

**HOW DO TEACHERS WITH DIFFERENT ESOL TEACHING  
BACKGROUNDS APPROACH FORM-FOCUSED  
INSTRUCTION?**

**ANA GERZIC**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (APPLIED  
LANGUAGE STUDIES)

1 July, 2005

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 The aim of the study.....	2
1.3 Rationale and significance of the study.....	4
1.4 The trends in grammar teaching.....	7
1.5 Background.....	8
1.6 Thesis outline.....	13
CHAPTER 2: SLA RESEARCH ON FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION AND TEACHER COGNITION	
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Some definitions of form-focused instruction.....	14
2.3 Direction of recent FFI research.....	17
2.4 Comparative studies of FFI.....	19
2.5 Classroom process research.....	20
2.6 Theory-driven FFI research.....	24
2.7 Descriptive studies of FFI and teacher cognition about FFI.....	27
2.8 Summary.....	30
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION	
3.1 Introduction.....	31
3.2 Form-focused versus meaning-focused instruction.....	31
3.3 Three types of form-focused instruction.....	33

3.4	Type 1: Focus on forms.....	35
3.5	Type 2: Planned focus on form.....	40
3.6	Type 3: Incidental focus on form.....	41
	3.6.1 Incidental focus on form options.....	42
	3.6.2 Pre-emptive focus on form.....	43
	3.6.3 Reactive focus on form.....	43
3.7	Summary.....	46

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1	Introduction.....	48
	4.1.1 Research methods in FFI.....	48
	4.1.2 Confirmatory studies of FFI.....	49
	4.1.3 Interpretative research.....	50
4.2	The research focus and method.....	53
4.3	Participants.....	55
	4.3.1 Research site.....	55
	4.3.2 Participant selection.....	56
	4.3.3 Teachers.....	57
	4.3.4 Students.....	57
4.4	Procedure.....	58
	4.4.1 Data collection.....	58
	4.4.2 Data analysis.....	58
	4.4.3 Presentation of data.....	59
4.5	Identification of FFEs.....	60
4.6	Analysis.....	62
	4.6.1 Description of the system.....	63
	4.6.2 General characteristics of the system.....	63
	4.6.2.1 Approach.....	64
	4.6.2.2 Instigator.....	65
	4.6.3 Some examples of FFEs coded for general characteristics.....	66
4.7	Categories comprising FFEs.....	67
	4.7.1 Types 1 and 2: Teacher-initiated and student-initiated Reactive FFEs.....	67
	4.7.1.1 Description of categories comprising reactive FFEs.....	68

4.7.1.1.1	Trigger.....	68
4.7.1.1.2	Response.....	69
4.7.1.1.3	Uptake.....	73
4.7.2	Type 3: Teacher-initiated pre-emptive FFEs.....	75
4.7.2.1	Description of categories comprising TIPFFE.....	76
4.7.2.1.1	Trigger.....	76
4.7.2.1.2	Response.....	77
4.7.2.1.3	Uptake.....	78
4.7.3	Type 4: Student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs.....	80
4.7.3.1	Description of categories comprising SIPFFE.....	81
4.7.3.1.1	Trigger.....	81
4.7.3.1.2	Response.....	82
4.7.3.1.3	Uptake.....	84
4.8	The reliability of the coding system.....	84
4.9	Summary.....	85
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION		
5.1	Introduction.....	86
5.2	Total FFEs.....	86
5.3	General characteristics of FFEs.....	89
5.4	Types of FFEs.....	92
5.4.1	Reactive FFEs.....	94
5.4.2	Reactive FFE uptake.....	99
5.4.3	Initiating FFEs.....	100
5.5	Summary.....	106
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION		
6.1	Introduction.....	108
6.2	Results summary.....	108
6.3	Limitations.....	112
6.4	Theoretical implications.....	113
6.5	Pedagogical implications.....	115
6.3	Recommendations for future research.....	117
POSTSCRIPT.....		119

LIST OF REFERENCES.....120

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics forms.....137

Appendix B: Sample transcript of recorded lessons.....140

## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

“I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

## **A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S**

I am indebted to many people who have encouraged me and assisted me, in one way or another, with this thesis, in particular Associate Professor John Bitchener for his most patient guidance and insightful feedback throughout the research process and data analysis. I am grateful to my two colleagues and participants in this research, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, whose thoughts and voices I used to express my own. My thanks also to my parents who travelled half the world to help me look after my children while working and completing the thesis.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: General Characteristics of Identified FFEs.....	63
Figure 2: Categories Comprising TIRFFE <sub>s</sub> / SIRFFE <sub>s</sub> .....	68
Figure 3: Categories Comprising TIPFFE <sub>s</sub> .....	75
Figure 4: Categories Comprising SIPFFE <sub>s</sub> .....	80

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Total Number of Focus on Form Episodes.....	87
Table 2: Initiating and Reactive FFEs.....	89
Table 3: Instigator by Class and Overall.....	90
Table 4: FFE Type Overall.....	92
Table 5: FFE Type by Class.....	93
Table 6: Reactive FFEs by Participant.....	94
Table 7: Reactive FFE Responses by Participant.....	94
Table 8: Reactive FFE Responses by Category.....	95
Table 9: Reactive FFE Responses by Subcategory.....	95
Table 10: Reactive FFE Uptake by Participant and Overall.....	99
Table 11: SIPFFE Trigger.....	101
Table 12: SIPFFE Response by Participant.....	102
Table 13: TIPFFE Trigger.....	103
Table 14: Initiating Pre-Emptive FFEs Uptake by Participant and Overall.....	106

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BA:	Bachelor of Arts
CLT :	Communicative Language Teaching
COLT:	Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching
ESL:	English as a Second Language
ESOL:	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FFE(s):	Focus on Form Episode(s)
FFI:	Form-focused Instruction
FL:	Foreign Language
FonF:	Focus on Form
FonFS:	Focus on Forms
KAL:	Knowledge about Language
L2:	Second Language
MA:	Master of Arts
S(s):	Student(s)
SIPFFE(s):	Student-Initiated Pre-Emptive Form-Focused Episode(s)
SIRFFE(s):	Student-Initiated Reactive Form-Focused Episode(s)
SL:	Second Language
SLA:	Second Language Acquisition
T1:	Teacher One
T2:	Teacher Two
TESOL:	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TIPFFE(s):	Teacher-Initiated Pre-Emptive Form-Focused Episode(s)
TIRFFE(s):	Teacher-Initiated Reactive Form-Focused Episode(s)

## **A B S T R A C T**

Form-focused instruction makes up an important part of the literature on second language acquisition research. Current approaches to second language instruction have called for an integration of message-focused and form-focused instruction in the L2 classroom. At the same time, a growing interest is the pedagogical applications of form-focused research, which proposes a means of addressing form in the classroom using various instructional options, some of which involve incidental and pre-planned focus on form.

This study examined the nature and occurrence of pre-planned and incidental focus on form in two secondary school ESOL classrooms, and what thinking underlay the two teachers' practices in choosing a particular option. The study reports on the methods and approaches that two teachers employed in the context of their own ESOL classrooms, in which form-focused instruction occurred, and explored the extent to which different levels of experience influenced the instructional decisions of two ESOL teachers.

The results showed that there was a considerable amount of attention to form in lessons that purported to be 'communicative' and certainly were so. It also became clear that in these classes, a focus-on-form was not just a reactive phenomenon, it was also proactive since the students played an important part in both initiating and responding focus on form episodes. Much of the focus on form that arose was triggered by a problem in using English accurately, not by a problem in communication. That means that, although the lessons were 'communicative', the students regularly paid attention to language for its own sake.

It is suggested that both pedagogy and teacher education/development may benefit from a perspective in which both good and not-so-good practice is seen as cognitive and reflective activity.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Formal instruction in **second language** (L2) teaching has been extensively researched in the last 40 years. However, this work tells us little about different methods of grammar teaching as these are perceived by teachers. At the same time, educational research has shown that much can be learnt about the nature of instruction through the study of teacher cognition – the store of beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, theories, and attitudes about all aspects of their work which teachers hold and which have powerful impact on teachers’ classroom practices. Studies of teacher cognition of formal, explicit instruction have begun to appear in the field of L2 teaching in the last decade, yet **how** the teachers actually go about grammar teaching and what influences their instructional choices and decisions are the issues that have received little attention.

Educational research has acknowledged a conception of teachers as active, thinking decision-makers whose instructional decisions are powerfully influenced by their cognitions about teaching and learning. Research on teaching has focused increasingly on describing what teachers actually do in the classrooms and on understanding the cognition which underlies these practices.

Although teacher cognition research in the field of L2 teaching has increased in recent years, the teaching of grammar has attracted meager attention. Thus, there is little descriptive data about L2 teachers' practices (approaches and methods, syllabus design, material selection, etc.) in formal instruction and even less insight into the cognitions which underlie these practices. In light of these observations, there is a gap in the research agenda for L2 teaching.

## 1.2 The Aim of the Study

The purpose of the current study is twofold. In the first place, it examines the occurrence and nature of **pre-planned** (lessons where learners are involved in the production of the pre-targeted forms) and **incidental** (where the communicative need is attended to) **focus-on-form** (drawing students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in the course of a communicative lesson) because the teachers are most likely to construct lessons that combine a number of different options in order to make the instruction more effective and to provide variety. Secondly, the study focuses on what teachers in real L2 classrooms do in teaching grammar and examines their thinking underlying these observed practices i.e. their reasons for choosing certain approaches rather than others, because it is often quite difficult from mere observation to discern what determines the focus of a lesson: the teacher's intention (**pre-emptive** focus-on-form) or the student's response to instruction (**reactive** focus-on-form).

In order to investigate the application of various options in **form-focused instruction**, the study will report on the methods and approaches that two secondary

school teachers employ in the context of their own ESOL classrooms in which form-focused instruction occurs and explore the extent to which different levels of experience influence the instructional decisions of two ESOL teachers.

In addition, the research may provide some further insights for teacher education and help bridge the gap between SLA theory and classroom pedagogy by enabling teachers to look at their own practice.

The broad questions that will guide this study are:

- Do pre-planned and incidental focus on form occur in meaning-focused lessons in secondary school ESOL classes?
- What are the general characteristics of focus on form episodes in these two classrooms?
- How much do each teacher's cognitions (their knowledge of SLA theories and personal professional experience) inform their form-focused practices?
- What kind of a lesson would prompt pre-emptive form instruction?
- Under what circumstances would **reactive** (corrective feedback) focus on form occur?

- What differences in the rate of correct **uptake** (a student's response to a teacher's feedback in which correct linguistic information is incorporated in production) can be observed between two teachers' classes?
- Is there a relationship between the response moves initiated by the teacher and successful uptake?

A more detailed explanation of how the research questions will be operationalised is provided in Chapter 4 on Methodology.

### 1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

There are several reasons why it has become necessary to conduct a study such as the current one.

- A secondary school L2 classroom as a site has been completely overlooked in favour of a more theoretical focus in research so far.
- Cognitive bases of teachers' instructional decisions are relatively unexplored.
- Teachers are entitled to evaluation of such questions as to whether and when grammar should be taught. Teachers make such evaluations in the context of their own classrooms.

- Teachers can provide answers to questions such as what approaches in form- focused instruction are most likely to result in pushed output.

The present study reflects a growing interest in SLA - the pedagogical application of form-focused research. Such applications represent a tool for addressing form in the classroom using various instructional practices such as consciousness-raising and structured input. Besides, research has recently begun to look at the provision of negative evidence (reactive focus-on-form or corrective feedback) as a means of getting students to ‘notice the gap’ between their interlanguage and the target language forms. However, despite the significance of such studies, the cognitive bases of teachers’ instructional decisions in respect to form-focused instruction remain on the margins of research. The classroom setting, especially a secondary school classroom, is often overlooked in favour of a more theoretical focus. For that reason, this study attempts to address this gap by investigating form-focused instruction in an ESOL classroom from the perspective of teacher cognition (the theoretical knowledge and teaching experience bases underlying the classroom practice). In this regard, the study is also concerned with the relationship between theory and practice, the theoretical focus being the operationalisation and application of options in focus on form in L2 classroom (more about these options will be said in Chapter 3). The reasons for this include:

- a) Meaning-focused instruction is effective in developing fluent oral communication skills, however it does not result in a high level of linguistic or sociolinguistic competence and so focus needs to be given to form in both explicit and implicit manner .

- b) On the other hand, FFI consisting of a **focus on forms** may not result in learners being able to restructure their interlanguages, that is, incorporate the reformulated linguistic information into their productive language.
- c) FFI consisting of a focus on form can enable learners to develop fluency with accuracy because it creates the conditions for interlanguage restructuring to take place.

The abovementioned claims that the rationale for focus-on-form draws on have already provided an affirmative answer to the question that arises in some of the research , ‘Should teachers teach grammar?’ However, Ellis (2001) agrees that any proposal regarding this issue needs to be subjected to evaluation by teachers in the context of their own teaching.

