immediate post-test (i.e. a slight regression in mean scores from  $14.56 \pm 1.34$  points to  $14.00 \pm 1.27$  points, but a statistically significant improvement in comparison with mean scores of the **FonF** group displayed in Table 1a b); therefore, we can reject the *null hypothesis* that the gains of instruction will not be maintained in the long-term for the **FonF** group. Stated otherwise, given that the effect was lasting for the experimental group who did not lose ground, this is indicative that the *null* does not stand, that there is a relationship between **FonF** instruction and long-term effect on learning of target structures, and that the result is not likely to be due to chance (i.e. there is 0% chance of observing a mean difference of .556 between the paired samples' performances (see Table 3c below). Table (3b) below presents the data on the extent to which the two variables are similar or correlated. As we have expected, there is a high correlation between the two variables.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

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We are drawing to the close of this paper and so far have discussed the role of **FonF** instruction in the development of L2 grammatical structures, namely parallel structures. The results of the present study are very telling. Be that as it may, we believe that the pedagogical provision of grammar instruction with no practice on the part of the learners is likely to result in non-target-like accuracy. Therefore, tasks promoting language practice are very much in order for input to translate into intake, and for stabilized interlanguage to break free and keep away from being fossilized.

Of note also is that the value of **FonF** instruction may vary depending on complexity of the grammar structure under study. At any rate, it can be claimed that the present study tested a variety of parallel constructions ranging from single words up to clauses, though it did not set out to measure the difference therein specifically. Research studies targeting both simple and complex L2 forms are, therefore, very much warranted.

Of note also, for a coherent picture of **FonF** to emerge, more research studies trying out other tests that are production-based are in order.

**The T-Tests Tables**

Test	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	FonFG	27	8.22	1.423	.274
	ControlG	24	8.38	1.345	.275

**Table 1a. Group Statistics**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means	
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MeanDifference	Std. ErrorDifference	Lower	Upper
Pre Equal - varianc t Tes es t assume d	.114	.737	-.393	49	.696	-.153	.389	-.935	.629
Equal varianc es not assume d			-.394	48.801	.695	-.153	.388	-.932	.627

**Table 1b. Independent-Samples T-Test for Pre-test Scores of both Groups**

Test	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
ImmediatePost-Test	FonFG	2	14.5	1.340	.258
		7	6		
	Control G	2	8.79	1.444	.295
		4			

**Table 2a. Group Statistics**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means	
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

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		F	Sig. t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	MeanDiffer ence	Std. ErrorDiffer ence	Lower	Upper	
Immediate Post-Test	Equal variances assumed	.290	.593	14.785	49	.000	5.764	.390	4.980	6.547
	Equal variances not assumed			14.718	47.211	.000	5.764	.392	4.976	6.552

**Table 2b. Independent-Samples T-Test for Immediate Post-test Scores of both Groups**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Pair 1 FonF Immediate Post-Test	14.56	27	1.340	.258
FonF Delayed Post-Test	14.00	27	1.271	.245

**Table 3a. Paired Samples Statistics**

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 FonF Immediate Post-Test & FonF Delayed Post-Test	27	.926	.000

**Table 3b. Paired Samples Correlations**

	PairedDifferences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 FonF Immediate Post-Test - FonF Delayed Post-Test	.556	.506	.097	.355	.756	5.701	26	.000

**Table 3c. Paired-Samples T-Test** for Immediate & Delayed Post-test Scores of FonF Group

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**Appendices**

**Appendix I. Pilot test**

**Which of the following sentences is grammatically parallel and which is nonparallel? Tick as appropriate.**

**Single words:**

1. The ceremony was both long and tedious. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
2. It is a time not for words, but for action. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
3. You must either grant his request or incur his ill will. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
4. Susan is smart, diligent, and a hard worker. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
5. Ellen likes hiking, the rodeo, and to take afternoon naps. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
6. The obvious choices were to become a soldier or he could join the priesthood. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
7. My favourite subjects are: history, psychology, and math. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
8. To succeed in this job, you must both learn fast and work hard. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**