A further rationale for this research can be found in the kind of skill-building theory advanced by Johnson (1996). Johnson argues that skill-development occurs when learners obtain feedback. He suggests that feedback is most effectively utilized by learners when it is provided under ‘real operating conditions’, in natural contexts in which learners are actually trying to perform the skill. When teachers respond to student errors through corrective feedback they potentially create conditions for students to attempt to produce the correct forms themselves. Doing so may help to foster the acquisition of these forms so that on subsequent occasions the students are able to use the correct forms without prompting. A question of interest from this standpoint would be what kinds of focus-on-form the teachers find most likely to result in **pushed output** and what kind of approach they most frequently take in order to induce this output.

Therefore, in order to answer the abovementioned questions, this study attempts to provide a snapshot of the practices of two ESOL teachers in a secondary school in New Zealand. The significance of this study lies in the fact that there have not been any recorded attempts to conduct a similar research in a secondary school setting. The study aims to provide data which can serve as the basis of more effective L2 teacher education and development initiatives in terms of indicating to what extent theory and practice in L2 teaching can be reconciled in the reality of a classroom. Currently, L2 teacher educators can, at best, introduce trainees to instructional strategies for teaching grammar without being able to illustrate how, why and **if** L2 teachers in real classrooms utilize these strategies. The two secondary teachers' feedback, which the current study provides, is indicative of the effort that they had to put in their own professional development to be able to make valid instructional choices and decisions in the context of their own classrooms. In addition, the study attempts to cast some light on the theories and grammar teaching trends that teachers find really effective in practice and also indicate what approaches the two teachers find less successful. Given that we lack indisputable knowledge about effective L2 grammar teaching and learning, the data should be of significance to tertiary institutions that offer teacher training qualifications in L2 teaching domain.

#### 1.4 The Trends in Grammar Teaching

The trend towards communicative language teaching has had a considerable impact on L2 teaching and research. Message-focused instruction has become present in most L2 classrooms. However, research into this kind of instruction has found that

while students in these classes often achieve near native-like levels of fluency, these students often do not achieve correspondingly high levels of linguistic accuracy (Day & Shapson, 1991; Swain, 1985). Second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and theorists therefore call for an integration of message-focused and form-focused instruction in the L2 classroom ( Ellis, 2001; Hulstijn, 1995 ).

Message-focused instruction is characterized by tasks and activities in which students are primarily concerned with exchanging meaning (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Form-focused instruction occurs when students' primary focus is on linguistic form (Ellis, 2001). Form-focused instruction has been further divided into two categories: focus on forms and focus on form (Long, 1988, 1991). The former is characterised by lessons in which the main purpose is to teach linguistic items whereas the latter is characterised by incidental attention to linguistic form within the context of meaning-focused activities.

The current study acknowledges the centrality of both form-focused instruction in L2 teaching and of teacher cognition in the study of instruction. It focuses on what teachers in real classrooms do in teaching grammar, 'real classroom' meaning the teachers have been studied in the course of their routine duties, and it examines the thinking underlying and influencing the observed practices.

## 1.5 Background

As mentioned earlier, the work done in the field of formal instruction has been largely inconclusive (Ellis, 1998). The frequently asked questions such as "Should teachers

teach grammar at all?” (Krashen, 1981; Bialystok, 1982; Pienemann, 1985; Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Gass, 1991), or “Should teachers correct students’ grammatical errors?” (Chaudron, 1977; De Keyser, 1994; Ferris, 2002, 2003, 2004), have not been answered conclusively. After over 20 years of research, Ellis (1994, p.646) concludes that “it is probably premature to reach any firm conclusions regarding what type of formal instruction works best”. Therefore, in attempting to understand how teachers approach formal instruction, we cannot start with the assumption that their decisions are informed by a well-defined research base providing firm guidelines for practice.

Much of this research has been experimental in nature. To identify the above strategies for teaching grammar, researchers have set-up instructional contexts in which the effects on student achievement of different strategies can be compared (Fotos, 1993; De Keyser, 1995). Such work tells us nothing about teachers’ decision-making processes in teaching grammar in natural settings.

A substantial amount of descriptive research on grammar teaching in naturally-occurring settings has also been conducted (e.g. Lightbown and Spada, 1993; Lyster and Ranta, 1997). Yet none of these studies has investigated the teacher cognitions underlying the practices described.

Educational research was characterized by studies which explored effective teaching by correlating specific processes, or teaching behaviours, with student achievement as measured by standardized tests. The principle underlying this research is a view of teaching as primarily linear activity – teaching behaviours are seen as ‘causes’ and student learning as ‘effects’. This approach emphasizes the actions of teachers rather

than their professional judgements and attempts to capture the activity of teaching by identifying “sets” of discrete behaviours reproducible from one teacher and one classroom to the next” ( Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990, p.2 ).

Various empirical studies have examined focus on form but they exclusively looked at the characteristics of student-initiated focus on form (Loewen, 2003) and several distinctions have been made. One is between planned and incidental focus on form (Ellis 2001). In planned focus on form, there is an *a priori* decision made on the part of the researcher or teacher to target specific linguistic items during meaning-focused activities. This targeting may take the form of enhanced input, targeted output or both. However, in incidental focus on form, linguistic structures are not pre-targeted. Instead, they are dealt with as they arise spontaneously in meaning-focused classroom discourse. The present study considers focus on form in all its varieties with particular interest being shown to incidental focus on form.

It should be noted that the distinction between planned and incidental focus on form has traditionally been based on the teacher’s decision to target specific structures (**teacher-initiated pre-emptive focus on form**). However, there has generally not been a consideration of the student’s role in this. For example, students may have their own agenda and decide before class that there are specific structures that they wish to inquire about (**student-initiated pre-emptive focus on form**). Some of these, at least, could be raised during meaning-focused activities. Thus, while this study purports to be looking at a type of incidental focus on form, it is acknowledged that student-initiated FFEs, while most probably occurring spontaneously during meaning-focused tasks, may in fact be pre-targeted by the student. Such a distinction

may be difficult to ascertain, however, unless the students are asked to comment on the FFEs they initiate.

The last 40 years have seen the gradual emergence of an alternative conception of teaching as a process of active decision-making informed by teacher's cognitions – the beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions, and attitudes about all aspects of their work which teachers have. This conception of teaching has been developed through a growing body of research, the scope of which includes elementary teachers' beliefs about teaching reading (Beach, 1993), elementary teachers' beliefs about vocabulary teaching (Konopak and Williams, 1994 ), college reading instructors' beliefs about teaching (Wyatt and Pickle, 1993), and so on. The important body of such work that now exists indicates that teachers' cognitions consist of a set of personally-defined practically oriented understandings of teaching and learning that significantly influence instructional decisions (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Clandinnin and Connelly, 1987; Pajares, 1992). The implication of this work is that comprehending the process of teaching means describing teachers' actions, understanding the implicit bases of teachers' work and accessing the cognition underlying these.

Borg (1999) summarized the applications which research on teacher cognition should provide. Insight into teachers' conditions allow us to understand differences between theoretical recommendations based on research and classroom practice, to provide policy makers in education and teacher education with the basis for understanding how best to implement educational innovation and to promote teacher change, to engage teachers in reflective learning, by making them aware of the psychological bases of their classroom practice, to understand how teachers develop, to provide the

basis of effective and purposeful pre- and inservice teacher education and professional development. Most relevant for this study is the observation that teacher cognition and practice research can inform the process of L2 teacher education. It has practical and not only theoretical value.

The research into the psychological context of L2 teaching supports the finding that, although contextual factors may prevent teachers from acting in accordance with their cognitions, the latter are a very powerful influence on classroom practice. However, few of these studies have focused specifically on grammar teaching. The only research on language teaching which does shed light on teachers' perspectives on formal instruction is that which examined the knowledge about language (KAL) component of the National Curriculum in the UK (Mitchell, 1994; Brumfit et al., 1996). The most important finding of this study was that inadequate knowledge of metalinguistic terminology on teachers' part made them reluctant to use such terminology in teaching.

Another paper about teacher cognition in L2 grammar teaching (Williams, 1994) reports on the views about grammar and grammar teaching expressed by teachers on an MA course. The outcomes of the study appear to be useful for planning MA courses, however, such work does not investigate teachers' classroom practices or the cognitions and educational background which shape these.

Teacher cognition research needs to shed light not only on what teachers do, but also provide insight into the cognitive bases of these practices. Such data can play an important role in L2 teacher education and stimulate teachers to reflect on and

improve the quality of their own grammar knowledge and grammar teaching practices.

## 1.6 Thesis Outline

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapters 2 and 3 review the literature pertaining to focus on form. Chapter 2 is concerned with the theoretical background of form-focused instruction and teacher cognition while Chapter 3 examines the concepts that closely determine the nature of interaction as it relates to focus on form. Chapter 4 details the methodology of the study. Chapter 5 presents the results and discussion of the research questions. Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the results, discusses the limitations of the study, theoretical and pedagogical implications of the research, and points to some directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SLA Research on Form-focused Instruction and Teacher Cognition**

#### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review SLA research on form-focused instruction and studies of teacher cognition in the past 30 years, with special attention being paid to the trends in research that aimed at bridging the gap between SLA theory and classroom pedagogy in the last ten years.

First, the distinction between focus-on-form and focus-on-formS will be explained, followed by the review of recent research directed at examining how form-focused instruction is accomplished. The chapter will also include an overview of comparative and classroom process research, as well as a review of theory-driven research. Finally, I will survey descriptive studies of form-focused instruction and teachers' cognitions about it.

#### 2.2 Some Definitions of Form-Focused Instruction

Form focused instruction is a vast and expanding area of enquiry. Also, it is an area that is of considerable interest to both Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Second Language (L2) pedagogy. The term form-focused instruction (FFI) is of two basic types: (1) any planned instructional activity aimed at inducing learners to pay attention to linguistic form and (2) any incidental attempt to focus learners' attention

onto forms in the course of instruction that is not explicitly designed to teach them. In regard to these two basic types, Long (1991) makes the distinction between **'focus-on-formS'(FonFs)** and **'focus-on-form'(FonF)**.

Focus-on- forms, according to Long, consists of the teaching of discrete grammar points in accordance with a synthetic syllabus, such as a structural syllabus. It involves language programme planning based on the structures the learner is ready to learn and targeting the next stage of the learner's language development. Focus-on-forms is also closely associated with 'PPP', a methodological sequence involving the **presentation** of a linguistic feature, followed by first controlled **practice**, and then free **production**. In other words, the criterial features of focus-on-forms are (1) the pre-selection of a linguistic target for a lesson and (2) awareness on the part of the teacher and students of what the linguistic target for the lesson is.

However, a focus-on-forms approach is also evident in a more **'communicative'** methodology. Communicative language teaching employs activities that prepare students for natural, appropriate, additional language use outside the classroom. Language is viewed as more than grammar drills and word memorization. The goal is to train students in language skills that enable them to function easily by themselves without their teachers. Students need to learn what language is effective and culturally appropriate in natural discourse. Errors in additional language learning are a natural part of learning, but they should be detected and corrected early. Supervised by their teachers, students can practice with one another and detect and correct each other's errors. The teacher's role is not to control and dominate the classroom. Instead, the teacher can present real-language models to the students

(**comprehensible input**), provide information and focus to the language forms being studied, use a limited amount of controlled exercises so that students gain confidence, and then allow students to interact with each other by using language for natural communicative functions. Thus, the classroom should be neither completely learner-centred nor completely teacher-controlled; rather both contribute to learning (e.g. contextualized grammar activities as illustrated in Ur, 1988).

Focus on form, as defined by Long (1991: 45-46), "...overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication." The concept of focus-on-form involves a few assumptions. The first one refers to pedagogic, not to mental, activity. Therefore, it takes place interactionally and involves observable behaviour. The second assumption is that teacher and learners are both primarily focused on using language communicatively, not with trying to learn the language. The third assumption is that, despite the focus-on-meaning, there are occasions when the participants choose to or need to focus on form. Along the lines of Long's definition, these occasions are not pre-planned; they occur incidentally. Finally, there is the assumption that focus-on-form is necessarily occasional and transitory, as otherwise it would supplant the primary focus-on-meaning. Ellis et al.(1999) consider focus-on-form to have four criterial features: (1) it is **observable** ( i.e. occurs interactionally); (2) it **arises incidentally**; (3) it occurs in discourse that is primarily **meaning-centred** and (4) it is **transitory**.

There are some other terms used in the current literature to refer to form-focused instruction, for instance, Stern (1990) talks about "analytic teaching" which, in fact,

refers to the ‘analytic strategy’, planned form-focused instruction that involves specifying objectives, presenting predetermined items and, as far as possible, controlling the process to ensure they are learnt. He contrasts it with ‘experiential strategy’, which is incidental, and involves the learners developing language in individual, spontaneous ways. Lyster and Ranta (1997) refer to corrective feedback / error correction, and “negotiation of form”.

FFI includes both traditional approaches to teaching forms, based on structural syllabi, and more communicative approaches. The term ‘form’ includes phonological, lexical, grammatical and pragmalinguistic aspects of language.

The purpose of this section was to define terms that will be operated with in this research, not to propose that one pedagogic approach is better than another. The section that follows will review theoretically and pedagogically motivated research on FFI.

### 2.3 Direction of Recent FFI Research

In SLA research, the pedagogical concern of form-focused instruction has been most apparent in recent research related to French immersion and intensive ESL in Canadian schools (Lightbown, 2000). Here, although acquiring language in a communicative sense, evidence has suggested that the young learners in these meaning-focused contexts do not reach high levels of grammatical competence. It is for this reason that classroom-based researchers have sought to identify ways in which to draw learners’ attention to form without compromising the meaning-focused

content of instruction. In this regard, Lightbown (2000) notes that in addition to theoretical concerns, ‘there has been a huge increase in SLA research which is either carried out in the classroom or which has been designed to answer questions about FL/SL (Foreign Language/Second Language pedagogy)’.

Also, some recent studies (e.g. Allen, 2000; DeKeyser & Sokalski, 1996; Ellis, 2001, etc.) have tried to test the rival theoretical claims of skill-building and input-processing models of L2 acquisition where the relative effectiveness of production-based and input-based grammar instruction have been examined. Some other studies have focused on error correction where the goal has been to try to identify what constitutes effective pedagogic practice. The abovementioned pedagogical concern regarding the effectiveness of FFI in the meaning-focused context, however, is not characteristic of the wider field of form focused instruction research. Ellis(2001:9), taking a more comprehensive view, concludes a recent view by commenting that whereas the earlier research was primarily concerned with whether form focused instruction “worked”, current research is directed at examining **how it is accomplished** in different settings and **what effects** different types of form focused instruction have on L2 acquisition. This shift in direction contributed to progressively refined conceptualization of form focused instruction options, which the next chapter will look more closely at. Different form-focused options tended to be based on developments in L2 theory rather than language pedagogy. Likewise, Ellis noted, this kind of research was motivated by theoretical rather than pedagogical considerations. As a result, there is now a clearer divide between theoretical and pedagogical research than a decade ago.

Ellis's view is also shared by pedagogically orientated researchers who argue that controlled laboratory studies showing positive results for certain types of corrective feedback may not be readily applicable to classroom settings. However, as Ellis notes above, the divide between research and practice is one that is most perceived by the teaching profession. Despite the promise form-focused instruction shows in addressing both the interests of SLA theory and L2 pedagogy, the relationship remains one in need of mediation.

#### 2.4 Comparative Studies of FFI

In the 1960s and 1970s, which were the years of early research into form-focused instruction, the focus was "method" oriented. It consisted of global comparisons of language teaching methods in language teaching. At that time language pedagogy assumed that language teaching necessarily involved focusing on form. The principal debate concerned how form should best be taught, **explicitly** (as in grammar-translation method where the language programme planning is based on the structures the learner is ready to learn) or **implicitly** (as in communicative language teaching where the approach to planning is content based, the language learning is co-operative and the instruction is task-based). The studies conducted on a large scale in order to resolve what Diller (1978) called "**language teaching controversy**" (e.g. Scherer & Wetheimer, 1964; Smith, 1970) were inconclusive in their research and failed to show the superiority of one L2 learning method over another.

At around the same time, investigation of how learners acquired L2 in **naturalistic** settings began. This research was in part pedagogically motivated. The study carried

out by Hatch (1978) indicated that learners tended to follow a natural order of acquisition and also manifested well-defined sequences in the acquisition of target structures. These findings led to questioning if FFI was necessary for acquisition. The question addressed in the majority of studies was “Does form-focused instruction work?” The findings of the series of **comparative studies** conducted by Ellis (1984a), Pica (1983), Pienemann (1984) and Turner (1979) were quite contradictory: the majority of these studies indicated that instructed learners learned faster and achieved higher levels of proficiency than noninstructed learners whereas some other studies (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) showed that instructed learners followed the same sequence of acquisition as noninstructed learners. Therefore, this paradox had an important impact on theoretical thinking about the relationship between FFI and acquisition. This led to claims that FFI only works by promoting the processes involved in natural language acquisition, not by changing them.

## 2.5 Classroom Process Research

After the comparative method studies had lost their significance, a new strand of research became wide spread - **classroom process research**. Its focus was obtaining precise and detailed information about how instruction was accomplished through the observation and description of teaching and learning activities. Early studies in this field of FFI focused on **error treatment** (Allwright, 1975; Long, 1977; Chaudron, 1977). As a result, various taxonomies of error treatment options were developed. These options include no response at all, interruptions, or various forms of re-stating the error, either to indicate to the speaker that an error occurred, or to repeat the utterance with the error corrected. Some theorists refer to such repetitions as recasts,

which Long defines as "utterances that rephrase an utterance by changing one or more sentence components while still referring to its central meanings" (434).

Toward the end of the 80s, **process-product** studies began to appear. These tried to relate features of classroom language use to learning outcomes. For example, using a classroom interaction scheme called the Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching (COLT) , Allen, Swain, Harley, and Cummins (1990) examined the relationship between various experiential and analytic classroom activities and learning outcomes, measured by a battery of tests based on a model of communicative competence. Later studies conducted by Ellis (1994b) and VanLier (1996) addressed the kinds of interactions that occurred in language classrooms. Their studies provided general framework of language use and ethnographic accounts of particular aspects of classroom language such as **turn-taking** and **repair**.

The **experimental studies** in the late 1980s and early 1990s all addressed the same question: "Does form-focused instruction work?" These studies focused on whether learners learnt the specific forms they were taught. "Learned" was operationalized as significant gains in accuracy, i.e. the accurate production of the targeted structures. The claims advanced by Krashen (1981) and Schwartz (1993) that grammar can only be acquired unconsciously from comprehensible input and that teaching grammar or correcting learner errors has no effect on the learner's acquired system was the theoretical background that motivated these studies. Pedagogically, these studies explored if FFI could help learners to acquire those grammatical structures that they failed to acquire even after years of exposure to comprehensible input. The results these studies produced were mixed. Gains in accuracy were evident only in a cloze

test and written interview (explicit knowledge), but not in an oral interview (implicit knowledge) (Day and Shapson, 1991). Day and Shapson concluded that systematic instruction in grammar was helpful, especially with verb tenses. A closer look at their study shows that this claim is based on weak evidence. In their study, seventh graders in French immersion in Canada studied the French conditional for six weeks (17 hours total). They did somewhat better than comparisons on a grammar test and on a composition given 11 weeks after the instruction ended, but not on an oral interview. Even on the grammar test, however, gains were hardly spectacular after so much instruction. Instructed students improved from 19 percent correct on the pre-test to 41 percent correct on both the post-test and delayed post-test. The grammar test had 27 items, which means that students improved from five correct to eleven. After 17 hours of instruction, this is disappointing. It would mean about a C+ in the average classroom.

Some other experimental studies have examined the difference between explicit and implicit FFI approaches (e.g. DeKeyser 1994, 1995; de Graaff, 1997; Robinson, 1996) generally finding in favour of explicit grammar teaching and learning. On the other hand, Fotos & Ellis (1991) have explored which type of explicit instruction-traditional, teacher-centred, or consciousness-raising tasks- works best, and found no difference.

Running parallel to the research that examined if FFI worked were the experimental studies that addressed the related research question '*What effect does form-focused instruction have on the **order** and the **sequence** of acquisition?*' Long's research (1988, 1991) that shows that instruction appears to facilitate learning but only if it

supports the natural process of acquisition had a major influence on current form-focused research. He argued that attention to form will work effectively for acquisition if it occurs in the context of meaning-focused communication. According to Long's revised Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), attention to form in meaning-focused communication occurs when learners have the opportunity to negotiate for meaning following a breakdown of understanding. Such negotiation serves to highlight linguistic forms that are problematic to them, "notice the gap" between the input and their own interlanguage and gives them opportunities for "pushed output" (improving linguistic accuracy by reformulating utterances that were initially misunderstood). Pavesi (1986) and Ellis (1989) in their respective comparative studies compared groups of noninstructed and instructed learners. They provided additional support that instructed learners followed the same order and sequences of acquisition as naturalistic learners but that they proceeded further and more rapidly. Studies by Pienemann (1985, 1989) indicated that instruction directed at structures that were next in line to be acquired according to developmental sequence was effective in moving learners along the sequence. On this basis, Pienemann (1985) advanced the teachability hypothesis which claims that "instruction can only promote language acquisition if the interlanguage is close to the point when the structure to be taught is acquired in a natural setting. According to this hypothesis, instructional sequences or approaches work if the learner is **"ready"**.

Another group of experimental studies tested the hypothesis that teaching learners a marked structure in a hierarchy would enable them to acquire not only this structure, but also the implicated less marked structures. For instance, Eckman, Bell, and Nelson (1988) showed that training complex sentence structures in early stages of

learning results in more rapid acquisition of the grammar of the second language than does training simpler forms.

What the abovementioned studies showed overall, was that grammatical form was amenable to instruction, especially if the learners were developmentally ready to acquire the targeted structure, and also that these effects were often durable. They provided the valuable taxonomy of error treatment options, which has shown to be a valuable tool in operationalising research in error treatment domain. However, most of the time the research results of the abovementioned studies were not convincing enough and they failed to highlight the role of the teacher in the form-focused instruction process. While research is inconclusive on whether or not targeting a particular stage of development for teaching will actually improve a learner's progress, the fact that the developmental sequences for many structures have been discovered makes such an effort worthwhile. Pienemann is continuing to research this area and has developed a "Processability Theory," which formally predicts which structures can be processed by a learner at a given level of development. The next section will look at the studies that preceded Pienemann's earlier-mentioned theory and that were concerned with information processing and skill learning in SLA.

## 2.6 Theory-driven FFI Research

In the early 1990s SLA began to draw on theories of **information processing** and **skill learning**. These theories were drawn from cognitive psychology. Schmidt (1990, 1994, 1995a) advanced the "**noticing hypothesis**" which claims that for

acquisition to take place, learners must consciously notice forms in the input. Noticing, on the other hand, is not seen as acquisition. Noticing enables learners to process forms in short-term memory but does not guarantee they will be incorporated into their developing interlanguage. The noticing hypothesis contradicts Krashen's (1981) claim that the process of acquisition is unconscious. How conscious the process of acquisition actually is was well-supported by Sharwood Smith's (1993) study which examined the effects of "enhanced input" on "noticing" and on acquisition. Evidence provided suggests that highlighting forms in the input increases the likelihood of their being noticed and subsequently used.

Van Patten (1990, 1996) has also drawn on information processing theory to claim that learners, especially beginner learners, experience difficulty in paying attention to meaning and form at the same time and thus often prioritize one at the expense of the other. He argues that learners will only be able to attend to form when the input is easy to understand and when learners are concerned with processing meaning in the first place.

Some other, more recent experimental studies by Robinson (1996) and Rosa & O'Neill (1999) explored the effect of different instructional treatments on learners' awareness of form in the input as they perform some task. This kind of research uses learners' self-report in order to examine what "noticing" has taken place.

At around the same time (mid 90's) when "noticing hypothesis" became widely accepted among SLA researchers, another theory became more and more frequently tested. That was **skill building theory** by Anderson (1993). This is a cognitive

learning theory that claims that we acquire language by first consciously learning the grammatical rules, then by practicing them and finally, by applying the rules. Error correction is seen as an important part of skill building. Johnson (1996) has drawn on Anderson's skill building theory to suggest that FFI can enable learners to process **declarative knowledge** through practice, especially if this is accompanied by **negative feedback** on learners' attempts to produce a target structure under real "operating conditions" i.e., when they are trying to communicate. It can be argued that noticing/consciousness-raising will bring about declarative knowledge, whereas practice will lead to, or enhance procedural knowledge.

The studies that the skill-building hypothesis drew on were the earlier research projects by Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989), which explored the effects of negative feedback on acquisition. Those studies have found that inducing learners to make errors and then correcting them works better than traditional grammar instruction involving production practice. A few years later, Carroll, Swain, and Roberge (1992) examined the difference between explicit and implicit feedback. Explicit feedback is found to be more effective and their research results have been motivated to encourage those who do not follow Krashen's (1982, 1985) claims that learning could not lead to acquisition because SLA was the result of implicit processes operating together with the reception of comprehensible input. Embracing the skill-building theory, Doughty & Varela (1998), Mackey & Philp (1998), Long, Inagaki & Ortega (1998) go on to examine a particular type of implicit feedback, "recasts" (reformulations of deviant learner utterances). The results suggest that these could have a positive effect on acquisition.

These studies show that instruction and correction have an impact on tests in which subjects are focused on form. It is also noteworthy that the studies reviewed so far in this section are increasingly teacher-oriented.

FFI has been researched for over thirty years. The most consistent findings show that a large number of variables have an impact on the effectiveness of FFI – the learner’s developmental stage, the structure being taught, the instructional context, and the instructional materials. Therefore, the variety that emerges from different studies is not surprising. Two findings, however, are pervasive: (1) FFI of the more explicit kind is effective in promoting language learning and (2) FFI does not change the natural process of acquisition. It is quite interesting to note, though, that none of the abovementioned studies has included one of the most significant variables in the SLA and FFI processes: the teachers’ cognitions about SLA theory, and even more importantly, their instructional choices and decisions. The first studies aimed at the description of teachers’ cognitions and their approaches to FFI will be discussed in the next section of this literature review.