**Phrases:**

9. Buying a car and beginning her job were the next steps in her life. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
10. In spring, in summer, or winter, they usually spend their weekends sleeping. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
11. His satisfaction lies not in his title but his daily work. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
12. I would rather pay for my education than receive financial aid. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
13. They can't decide whether to take a cruise or to go on a safari. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**

**Clauses:**

14. The candidate believes that this country is ready for change, that the people are willing to sacrifice, and that there can be no change without sacrifice. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**
15. His idea of a relaxing evening is either biking around the island or that he watches the sunset over the lake. **[Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]**

16. The insurance clerk knew that we had paid our bill and we had our receipt. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Appendix II. Pre-test**

**Which of the following sentences is grammatically parallel and which is nonparallel? Tick as appropriate.**

**Single words:**

1. Galileo studied, thought, and experimented. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
2. They waited four hours at the airport, reading and sleeping. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
3. The doctor recommended plenty of food, sleep and exercising. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
4. I am happier at my new job than I was at my old one. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
5. For the first time in his life he had a job, a home, and a family. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
6. Syntax, morphology, and the area of phonology are the core areas of linguistics. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
7. I was happy and my parents happy too. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
8. Global warming affects humans, the environment, and is scary. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Phrases:**

9. Come to the meeting prepared to take notes and to ask questions. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
10. To chew carefully and eating slowly are necessary for good digestion. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
11. To swim in a lake is more pleasant than swimming at the seashore. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
12. The cat climbed over the fence, up the tree, and onto the roof of the house. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
13. The judge told her to take the stand and tell the truth. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Clauses:**

14. A father who spends time with his son and who thoughtfully answers his son's questions will be respected and loved. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

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15. He appreciated neither what she said nor how she said it. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
16. She's asking not where he went but the time he went. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Appendix III. Immediate Post-Test**

**Which of the following sentences is grammatically parallel and which is nonparallel? Tick as appropriate.**

**Single words:**

1. The young actor was tall, dark, and had a handsome face. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
2. He introduced aids to understanding such as paintings, recordings, pieces of sculpture, and guest lecturers. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
3. He was not only kind but also knew when to help people. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
4. Bill not only passed the test but also wrote the best paper in the class. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
5. He was a waiter, a tour guide, and taught at school. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
6. It's harder to do long divisions than dividing with a calculator. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
7. The dentist did not let me eat or drink anything for at least an hour. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
8. The ambassador spoke quietly and with force. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Phrases:**

9. To support his family and to put himself through college, he worked seven hours a day. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
10. I debated whether I should give the beggar money or to offer him food. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
11. I hope to vacation either in Spain or in Ireland. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
12. The instructor recommended several books for outside reading and that we should attend a play dealing with our subject. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
13. Going to a movie is more expensive than to rent a video. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Clauses:**

14. If you write or if you telephone, wait for two weeks until I return from Singapore. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
15. Unfortunately for all of us, what she says and she does are very often two different things! [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
16. My employer informed me that I would be sent to Hong Kong and I should make arrangements to leave in about two weeks. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Appendix IV. Delayed Post-Test**

**Which of the following sentences is grammatically parallel and which is nonparallel? Tick as appropriate.**

**Single words:**

1. Late for the dance, Jim dressed hastily and carelessly. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
2. He made learning more enjoyable and more lasting. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
3. The French, the Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
4. They have space for a computer but not a cupboard. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
5. He told us that the novel was timely, informative, and could hold our interest. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
6. Both my plane ticket and my passport were lost. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
7. Now is the time to organize, plan, and to act. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
8. Their wedding day was beautiful, bright, and joyful. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

**Phrases:**

9. Jack passes his time doing crossword puzzles and building model airplanes. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
10. Carlos wasted his first year at college by not studying enough and spending too much time at parties. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
11. Dentists advise brushing the teeth after each meal and to avoid too much sugar in the diet. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
12. My dog likes not only to play fetch, but also to chase cars. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]
13. Investing in his company is the same as to throw your money away. [Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....]

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**Clauses:**

14. I forgot that my research paper was due on Tuesday and my teacher had said he would not accept late papers. [**Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....**]
15. Areyoustayinghomebecauseyouaretiredorbecauseitisaschoolnight? [**Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....**]
16. Sheisa person who works hard and gets along well with others. [**Grammatical..... / Ungrammatical.....**]