## 2.7 Descriptive Studies of FFI and Teacher Cognitions about FFI

In the 1990s there were a number of descriptive studies of FFI and teacher cognitions about FFI. Experimental research, which was theory driven, was directed at testing a variety of hypotheses generating from SLA theory and as such, sacrificed to some extent pedagogic relevance. As a result, a gap grew between theory-driven and pedagogically motivated research. Lyster and Ranta (1997) conducted a number of descriptive studies examining teachers’ corrective feedback in immersion classrooms

where the primary focus is on content and meaning rather than on form. Borg (1999a), concluded that the results of the theory-driven research were ‘largely inconclusive’ (p.20) and that the consensus was not reached on how best to teach grammar. Borg also argues that an essential element in FFI, the teacher, has been completely ignored.

According to an earlier study by Bailey (1996), teachers’ in-class decisions to depart from their lesson plan were based on the following principles: (1) serve the common good; (2) teach to the moment; (3) further the lesson; (4) accommodate students’ learning styles; and (5) promote students’ involvement. Similar findings were those by Breen (1991), who observed that teachers’ instructional decisions were influenced by concerns about learners’ affective involvement, background knowledge and cognitive processes, and conceptions of language and language usage. Research conducted by Burns (1992, 1996) gave rather vague and generalised results that teachers’ practices were influenced by a network of beliefs they held about language and language learners. Teachers’ practices, according to Burns, were shaped by beliefs relating to the institutional culture of the school they worked in. Smith (1996) concluded that teachers’ beliefs about L2 teaching and learning were the critical factor in influencing the types of decisions these teachers made. Ulichny (1996) came up with more detailed findings: a teacher planned her lesson with reference to her principles about L2 teaching and the nature of L2 reading. During the lesson, the teacher modified her plan on the basis of unexpected difficulties which the students had and to help the students cope, she engaged in the practices which did not reflect her principles. Lyster (1998a, 1998b) carried out some analyses of teachers’ corrective feedback in relation to error type and uptake.

Borg's research (1998, 1999b), however, draws on teacher-cognition studies. He has used qualitative research methods such as observation and interviews to gain an understanding of teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and their practices. Borg (1999) provides a summary of the insight into the relationship between cognition and practice in L2 teaching based on the research into the psychological context of L2 teaching.

Borg's (1999) project is descriptive and interpretive in scope. From his work, it has become evident that form-focused instruction is a multi-faceted decision-making process. The teachers he worked with and observed made the decisions about whether to conduct formal instruction at all, what language points to focus on, how to structure grammar lessons, how to present and analyse grammar, what grammar activities to use and how to deal with students' grammatical errors. Therefore, form-focused instruction is defined by teachers' interacting decisions about a range of issues. These decisions were influenced by their often conflicting cognitions about language, form-focused instruction, students, and self. Another important conclusion that came out of Borg's project was that cognitions underlying formal instruction were generated by key educational and professional experiences in the teachers' lives. Borg distinguished three categories of experience that he found particularly influential: (1) schooling, particularly teachers' language education; (2) teacher-training education, especially the principles instilled by teacher education programmes had an enduring effect on the teachers; (3) classroom experience had a strong effect on teacher cognition – they were often trained to avoid explicit talk

about grammar. However, most of them came to understand that students often wanted and felt comfortable with such information.

Borg's study provides preliminary insights into the nature of form-focused instruction and also illustrates the potential which the study of teacher cognition has for extending current understandings about L2 grammar teaching.

## 2.8 Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide a theoretical framework for the current study. Some of the issues discussed here will be addressed again in Chapter 3, particularly as they pertain to different conceptual frameworks that inform FFI research and approaches to FFI options.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Conceptual Frameworks of Form-Focused Instruction**

#### 3.1 Introduction

Nowadays, there are two conceptual frameworks that inform current FFI research. The first is external in the sense that the pedagogic options have been derived from theory, in particular theories of L2 acquisition, and this has further informed the construction of form-based syllabi. The second is internal in the sense that the constructs have been derived from observing and describing classroom discourse; it affords an account of FFI as teaching.

In order to provide better understanding of the findings of the present study, this chapter will review the recent literature that more closely highlights FFI options in today's ESL classrooms. Undoubtedly, the majority of teachers in communicative ESL classrooms are aware of the difficulty of reconciling the two opposites: form-focused and meaning-focused instruction. The literature reviewed will disclose what technical knowledge the ESL teachers have at their disposal today and what practical findings could support their instructional choices.

#### 3.2 Form-Focused Versus Meaning-Focused Instruction

FFI contrasts with meaning-focused instruction. FFI describes instruction where there is some attempt to draw learners' attention to linguistic form, whereas meaning-

focused instruction requires learners to attend only to the content of what they want to communicate. Widdowson (1998) criticised this distinction, arguing that so-called form-focused instruction had always required learners to attend to meaning as well as form.

For Widdowson, the major difference lies in the kind of meaning learners must attend to whether it is semantic meaning, as in the case of language exercises, or pragmatic meaning, as in the case of communicative tasks. Ellis (2000) argued that the main difference between form-focused and meaning-focused instruction lies in the way language is viewed (as an object as opposed to the tool) and the role the learner is invited to play (student as opposed to user). Therefore, what constitutes form-focused instruction is attention to grammatical and lexical forms and the meanings they realise, where words are treated as objects to be learned.

Of course, many interactions that occur inside the classroom will be neither entirely form-focused nor meaning-focused but a combination of both. Teachers operate in classrooms where they continuously have to make instantaneous decisions about what and how to teach. They need to advance their technical knowledge and seek to develop practical knowledge. Technical knowledge is necessary in planning lessons, choosing and writing teaching materials and tests, deciding what methodology to use. It is acquired deliberately (Ellis, 1997) and is general in nature. On the other hand, practical knowledge is implicit and intuitive. Depending on their experience, teachers, in the act of teaching, rely largely on their practical knowledge (Calderhead, 1988), which may be the key factor in the way teachers approach FFI.

### 3.3 Three types of Form-focused Instruction

The attempts to develop taxonomies of pedagogic options in FFI centred on a binary distinction between what Long (1988, 1991) called focus-on-form and focus-on-forms (both concepts have already been explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.1). Ellis (2001), however, finds it more helpful to conceptualise FFI as involving three broad types:

(1) focus-on-forms, (2) planned focus-on-form and (3) incidental focus-on-form.

(1) Focus-on-forms is quite obvious in the traditional approach to grammar teaching. It is based on a synthetic syllabus where the underlying principle is that language learning is “a process of accumulating distinct entities” (Ellis, 2001: 14), which refers to being specific about items/features of grammar. Learners are required to treat language as an “object” to be studied and practiced bit by bit.

(2) and (3) Focus-on-form, however, overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons in which focus is on meaning or communication. According to Ellis (2001), there are two essential characteristics of focus-on-form: (1) attention to form occurs in lessons in which focus is meaning or communication (**pre-planned**), and (2) attention to form arises **incidentally** in response to communicative need.

Planned and incidental focus-on-form instruction types are likely to differ in one respect. In planned focus-on-form, the instruction will be intensive. The learners will have an opportunity to attend to a single, pre-selected form many times. In incidental focus-on-form, the instruction will be extensive, because a range of linguistic forms

will arise. This difference poses the question for teachers and researchers alike whether language learning benefits from focusing on a few problematic forms intensively or from the approach where the multitude of problematic forms are treated randomly and where the treatment may or may not be repeated.

Long et al. (1998), Doughty and Varela (1998) and Williams and Evans (1998) researched the first of these two characteristics in order to design experimental studies in which a pre-selected form was taught using communicative devices. Long and Robinson (1998) gave three examples of focus-on form. The first involved “seeding” the text with ergative verbs. The second involves the teacher taking time out from a communicative activity to draw attention to a linguistic problem that the students are experiencing. The third example consists of using recasts in the context of task-based conversation.

This kind of reconceptualisation of focus-on-form is evident in the definition provided by Doughty and Williams (1998c). Three definitional features are mentioned. (1) the need for learner engagement with meaning to precede attention to the code ; (2) the importance of analysing learners’ linguistic needs to identify the forms that require treatment; and (3) the need for the treatment to be brief and unobtrusive. The first and the third features are along the lines of Long’s initial definition. The second one is not, as it assumes a planned rather than incidental approach to form.

Now, we will look more closely at all three types of FFI as they have been dealt with in recent studies.

### 3.4 Type 1: Focus-on Forms

Focus-on-forms is the type of instruction where the teacher and students are aware that the primary purpose of the activity is to learn a pre-selected form and that learners are expected to focus their attention on some form in order to learn it. There are several different options to achieve this: (1) explicit focus-on-forms, (2) implicit instruction, (3) structured input, (4) production-practice and (5) functional language practice. Each of these options may or may not involve negative feedback ( Ellis, 1997) where the learners are shown that an utterance they have just made is incorrect.

(1) **Explicit focus-on-forms** involves some rule being taught about during the learning process in order to raise the learners' consciousness about the linguistic item. The rule can be addressed (a) deductively or (b) inductively. A deductive presentation is when the rule is presented to the learners. An inductive presentation is when the learners try to arrive at the rule themselves by analysing information which contain samples of that linguistic feature.

(2) **Implicit instruction** involves learners memorising instances or inferring rules without awareness of what is being learned. The idea of both explicit and implicit instruction is that learners' attention will be focused on form, but they will not be aware of what specific feature has been targeted.

Fotos and Ellis (1991) used the terms *direct and indirect consciousness-raising* when investigating the relative advantages of the conscious-raising activities. They gave a number of reasons for favouring the indirect option. Motivating learners by inviting them to discover the rules for themselves is easier than giving them the rules to learn. Consciousness-raising tasks require co-operative group work where the target language is used as the medium for solving the problems the tasks pose. Therefore, talking about grammar, just like talking about any other topic, may be seen as a communicative task.

On the other hand, a number of research studies carried out in the 60s (e.g. Scherer & Wertheimer, 1964; Smith, 1970), the 70s (Seliger, 1975), as well as recently (DeKeyser, 1994, 1995) found some advantage for explicit (direct) instruction. In all these studies, the groups that received explicit explanations outperformed all the other groups on a grammaticality judgement test administered immediately after the explicit instruction had been given.

However, there is a problem in applying the outcomes of these studies to language pedagogy because the studies did not include the delayed test and did not find out if the groups that received explicit instruction maintained their advantage over other groups over time. To date there has been no clear evidence that explicit instruction of any kind leads to greater grammatical accuracy in communicative language use.

(3) **Structured input** should be viewed as an option in **focus-on-forms** which is designed to enable learners to give primary attention to form rather than meaning. It is simply another way of teaching structured syllabus. Learners listen to or read texts

which consist of discrete sentences or continuous discourse. Then, in order to prove that they understand the texts, the learners may indicate agreement or disagreement, tick a box, choose the correct answer, carry out a command, draw a picture or write down a short answer. The learners' responses to the input are nonverbal or minimally verbal and do not involve producing the structure.

An example of a grammar task where structured input is used as an option is where the target structure is making the distinction between present and past participles functioning as adjectives. L2 learners often confuse these, producing utterances such as "*I am very interesting in soccer*". In the given task the learners have to indicate if they agree or disagree with the given statements.

#### **An Example of a Structured-Input Task**

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

- 1. Action movies are interesting.*
- 2. I am interested in classical music.*
- 3. People who complain a lot are boring.*
- 4. I get bored when I go shopping.*
- 5. It is annoying to wait in a queue.*
- 6. I am annoyed by people who are shy and quiet.*

Ellis (1997) gives the psycholinguistic rationale for the structured-input option according to which acquisition occurs when learners attend to the new structure in input rather than when they try to produce it. Numerous studies conducted by Van Patten and Cadierno (1993), Tanaka (1996), Van Patten and Sanz (1995) and DeKeyser and Sokalsi (1996) used comprehension-based and production tests to measure the learning outcomes of the structured-input and production-practice options respectively. Van Patten and Cadierno suggest that the production-based

instruction only contributes to **explicit knowledge** whereas comprehension-based instruction creates intake that leads to **implicit knowledge**. Tanaka's results were similar – the production-practice group scored much higher than the structured-input group on the immediate posttest but not on the delayed posttest.

The shortcomings of the studies mentioned above were that the kinds of tests used did not show convincingly that the comprehension treatment was effective in developing implicit knowledge necessary for communication. Even the variety of tests used in the study by Van Patten and Sanz (1995), which included both written and oral versions, did not provide convincing evidence that input-processing instruction led to changes in implicit knowledge. The same failure to show an advantage for structured input was repeated in the study by DeKeyser and Sokalski. (1996).

In all of these studies, the instruction involved two focus-on-forms macro-options: **explicit explanation** combined with **structured input**. In order to find out whether it was due to explicit explanation, structured input, or a combination of the two that gave an advantage to the input-processing groups, Van Patten and Oikkenon (1996) investigated this using second year high school students. They had three experimental groups this time and the focus was on object pronoun placement in Spanish. The outcome of the study showed that the “improvement on the interpretation test is due to the presence of structured-input activities and not to explicit information” and that “the effects of explicit information are negligible” (p.508).

None of these studies reached any definite conclusions. The only outcome that comes out of them is that they provide teachers with very ambivalent technical knowledge.

(4) **Production practice** involves both mechanical and contextual activities.

Van Patten and Cadierno (1993) operationalised this instructional option by means of oral and written transformation and substitution drills and more open-ended communicative practice. The difference between structured input and production practice lies in the fact that structured input involves the provision of oral and written information containing the exemplars of the target feature together with some task requiring learners to interpret (but not produce) the input.

A common methodological principle in grammar teaching nowadays is to begin with text-manipulation and then move to text-creation activities. In this way teachers try to push the L2 learner from controlled to automatic use of the target structure.

Learners generally need time to process and integrate new grammatical structures into their interlanguage systems. There are series of transitional stages they go through before they arrive at the target language rule and before it becomes incorporated in their language behaviour. Besides, learners have their own built-in syllabus (Corder, 1967), which dictates the acquisition of some structures before others. Therefore, if the production practice is aimed at a structure that the learner is not yet ready to acquire, it is likely to fail (Pienemann, 1984). These problems led Krashen (1982) to reject any significant role for form-focused instruction .

Meanwhile, the studies of DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996), Spada & Lightbown (1993), White, Spada, Lightbown & Ranta (1991) have demonstrated that although production practice might not enable learners to integrate completely new grammatical structures into their interlanguages, it may help them use partially

acquired structures more fluently and more accurately. The studies have also shown that clear and often durable gains in knowledge can occur.

The results of the studies suggest that production practice as a macro-option in teaching grammar should not be and has not been abandoned. It is upon teachers to decide when this approach may or may not assist their students. They also need to make relevant choices about what kind of production practice to provide (free practice or controlled practice) since research to date has not shown that one kind of practice works better than the other.

(5) **Functional language practice** involves the development of instructional materials that provide learners with the opportunity to practice producing the target structure in some kind of situational context. The primary focus of the functional tasks is on form rather than meaning and the users are aware that the purpose is to master accurate use through repeated use of the target feature.

### 3.5 Type 2: Planned Focus-on Form

Ellis (2001) claims that there are two options to be considered here: (1) input and (2) production.

(1) Enriched input involves a planned focus-on-form. It consists of input that has been specially contrived or modified to provide learners with a multitude of examples of the target structure. Compared to structured input, enriched input invites learners to focus primarily on meaning. The tasks that accompany the enriched input are communicative in nature and require learners to respond to the content of the input.

Therefore, enriched input is designed to cater to incidental rather than intentional language acquisition. Its purpose is to induce noticing of the target form in the context of meaning-focused activity.

(2) Focused communicative tasks are designed to elicit the **production** of a specific target feature. These tasks have characteristics of communicative tasks. However, compared to the communicative tasks in general, focused communicative tasks are intended to result in learners' employing some feature that has been specifically targeted. The primary focus is on meaning rather than on form.

### 3.6 Type 3: Incidental Focus-on-Form

This type came out as a result of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which grew out of dissatisfaction with earlier methods that were based on the conscious presentation of grammatical forms and structures or lexical items and did not prepare learners for the effective and appropriate use of language in natural communication. Celce-Murcia (1991) pointed out that many CLT proponents neglected linguistic competence and accepted the premise that linguistic form emerged on its own as a result of learners' engaging in communicative activities.

Schmidt (1991) summarized the general principle of CLT which says that "... linguistic form was learnt incidentally rather than as a result of focusing directly on linguistic form" (p.122). He thought that this argument was not in accordance with the principles of cognitive psychology, which suggests that for learning to take place efficiently the learner must pay attention to the learning objective and must then

practice that objective so that it changes from part of a controlled process to part of an automatic process (Baddeley, 1976).

Widdowson (1990) also argues that incidental language acquisition is a “long and rather inefficient business” which goes against the whole point of language pedagogy – finding a short-cut to the slow process of natural discovery and making arrangements for learning to happen more easily and more efficiently than it does in ‘natural surroundings’ ( p.162 ). Widdowson (1989) argues that,

“Communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as and when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual standards”. ( p.135 )

In that case, native speakers of a language are in command of thousands of preassembled language chunks and they use them as building blocks. The retrieval of these blocks is cognitively undemanding. However, for L2 learners, who lack such language chunks, this means that they tend to put sentences together from scratch and that takes up most of their cognitive capacity and does not allow them to achieve native- like fluency, particularly after they have reached mid-adolescence, i.e. fifteen years of age (Lenneberg, 1967).

### 3.6.1 Incidental Focus-on-Form Options

The options considered under incidental focus-on-form have been derived from studies of classroom processes and relate to (1) pre-emptive and (2) reactive focus-

on-form. Both kinds arise either because there is a perceived problem in communication or because there is a problem of form.

### 3.6.2 Pre-emptive Focus-on-Form

Pre-emptive focus-on-form is an option in which the teacher or a learner takes time out from a communicative activity to initiate attention to a form that is perceived to be problematic. Pre-emptive focus-on-form has been little studied so far. Williams (1999) looked at the ways in which learners initiate attention to form in learner-learner interactions and reported that this occurred most frequently when learners requested assistance from the teacher. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) and Loewen (2003) examined teacher and learner initiated attention to form in communicative ESL lessons and found that this occurred as frequently as reactive focus-on-form. Yet, little is known about the kinds of options teachers and learners select from during pre-emptive focus-on-form and whether or not it facilitates acquisition.

### 3.6.3 Reactive Focus-on-Form

Reactive focus-on-form consists of the negative feedback teachers provide in response to learners' errors. Negative feedback shows learners that an utterance they have just made is incorrect. This feedback occurs in all types of FFI, most often in conjunction with production practice. However, negative feedback seems to be more effective when used in activities in which the primary focus is on meaning rather than

on form. The options entail different ways of providing (a) **implicit** and (b) **explicit** negative feedback. This distinction is important since it potentially affects noticing and has been shown to influence whether learners notice corrected forms and **uptake** them ( Lyster , 1998a; Oliver , 2000; Ellis et al., 2001).

**(2a) Implicit negative feedback** is generally preferred by teachers as an option in FFI. Lyster and Ranta (1997) show that teachers in immersion classrooms rely extensively on *recasts*. It involves an interlocutor, usually a teacher, reformulating a learner's utterance in accordance with target-language norms. Lyster and Ranta identified five other types of feedback: (a) explicit correction, in which the teacher provides the correct form; (b) clarification requests, in which the teacher indicates that an utterance has not been understood; (c) metalinguistic feedback, in which the teacher uses technical language to refer to an error; (d) elicitation, in which the teacher tries to elicit the correct form from the student; and (e) repetition, in which the teacher points out to the mistake by repeating a part or the whole utterance made by the student. Naturally, teachers would like to know which type of negative feedback is most effective. Lyster and Ranta found that recasts were the least successful type of feedback since they rarely elicited student repair.

Some researchers like Oliver (2000) distinguish recasts and negotiation of meaning, with recasts defined as reformulations that negotiate form and negotiation of meaning as involving negotiation checks used to clarify understanding. Such distinction requires interpreting the intention of the teacher and therefore may be an uncomfortable one.

Other implicit feedback options are available to teachers: requests for clarification and repetitions. Experimental type studies of clarification requests involving Type 2 FFI have provided evidence of long-term effects on acquisition (Farrar, 1992; Nelson, 1991; Carrol & Swain, 1993; Doughty & Varela 1998).

**(2b) Explicit negative feedback** is not a preferred option in FFI. It is far more obtrusive than implicit. Explicit correction, according to Lyster and Ranta (1997) occurs when a teacher clearly indicates that the learner has said something wrong and provides the correct form. In their study, Lyster and Ranta identified seven different types of feedback: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, and multiple feedbacks (which referred to combinations of more than one type of feedback). It was found that recasts were by far the most widely used form of feedback of all the teachers' corrective feedback moves although they proved to be least successful in ensuring the correct uptake. These findings suggest the need for teachers to implement various types of feedback, particularly those that lead to student-generated repair, namely **elicitation**, **metalinguistic clues** (the kind of feedback which consists of comments, information, or questions related to the "well-formedness of the student's utterance" (p.47)), **clarification requests**, and **repetition of error**. These four types initiated what Lyster and Ranta characterize as negotiation of form in that they engage learners more actively by helping them to draw on what they already know, rather than providing learners with correct forms.

Much earlier than Lyster and Ranta conducted a comprehensive research on corrective feedback options, Swain (1985), and Pica (1988) found that elicitation is an

attempt to directly elicit the correct form from the students. It is necessary to prompt students into using the feature targeted in the focused communication activity. Corrective techniques, such as clarification requests, elicitation and confirmation checks, that lead to modified output and self-repair are more likely to improve learners' ability to monitor their output and lead to interlanguage development.

As this section of the literature review demonstrates, researchers investigating the role of reactive focus-on- form in SLA have made remarkable progress in the last two decades, particularly in the 90s. As progress is made, and as the questions become more complex, more sophisticated methods will need to be developed. Nonetheless, research on the impact of negative feedback on SLA development has been dynamic and continues to grow.

### 3.7 Summary

It is certainly a valuable effort to describe various types and options in FFI. That provides a basis for a valid selection of what to investigate or to teach. However, there seem to be so many inconclusive findings of the FFI research which is the result of a failure on behalf of researchers to investigate particular subtypes. Teachers, however, can be expected to respond in different ways. They are most likely to construct lessons that combine a number of different options in order to make the instruction more effective and to provide variety. Besides, they will also vary their instructional approach from lesson to lesson.

Conceptualising FFI in terms of types and options is quite clear and unproblematic.

The three types are the result of the distinction between focus-on-form and focus-on-meaning. Yet, the question remains if the focus is determined in terms of the researcher's or teacher's intention or in terms of the learners' response to instruction.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

##### 4.1.1 Research methods in FFI

FFI research, like classroom research in general, reflects two broad traditions: confirmatory and interpretative research (Ellis, 2001). The former tradition is evident in correlational and experimental studies that involve manipulation of the learning context and quantitative analyses. The latter tradition is evident in descriptive and ethnographic studies of contextualized practice in real classrooms and, more recently, in studies of teachers' cognitions about FFI; it emphasizes qualitative analyses but not exclusively. While Tarone (1994) is probably right in asserting that "researchers typically agree, in theory, that both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are essential" (p.26), there is also evidence of tension and opposition between advocates of these two approaches. This is reflected in the tendency of researchers to try to make a case for their chosen approach. Hulstijn (1997), argues the case for laboratory-based research, noting the difficulty of keeping variables constant in natural learning environments. Borg (1998), on the other hand, presents the case for an exploratory-interpretative approach to FFI in order "to understand the inner perspectives on the meanings of the actions being studied" (p. 11). This tension is also reflected in the obvious bias toward confirmatory research in the journals that publish FFI research (i.e. *Language Learning*, *Modern Language Journal*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and *TESOL Quarterly*).

#### 4.1.2 Confirmatory Studies of FFI

Two main types of confirmatory research are evident in FFI research: comparative and experimental studies (Ellis, 2001). Confirmatory research is deductive, seeks to verify theory, and is concerned with causal explanation through controlled observation and measurement.

As noted in the historical sketch of FFI research, there has been a gradual shift from comparative to experimental research. In fact, there have been no comparative studies published in recent years. Comparative studies (e.g. Ellis, 1989; Pavesi, 1986; Pica, 1983) compare groups of naturalistic and instructed learners to investigate if there are differences in the order or sequence of acquisition of grammatical features. There is an inherent problem with such an approach. An assumption is made that might not be justified – namely, that the instructed learners have indeed received FFI (as opposed to some other kind of instruction) and that the naturalistic learners have not engaged in any FFI (e.g., through consulting a grammar reference book or receiving explicit negative feedback). Indeed, classifying learners as instructed or naturalistic on the basis of the setting in which they are learning is necessarily a very crude procedure. When comparative studies do find evidence of differences between two such groups of learners, it is not possible to establish what aspects of FFI are responsible, because no data on the FFI itself are available.

Experimental studies can be carried out in laboratory-type settings, in which case they may involve either a real language or an artificial language, or in real

classrooms, where for ethical reasons they invariably involve a real language. The advantage of laboratory studies is that they allow for rigorous control of variables and also for careful replication; their disadvantage may be lacking in ecological validity since they often assume a scientific paradigm in which theoretically derived hypotheses relating to specific cause-and-effect relationships are tested. However, experimental studies have often failed to meet these requirements.

#### 4.1.3 Interpretative Research

Interpretative FFI research can be subdivided into two main types –descriptive and introspective (Ellis, 2001). Descriptive research can be further classified according to whether the focus of the description is the language produced by instructed learners or the classroom discourse of FFI. Introspective studies of FFI are few and far between. They entail attempts to investigate the perspective of the participants in FFI (i.e., the teacher and the learners). Both descriptive and introspective FFI research typically seeks an **emic** perspective on FFI through qualitative analysis and in this contrasts with confirmatory FFI research with its **etic** perspective and quantitative procedures.

Descriptive studies of learner language ideally need to be longitudinal to show how instructed learners' interlanguage develops over time. The reason these studies are necessary lies in the fact that it has been noted that teacher talk dominates in the classroom, so individual learners have limited opportunities to speak. And when they do speak, their speech typically consists of utterances shorter than a clause (Allen et

al., 1990). Furthermore, the kind of speech learners typically produce in the classroom is highly controlled and, therefore, not ideally suited to an investigation of interlanguage.

The strength of descriptive studies of learner language lies in the potential for plotting the effect of FFI on interlanguage development. However, it is difficult for such studies to determine what is in the instruction that promotes (or impedes) acquisition, unless they incorporate a detailed study of the instructional discourse. With the exception of Lightbown (1983), no such comprehensive FFI study has yet been undertaken.

Descriptive studies of FFI discourse have been numerous. These have examined instruction involving all three types of FFI. Descriptive studies of Type 3 (incidental focus-on-form) have recently been quite evident. These studies involve the recording and transcribing of samples of instructional discourse and the construction of data-driven taxonomies of discourse moves, instructional options, teaching strategies, etc. Such studies contribute to what van Lier (1998) sees as the main aim of interpretative research, an understanding of how instruction is accomplished in context. They also reinforce that FFI cannot be viewed as a general phenomenon but must be seen as contextualised and variable. However, because each study has its own descriptive taxonomy, it is difficult to compare results and make any generalizations. There is another drawback that descriptive studies suffer from. Whereas it is possible to examine what effect focus-on-form has on learner uptake (Lyster, 1998b), it is very difficult to investigate its effect on acquisition. Since the features attended to in this type of FFI are incidental, it is not possible to pre-test learners. Also, post-tests will

need to be tailor-made to target specific features that each learner has addressed during a lesson.

To summarize, earlier studies have not shown a clear distinction between the experimental and interpretative research. Many FFI studies are examples of hybrid research (a combination of experimental and interpretative methods).

The earlier FFI research was mainly concerned with whether FFI “worked” whereas current research focuses on how FFI is accomplished in different settings and what effect different types of FFI have. This shift is based on developments in L2 acquisition theory rather than pedagogy.

As a result, there is a clearer divide between theoretically and pedagogically driven research, which is further reinforced by the preponderance of experimental studies of FFI.

What the current study aimed to be is a descriptive and comparative study that adopts a more holistic perspective on FFI and where instructed L2 acquisition is viewed as an organic process. The research aimed to record, describe and compare naturally occurring classroom interaction, and it focused on a specific phenomenon, namely focus on form. The construct of focus on form was grounded in previous research (Ellis et al., 1999). The present study was not ethnographic because it was not concerned with explaining holistically all of the classroom interaction, nor did it include longitudinal observation of the classes.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss in further detail the design of the study, its focus and method, the instruments used, the procedures used, and the analyses used.

#### 4.2 The Research Focus and Method

A particular area of interest in this study lies in the situated and interpretive nature of language teaching (Freeman 1996; K.E. Johnson 1996).

The intention here was to extend the research agenda as suggested by Borg (1999a) to the researcher's own teaching context by investigating the personal pedagogical systems of two colleagues in relation to form-focused instruction. Two main questions motivated the investigation:

**1. What do the two teachers do when they introduce a pre-planned grammar topic?**

This question was operationalised through the analysis of teacher-initiated pre-emptive focus on form episodes in order to establish whether the lesson was pre-empted or planned, and how explicit the focus was made to the students. The post-recording interview with the teachers also helped to give a background on the real intentions of each teacher and their instructional decisions. The focus here was on the following:

- Frequency of teacher-initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (TIPFFE<sub>s</sub>)
- Frequency of student-initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (SIPFFE<sub>s</sub>)

- Did the teachers encourage students to ask questions about grammar?
- Were the set grammar activities student centred or teacher centred?
- How much input from the teachers was there during the grammar practice activities?

**2. Is there a difference in the incidental form-focused moves employed by an experienced and an inexperienced ESOL teacher in a communicative classroom? If so, to what extent is there a difference?**

**3. What are the form-focused moves initiated by the students?**

The questions 2 and 3 were operationalised by looking primarily at incidental grammar teaching, i.e. how the teachers and students responded to pre-emptive focus on form, what reactive focus-on-form is and how the teachers and students responded to it.

The focus was on the following:

- Frequency of teacher-initiated reactive form-focused episodes (TIRFFEes)
- Frequency of student-initiated reactive form-focused episodes (SIRFFEes)

The study aimed to be collegial in nature; it was intended that such a process, in so far as it did not invalidate the research procedures, would be of benefit to the participating teachers.

Therefore, the study was comparative in nature, done in the confirmatory research tradition which is deductive, it sought to verify theory, and was concerned with casual explanation through observation and measurement.

Confirmatory tradition has informed the vast majority of research in form-focused instruction ( FFI ) ( Ellis 2001). This study sought to provide comparison of the two teachers' form-focused practices in the context of their own classrooms.

### 4.3 Participants

The following sections describe those who participated in the research.

#### 4.3.1 Research Site

Two classes in Rutherford College on Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland, were selected as the site for data collection. The reason was that the study aimed to provide a description of two teachers' grammar teaching practices in the context of the secondary school ESOL classrooms. There was a proposed need for mediation between Second Language Acquisition theories and Classroom Pedagogy, and in order to build on the research that had already been done in this area, the research setting needed to be a secondary school. The secondary school learners, due to their age, undergo different cognitive processes in L2 acquisition from the primary school aged children (Lenneberg, 1967; Long, 1990). Therefore, the approach to L2 teaching in a secondary school, especially grammar teaching, is quite different from that in primary school setting.

Rutherford College is my own workplace – the ESOL Department offers English language instruction to the immigrants aged between 13-19, refugees, adult students and overseas fee paying students. The syllabus is topic-based and is organized around a competency-orientated framework. The programme maintains a strong commitment to the principles of learner-centredness with, for example, students having input through an on-going assessment of their needs in and out of the classroom. In the programme, teachers are also free to choose their own methodological approach. The programme is multi-focused and teaches language across the curriculum (topics which are selected for language study reflect the subjects taught across seven strands in New Zealand Curriculum) and is largely informed by eclectic, but principled practice.

#### 4.3.2 Participant Selection

Two classes with two different teachers participated in the study. The ESOL students were part of the existing classes at Rutherford College. Following the ethical guidelines at my work-site, the two teachers were approached and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. If the teacher was willing to participate, the researcher visited each class prior to the lesson recording to present an outline of the study to the teacher and the students and to invite them to participate (see Appendix A for the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (for the teachers only) presented to the participants). The teachers were informed that the purpose of the research was to examine classroom interaction during meaning-focused lessons where there was some focus on form; however, they were not made aware of the precise

focus of the study in order to minimize any effects relating to ‘the observer’s paradox’ (Labov 1972, cited in van Lier, 1988:39). No effort was made to guide the teachers in their choice of lesson plans.

#### 4.3.3 Teachers

Two teachers with different levels of experience were the participants in this research. Both teachers were native speakers of English. Teacher 1 is a New Zealand Maori female with two years of experience teaching at primary school, two years of experience teaching English at junior level at secondary school and one year of teaching ESL in Korea. At the time the current research was being conducted, she was in her first year of teaching ESOL at a secondary school in New Zealand. She holds a BEd Degree from a New Zealand tertiary institution and does not have any formal ESL training. Teacher 2 is a European female who has lived in New Zealand for the past 20 years and holds a BA Degree (English major) and Diploma in Teaching (English and ESOL) from a New Zealand university. At the time of research, she had six years of experience teaching ESOL at the same secondary school.

#### 4.3.4 Students

The students in the first class taken by Teacher 1 (the less experienced one) were at the elementary level of proficiency. They were between 13 and 15 years of age and the majority of them (8) were Korean boys. There were also 2 Japanese boys, 2 Korean and 2 Chinese girls in this class.

The students in the second class taken by Teacher 2 (the more experienced one) were at the intermediate level of proficiency. They were between 16 and 18 years of age and the majority of them were girls, 4 Korean and 5 Chinese, followed by 5 Chinese and 1 Fijian Indian boys.

#### 4.4 Procedure

##### 4.4.1 Data Collection

The data comprised 6 hours of audio-recorded classroom talk (3 for each teacher). The recordings were of lessons with focus on form but inevitably included some focus on forms. A wireless, clip-on microphone was attached to the teacher in each class in order to record the teacher herself and the whole class interaction. The researcher was not present in order to avoid the observer's paradox, but did give instructions to the teachers about how to operate the equipment first.

##### 4.4.2 Data Analysis

- The first step was the transcription of the recorded material. Inter-rater reliability check of the 41% of the random samples of identified FFEs from the transcribed data was subsequently done by an invited expert in the field. The percentage of agreement was 97%.
- Examples where there was attention to form-focused instruction were identified (see Section 4.5 of this Chapter on Identification of FFEs, p.60).

- Both teachers were briefly interviewed about their choices of form-focused instruction.
- Copies of each transcript were annotated with the key form-focused episodes.
- Data were analysed by establishing a set of descriptive characteristics and categories to account for the salient features.
- The next step involved the registering of the number of instances in which each episode type of FFI occurred ( explicit, reactive and pre-emptive) .
- Statistical analysis of the frequencies for each category was conducted.
- The final two stages of research involved the interpreting of data and drawing conclusions about the extent to which FFI might be influenced by an individual's experience as an ESOL teacher.

#### 4.4.3 Presentation of Data

Following identification and transcription of the FFEs, each FFE was repeatedly examined to establish a set of descriptive characteristics and categories to account for salient features (see Sections 4.6.2 General Characteristics of the System (p.63), 4.6.3 Some examples of FFEs Coded for General Characteristics (p.66), and 4.7 Categories Comprising FFEs (p.67). The purpose of this method of analysis was twofold. First, I wanted to ensure that the characteristics and categories identified were explicit, consistent and reliable. Second, I wanted to ensure that the rationale existed for claiming that each category was seen by the teachers as of potential importance for L2 acquisition.

After the data analysis had been conducted and the results presented, the analysis of teaching behaviour generated brief interview data which, in turn, provided access to the teachers' cognitions. Such a procedure enabled me to gain insights into my research questions.

#### 4.5 Identification of FFEs

The researcher listened to the recordings in order to identify occasions where there was attention to linguistic form, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, spelling, discourse or pronunciation. Some of these sequences arose when one of the teachers or students drew attention to a specific form ( e.g. by asking a question about that form) or when the students attempted to address an actual or perceived linguistic problem.

The recordings were transcribed. The researcher subsequently listened to the recordings on several occasions and read the transcripts to check that all interaction had been identified and transcribed. Next, the beginnings and endings of the FFEs had been correctly identified and (3) each FFE had been accurately labeled.

The following examples illustrate the procedure and the labeling of each episode. The total number of identified FFEs was 80. There were 42 FFEs recorded with Teacher 1 and 38 FFEs with Teacher 2. Example 1 shows a FFE categorised as a TIPFFE (underlined) with the surrounding interaction. The episode begins with a teacher introducing a focus on a linguistic item (the identification of the verb form in the sentence *I will pick up Jin Ho* in turn 1). The episode ends when the focus on the

linguistic item changes (in turn 3) to changing the verb *will pick up* into The Simple Past Tense.

Example 1: Episode 6 (T1/41/79)

1. T1: Yep, Jin Ho? “ I will pick up Jin Ho.” What’s the verb in this word?
2. S : Will pick up.
3. T1: Will pick up. So, if will pick up was in past tense, what would it be – Alex?
4. S: I picked up.

Example 2 shows a FFE categorised as SIPFFE (underlined) with the surrounding interaction. The episode begins with the student asking a free question *Why do you write adverb?* in turn 1. The episode ends with the teacher’s response as a recast (turn 5) to the student’s trigger in turn 4 and the shift to a new focus on the linguistic form – identification of a typical adverbial suffix.

Example 2 : Episode 16 (T1/41/79)

1. S: Why do you write an adverb?
2. Ss: (All discussing together).
3. T1: To describe a verb.
4. S: Forgot.
5. T1: *I* forgot. What do many adverbs end in?

Example 3 shows a FFE categorised as TIRFFE (underlined) with the surrounding interaction. The episode begins with an error (omission of the indefinite article ) in the student’s utterance *I wanted to make hot cake* in turn 1. This error was then addressed by the teacher. The episode ends with the student changing the linguistic focus by trying to extend his sentence and provide further explanation why he could not make hot cakes ( turn 5).

Example 3: Episode 8 ( T1/41/79)

1. S: I wanted to make hot cake.
2. T1: One hot cake?
3. S: Hot cakes, but I couldn’t...
4. T1: Is this a full stop or dot, dot, dot?
5. S: Dot, dot, dot. A small “b” “ because that wasn’t my hot cake flour...” “ I couldn’t find my hot cake flour.”

Example 4 shows a FFE categorised as a SIRFFE (underlined) with the surrounding interaction. The beginner class taken by Teacher 1 are revising adverbs of time and manner and trying to make a clear distinction between adjectives and adverbs. The episode begins when the student responds to the teacher's statement in turn 3 and claims that *yesterday* is an adjective and not an adverb ( turn 4 ). The student's response is then addressed by the teacher and the episode ends when the topic changes – a little joke goes on between the student and the teacher on the credibility of a grammar book that the teacher referred to during the lesson ( turns 8 and 9 ).

Example 4: Episode 21 ( T1/41/79)

1. T1: The day before today was...?
2. Ss: Yesterday.
3. T1: Yesterday. I am describing the time, so I can say "yesterday".
4. S: I think you made mistake. I think *yesterday* is an adjective.
5. T1: You think *yesterday* is an adjective?
6. S: Mmm.
7. T1: Adjective is here... "*nice day*". Verb is a doing word. Adverbs go with doing words such as "was". My book says so.
8. S: Your book is wrong.
9. T1: Yeah, probably... ( *Laughter* )

#### 4.6 Analysis

In developing a system, I decided to construct a 'category system' which entails a system that identifies a number of the properties of FFEs. There now follows an account of the procedures I followed to arrive at a category system. Following identification and transcription of the FFEs, each FFE was examined several times to establish a set of descriptive characteristics and categories to account for the salient features. This method of analysis is time-consuming but is necessary to ensure that the characteristics and the categories identified were explicit, consistent and reliable. The categories identified emerged largely in response to the observation of the transcribed episodes.

#### 4.6.1 Description of the System

The system consists of two parts. The first part takes into account the FFEs as wholes and presents two general characteristics ( Approach and Instigator). This analysis enables me to identify a number of broad types of FFE, for instance, whether an FFE was responding or initiating (i.e. its Approach) and whether the FFE was instigated by a teacher or a student ( i.e. its Instigator ). The second part provides a set of categories relating to the composition of each of the types ( Reactive and Responding).

The categories in each part will now be described and illustrated with examples from the data. The episodes in each example are numbered according to their chronological place in the corpus of FFEs that were compiled.

#### 4.6.2 General Characteristics of the System

The following is a list of the general characteristics of FFEs I identified. Each characteristic is described in detail below.

Figure 1: General characteristics of identified FFEs

- (i) Approach
  - A. Responding
  - B. Initiating
- (ii) Instigator
  - A. Student
  - B. Teacher

#### 4.6.2.1 Approach

In terms of overall approach to focusing on form, the FFEs differed according to whether they were pre-empted (**initiated**) or reactive (**responding**). Pre-emptive focus on form sequences occur when a participant decides to break from the main focus of the conversation by drawing attention to some aspect of language.

These sequences were further differentiated according to whether they were pre-empted (initiated) by a teacher (TIPFFE) or by a student (SIPFFE). Pre-emptive form-focused episodes are proactive in nature.

Example 5 (TIPFFE) : Episode 27 ( T2/38/79)

T2: If I ask you, John “ *Have you ever had an after-school detention ?* ” , how would you answer?

S: No.

T2: How would you say that using the Present Perfect Tense?

S: I haven't.

T2: *No, I haven't. Or, No, I have never had an after-school detention.*

Example 6 (SIPFFE): Episode 12 ( T1/41/79)

S : Now I forgot...Is it *I was practised* or *I had practised* ?

T1: I **practised**.

S: I practised.

By contrast, reactive (responding) form-focused episodes are sequences which occur when a participant responds to an utterance produced by another participant that is perceived as problematic, either because its meaning is not clear or it is seen as containing a linguistic error. These sequences were also further differentiated according to whether they were instigated by a teacher (TIRFFE) or by a student (SIRFFE).

Example 7 (TIRFFE): Episode 11 (T2/38/79)

S: I had operation on my leg.

T2: You had **an** operation on your leg. Goodness me, did it hurt?

Example 8 (SIRFFE): Episode 14 (T1/41/79)

S: I practised [praktizd] basketball.

S2: [s] [praktist]

S: I practised [praktist] basketball.

As it was observed earlier in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), nearly all the research to date has addressed reactive focus on form and there has been little attention paid to proactive (pre-emptive) focus on form. This distinction is important. Both approaches involve ways of addressing gaps in the learner's knowledge system. However, they differ with regard **how** this is achieved. TIPFFE and SIPFFE typically supply learners with declarative and illustrative information about form. TIRFFE and SIRFFE have the ability to facilitate the 'cognitive comparison' (Ellis 1994).

#### 4.6.2.2 Instigator

This refers to the person responsible for bringing about a focus on form. In the case of reactive focus on form episodes, the person who responds to the utterance containing a perceived problem is the instigator. In the case of pre-emptive focus on form episodes, the person who initiates (pre-empts) the focus on form by raising a linguistic topic is the instigator. In both pre-emptive and reactive focus on form episodes, the instigator may be a student (SIPFFE/ SIRFFE) or a teacher (TIPFFE/TIRFFE).

In Example 9, a student is pre-empting a FFE by requesting confirmation in regards to the identification of an adverb in a sentence. Therefore, the instigator in this case is the student.

Example 9 (SIPFFE): Episode 31 (T1/41/79)

*The teacher is reading out an example.*

T1: Miss Kelly's car was badly damaged.

S: So, *damaged* is adverb?

T1: No, *damaged* is an adjective.

S: *Badly*...just *badly*. Miss Kelly's car was badly.

T1: You can't finish on 'badly'. You have to say *damaged* or *hurt* or something.

A number of studies (Ellis 1998b) have suggested that when learners have the opportunity to initiate discourse, the opportunities for acquisition may be reinforced.

#### 4.6.3 Some examples of FFEs Coded for General Characteristics

Examples 10 and 11 below illustrate how the FFEs were coded for general characteristics.

Example 10: Episode 39 ( T1/41/79)

S: Can we say 'As shy as a peach'?

Type

Initiating

T1: 'As shy as a peach'?

Instigator

Student

S: Because peach...You pick a peach, it's yellow and has pink in it like child's cheeks.

T1: That makes sense, but that's not what we say in English.

The teacher acknowledges the 'sensibility' of the comparison, however, does not provide the student with the "correct" answer, i.e. an English equivalent of the simile.

Example 11: Episode 11 (T2/38/79)

S: I had operation on my leg.

Type

Reacting

T2: You had **an** operation on your leg.

Instigator

Teacher 2

## 4.7 Categories Comprising FFEs

After the data for categories comprising the FFEs have been examined, it became obvious that there were four types of categories according to the configurations of two of the General Characteristics described above: Approach and Instigator.

The four types were:

Type 1: Reactive FFEs (Instigator = teacher) – Teacher-initiated reactive form-focused episodes (TIRFFEes)

Type 2: Responding FFEs (Instigator = student) - Student-initiated reactive form-focused episodes (SIRFFEes)

Type 3: Pre-emptive FFEs (Instigator = teacher) – Teacher-initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (TIPFFEes)

Type 4: Pre-emptive FFEs (Instigator = student) – Student-initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (SIPFFEes)

These slightly different sets of categories were necessary to be identified to describe the psycholinguistically relevant features of FFEs according to the overall type of FFE.

4.7.1 Types 1 and 2: Reactive FFEs (Instigator = teacher) - TIRFFEes  
(Instigator = student) - SIRFFEes

The categories in this type of FFE are listed below and then described in subsequent sections. Uptake may not be present in all TIRFFEs/SIRFFEs.

Figure 2: Categories Comprising TIRFFEs / SIRFFEs

- (i) Trigger
- (ii) Response
  - A. Provide solution
    - 1. Inform
    - 2. Recast
  - B. Seek solution
    - 1. Request clarification
    - 2. Repeat
    - 3. Prompt
- (iii) Uptake
  - A. Acknowledge
  - B. Successful Repair
  - C. Unsuccessful Repair
  - D. None

Example 12 provides an example of an analysis of a teacher-initiated reactive focus on form using the set of categories listed above.

Example 12 : Episode 11 ( T2/38/79)

T1: *Taught*. Spell it for me please.

S: t-a-u-c-h

T1: t-a-u-c-h - is this right?

S: No.

T1: What's wrong with it?

S: t-a-u-g-h-t

Trigger

Response 1, Seek solution, Repeat

Uptake, Acknowledge

Response 2, Seek solution, Request Clarification

Uptake, Successful Repair

#### 4.7.1.1 Description of Categories Comprising Reactive FFEs

##### 4.7.1.1.1 Trigger

The Trigger is the utterance perceived as problematic, either because it was not understood or because it was considered to contain a linguistic error. In a Reactive FFE the Trigger constitutes the starting point of an episode.

#### 4.7.1.1.2 Response (Provide Solution and Seek Solution)

A Response is an attempt to address the problem that arose in the Trigger. In coding the Responses it became obvious that more than one Response was possible in a single episode. In episodes with multiple responses, the same category of Response could be repeated within an episode or different categories of Response could occur. It should also be noted that multiple Responses could occur within a single turn or over several turns. In accordance with the decision to develop a category rather than a discourse system, the Responses were coded in terms of different categories which were observed and not in terms of their frequency. Therefore, if the same category of Response was repeated within an episode, it was coded as occurring once only. However, if the multiple Response involved different categories of Response, each category was coded as Response 1 and Response 2. Thus the analysis focused on the categories of response given rather than their actual frequency. The identical kinds of responses produced by different participants were coded as separate Responses.

Two general categories of response were identified according to their function in the interaction: **Provide Solution** and **Seek Solution**. More specific options within these two general categories were distinguished. These specific options are described below.

##### A. Provide Solution (Inform and Recast)

The teachers can deal with the problem arising in the Trigger in two ways. They can Provide a Solution or Seek a Solution. In the case of Provide a Solution the teachers

seek to address the problem by means of an Inform or to model the correct form by means of a Recast.

### 1. Inform

This involves the provision of explicit information about the linguistic form that is perceived as the problem. The information can be provided by means of a definition, an example, an explanation or by signalling the problem by saying “ *No, that is not correct.*” Informs serve as one way in which the participants can negotiate form, as opposed to meaning. How explicit an inform may be depends on the signal used.

Example 13 gives an example of a TIRFFE containing an Inform response printed in bold.

Example 13: Episode 26 ( T2/38/79)

T2: When did you come to New Zealand, Victor?

S: I came to New Zealand since two years ago.

T2: Okay, you've mixed up the two. When you answer that, it's asking for a date but you still answer it with, “*I have been in New Zealand since ...*” and then you put the date there. Can you say that? “*I have been in New Zealand since 2002.*”

S: I have been in New Zealand since 2002.

T2: Good.

### 2. Recast

A Recast reformulates all or part of the Trigger by correcting the linguistic error. A Recast can be realised by means of a statement which models the correct form or by means of a confirmation request. Example 14 provides an example of a Response as Recast.

Example 14: Episode 9 (T1/41/79)

S: I ate too much...

T1: Too much what? Too much food, too much cereal?

S: Too much food. Because I was stressed...

## B. Seek Solution ( Request Clarification, Repeat and Prompt)

A different way of dealing with the problem in the Trigger is to respond by Seeking a Solution. That means that the responding participant (teacher or student) places the responsibility of dealing with the problem on the participant who produced the Trigger. Participants tried to Seek a Solution by means of a Request Clarification, Repeat or Prompt.

### 1. Request Clarification

This involves a participant asking another participant to make a previous statement clearer. Often it means the use of formulaic expressions such as “What?” or “What do you mean?” as in Example 15.

Example 15: Episode 37 ( T2/38/79)

S: They celebrated Rutherford Day forty four years.

T2: What do you mean?

S : For forty years.

T2: For forty years, not 44 years but for 40 years.

Quite often, a Request Clarification serves to negotiate meaning. However, a teacher may often use a Request Clarification strategically to focus students’ attention on a linguistic error, and in such cases, it functions to negotiate form. Request Clarifications provide students with an opportunity to reformulate their incorrect utterances and serve as a means of promoting “pushed output” (Swain, 1985).

### 2. Repeat

Here a student or a teacher repeats the Trigger or part of the Trigger which includes the linguistic error. The difference between a Recast and a Repeat lies in this respect; a Recast corrects the error whereas a Repeat does not. However, there is potential

ambiguity in both a Recast and a Repeat whether its purpose is to negotiate meaning or form.

Teacher 2 believed that the acquisitional potential of a Repeat was less than that of a Recast since a Repeat did not supply learners with information relating to what constituted correct linguistic form. Besides, as opposed to Request Clarification, it did not require a student to reformulate the incorrect utterance. In Example 16 below, Teacher1 responds to the student's error with a Repeat. When this fails to elicit a correct answer from the student, the Teacher then provides the solution herself by means of a Recast.

Example 16: Episode 30 ( T1/41/79)

S: The baby is very loudly.

T1: The baby is [pause]... very loudly?

S: *is*

T1: The baby is what very loudly? You have to give one more verb than *is*. The baby is crying very loudly.

S: What about shouting? The baby was shouting very loudly.

### 3. Prompt

A prompt is an attempt to give the participant who produced a linguistic error (the Trigger) an opportunity to correct the error. It involves the use of a clue to indicate where the error lies /and /or what the nature of the error is. In Example 17, Teacher 2 signals to the student that he has made a linguistic error by omitting a verb by drawing attention to the fact that there is something missing in the sentence. Like a Request Clarification, a prompt makes the student try to reformulate and, therefore, possibly contributes to acquisition through “pushed output”.

Example 17: Episode 30 ( T2/38/79)

T2: So if you're five years old, in China, you can go and have a bet?

S: I always.

T2: I always [ rises her tone].... Hm?

S: I always did.

#### 4.7.1.1.3 Uptake (Acknowledge, Successful Repair, Unsuccessful Repair and None)

An Uptake follows a Response. The student who produced the Trigger has the option of signalling that the Response has been received. However, the student is not obliged to uptake the response. He or she may choose to remain silent, and in that case, the FFE ends and the discourse reverts back to a focus on the message. There are four categories of Uptake that can be identified here: (1) Acknowledge, (2) Successful Repair, (3) Unsuccessful Repair and (4) None. These categories are distinguished in terms of whether the student who fails to correct the error in the trigger (i.e. 1, 3 and 4) or successfully corrects it ( i.e. 2). There were few cases where students initially made an Unsuccessful Repair followed by a Successful Repair. In this case, the Unsuccessful Repair was coded as Uptake 1 and subsequent Successful Repair was coded as Uptake 2.

##### A. Acknowledge

In an Acknowledge a student indicates acceptance of the preceding teacher's Response, often by responding 'yes' or by nodding. However, the student makes no attempt to reformulate the erroneous utterance in the Trigger. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether an Acknowledge draws attention to form or to message. It may be a twofold attempt to negotiate form and to negotiate meaning. In Example 18, *yeah* manifests an Uptake of the teacher's Recast. However, it is not clear whether the

student is acknowledging the teacher's correction ( adding *-th* to the ordinal number in the date) or acknowledging the message content ( i.e. that Australia Day is on 26<sup>th</sup> of January) or, perhaps, both since Teacher 2 does not seek to clarify this ambiguity.

Example 18: Episode 24 (T2/38/79)

T2: When does Australia Day take place?

S: 26 January

T2: 26<sup>th</sup> of January.

S: Yeah.

T2: Good.

### B. Successful Repair

In the case of a Successful Repair, the student who produced the Trigger corrects the 'error' by reformulating the erroneous part of the Trigger. Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 considered Successful Repair to have the greatest potential to promote acquisition through 'pushed output'. Previous research has shown that Successful Repair is more likely to occur after Request Clarification than after Recasts or Repeats (Lyster and Ranta, 1997). In Example 19, however, Successful Repair occurred after a Repeat.

Example 19: Episode 34 ( T1/41/79)

S: My bed was as cool as ice.

T1: As *cool* as ice? ( quizzical tone)

S: As cold as ice.

### C. Unsuccessful Repair

Unsuccessful Repair is another form of uptake. In this case, as illustrated in Example 20, the student who produced the Trigger attempts to correct his/her error but does not succeed.

Example 20: Episode 22 ( T1/41/79)  
T1: They went...  
S: *Early* to play  
T1: They went *early* to play?  
S: *Smoothly*... They went *smoothly* to play.

D. None

Here the student who produced the Trigger makes no attempt to react to the Response. Example 21 illustrates this form of non-uptake.

Example 21: Episode 23 ( T1/41/79)  
T1: Where can I go to play?  
S: To park?  
T1: No, choose one of the words from the list: *inside* or *outside*  
S: *Into* park...

#### 4.7.2 Type 3: Teacher-initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (TIPFFEs)

As with FFE Types 1 and 2, Type 3 may have a three-part structure. However, teacher-initiated FFEs allow two optional moves: Response and Uptake.

Figure 3: Categories Comprising TIPFFEs

(i) Trigger

- A. Query
- B. Advise

(ii) Response

- A. Repeat
- B. Provide
- C. None

(iii) Uptake

- A. Recognise
- B. Apply
- C. None

#### 4.7.2.1 Description of Categories Comprising Teacher-Initiated Pre-Emptive FFEs (TIPFFES)

##### 4.7.2.1.1 Trigger (Query and Advise)

The Trigger is the teacher's move, which begins the episode. There are two categories of Trigger that may be identified: Query and Advise.

###### A. Query

The teacher asks a question about a linguistic form. This category includes both WH questions (starting with an interrogative pronoun) calling for students to supply information and Yes/No (confirmation – type) questions. In this respect teacher-initiated FFEs resembled student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs as can be noticed later on. Irrespective of whether the teacher used a WH question or a confirmation-type question, the question was of the 'display' type. Example 22 illustrates a FFE initiated by Teacher 2 by means of a WH question.

Example 22: Episode 23 ( T2/38/79)

T2: Which question will you answer using the word “ for”? ( *the sentences are written on the whiteboard*)

S: The second one ...that starts with “ How long...”

T2: Good. And what would you use with the first question, which word?

S: *Since*.

T2: Yes, you use “ since” to tell us the date that whatever you were doing began or when you did it.  
Now, ask me a question.

###### B. Advise

This involved the teacher drawing the students' attention to a particular linguistic form. For example, the teacher modelled the correct form or reminded the students

about the need to pay attention. In Example 23, Teacher 2 is drawing the students' attention to the rules regarding the use of the Present Perfect Tense with "for" and "since".

Example 23: Episode 32 ( T2/38/79)

T2: Remember, we use the Present Perfect to talk about an action or a state which began in the past and continues to the present. We use 'for' to talk about the length of time and we can also use "since" to say when that action or state began. I'll write up a few examples on the whiteboard.

#### 4.7.2.1.2 Response (Repeat, Provide and None)

A Response is an attempt to address the Trigger. Students may or may not respond to a Query. If the student does not produce a Response, the teacher is likely to produce her own Response, as in Example 24 below. Two responses can be distinguished: teacher responses and student responses. In the case of an Advise, there was typically no response, as in Example 23 above. It is interesting to note that only one kind of Response was observed out of the pool of data regarding the teacher responses – a Provide. A Repeat in teacher responses is another type of Response observed by Ellis, Loewen and Basturkmen in their study of form-focused instruction in the classroom (1999), but not in the present study. Here, a Repeat was observed in student responses.

Example 24: Episode 33 ( T1/41/79)

S: I practised basket ball.  
T1: That's not two words.  
T1: Basketball, one word.

#### A. Repeat.

As mentioned above, this is always a student move and it follows an Advise. The student simply repeats what the teacher said i.e. the student uptakes the form

addressed in the teacher's Trigger move. In Example 25, the student responds to the Teacher's Trigger by repeating *taught* correctly pronounced. The Teacher 2 argued that it serves as one of the ways in which learners acquire items.

Example 25: Episode 12 ( T2/38/79)

T2: We've got a wee problem here....T-a-u-g-h-t...How do we pronounce it?

Ss: ...

T2: [to:t]– we pronounce it as if it's spelt t-o-r-t. Everyone

Ss: [to:t]

T2: Good.

#### B. Provide

In a Provide, a student or a teacher responding to her own Trigger supplies information to answer a Query. A Provide, according to the belief of Teacher 1, serves as one way in which the students' explicit knowledge of linguistic items can be developed. In Example 26, Teacher 2 provides the students with an extensive explanation of the past participle form of *know* including the correct pronunciation. The teacher 2 argued that such extensive explanation can facilitate the subsequent development of implicit knowledge.

Example 26: Episode 17 ( T2/38/79)

T2: Past participle of *know* ?

S : Knew, -ew.

T2: -n. **Known**. Don't make a mistake by saying [now/\n]. And this is a very Kiwi thing. You'll often hear people trying to put in a "u" between the "w" and the "n" like " Yes, I've **knowun** that for some time." No. You say *known*. *Known*, *known*.

#### 4.7.2.1.3 Uptake ( Recognise, Apply and None)

An Uptake always occurs after a teacher responds to her own Query and is always a student made move. Exactly the same categories of Uptake were observed in Student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs ( SIPFFE), i.e. Recognize, Apply and None.

## A. Recognise

The participant (a teacher or a student) who produces the Trigger now acknowledges the Response provided by another participant. In Example 27, the student shows recognition of the new information using different linguistic tokens, i.e. *mmm, ah*.

Example 27: Episode 36 (T1/41/79)

T1: *A mule*. What is a mule?

S: A horse?

T1: You know Jesus' father, Joseph?

Ss: Mmm...

T1: He put his wife on a mule and they rode into Bethlehem. And do you know the donkey in Shrek movie? A mule is maybe different but it is half donkey, half horse.

Ss: Mmmm...

T1: And we say 'As stubborn as a mule'. Because they won't do anything they don't want to do. Okay?

Ss: Ah.

## B. Apply

The student who produces the Trigger incorporates the information supplied in the Response into his/her production, sometimes by repeating or rephrasing part of the Response. In this way, the student signals that he/she has understood the information by trying to use it or tries out the information in the context of a confirmation request, i.e. the student tries to apply the information in his/her own speech. Such an action involves the production of 'pushed output', which both teachers found to be of great importance for language acquisition. In Example 28, the student produces an Apply by repeating part of the teacher's Response.

Example 28: Episode 41 ( T1/41/79)

T1: As big as...?

S: *As big as galaxy?*

T1: It does make sense but we say *As big as house*.

S: *As big as house*. Is it because it is more normal in life? *My fish was as big as house...*

### C. None

The participant who produces the Trigger fails to follow-up on the Response. In Example 29, we can see how the student failed to use the verb *'bet'* in the sentence and provided an irrelevant answer.

Example29: Episode 29 ( T2/38/79)

T2: When people come to the race on the Racing Day, what do they do first with their money?

S: They sit in their car and have a picnic.

#### 4.7.3 Type 4: Student- initiated pre-emptive form-focused episodes (SIPFFE)

The categories in this type of FFE are listed below and then described in subsequent sections. Uptake is optional. As with SIRFFEs, the categories are presented in terms of a three-part structure which reflects the sequence of discourse moves that may occur in all types of FFE.

Figure 4: Categories Comprising SIPFFEs

- (i) Trigger
  - A. Solicited Question
  - B. Free Question
  - C. Request Confirmation
- (ii) Response
  - A. Provide Solution
  - B. Seek Solution
- (iii) Uptake
  - A. Recognize
  - B. Apply
  - C. None

### 4.7.3.1 Description of Categories Comprising SIPFFEs

#### 4.7.3.1.1 Trigger ( Solicited Question, Free Question and Request Confirmation)

In a Trigger, a student raises a question about a linguistic form. This question can be of three kinds: Solicited Question, Free Question and Request Confirmation. These categories often seem similar and differ only in terms of the extent to which the student is prompted to initiate and in terms whether the student succeeds in making a solution to his/her problem. They are motivated by a desire to examine the extent to which they (students) can articulate their linguistic problem and attempt to test the linguistic rules.

##### A. Solicited Question

In a Solicited Question the teacher invites students to ask about linguistic forms that may be problematic. Although it is the teacher who extends the invitation , it is still the students' responsibility to raise the question. It is for this reason that this type is categorised as student-initiated. In Example 30, Teacher 2 asks the students to use the correct adverb in a sentence and one student initiates the focus by using the adverb *happily*.

Example 30: Episode 23 (T1/41/79)

T1: So, *They went.....to play*.

S: *Happily*

T2: *Happily?* Oh, *They went happily...* You have to put another word in here – *out*. *They went happily out to play*.

##### B. Free Question

This is a query in which the student poses an unsolicited question that invites another participant to supply an answer. The question typically begins with a WH question

word (e.g. “What?” or “Why?”). A Free Question is raised to address a gap in the student’s L2 competence. In Example 31, the student does not think the word *out* is specific enough and tries to find out the alternative ways of saying where children went to play.

Example 31: Episode 24 ( T1/41/79)

T1: *They went out happily to play.*

S: *Out? Why we do not say to park?*

S2: *Maybe not park...*

### C. Request Confirmation

This is a query where the student asks for agreement regarding an assumption. Therefore, in contrast to a Free Question, the student has some idea of the solution to the linguistic problem and puts this forward. According to Teacher 2, Request Confirmation serves as the discursal means by which students can test hypotheses about L2. As such, it certainly contributes to the process of hypothesis formation and testing which is believed to underlie interlanguage development. In Example 32, the student is testing a hypothesis about the correct use of the verb form. Teacher 2 confirms the hypothesis but does not go into an explanation regarding the differences between The Present Perfect Simple and Continuous forms.

Example 32: Episode 27 ( T2/38/79)

S: *They have lived here since 1988. Is this correct?*

T2: *Yes, well done!*

#### 4.7.3.1.2 Response (Provide Solution, Seek Solution)

The move following the Trigger is the Response, and it is an attempt to address the Trigger in some manner. The response was one of four kinds: Provide Solution, Seek Solution, Refuse and Refer. It can be preformed by the teacher or another student. In

most instances, T2 encouraged other students to give response whereas Teacher1 was more often the one to perform the response.

#### A. Provide Solution

Here the participant responding to the Trigger offers a solution by supplying information. The information can be used to fill the gap in the student's L2 competence. In Example 33, the student asks a question.

Example 33:Episode 16 (T1/41/79)

1. S: Why do you write adverb?
2. Ss: (All discussing together).
3. T1: To describe a verb.

#### B. Seek Solution

In Seek Solution, the teacher attempts to elicit information that can be used to address the Trigger. The elicitation is usually directed at the instigator of the FFE but may be directed at other students as well. Both Teacher 1 and 2 agreed that providing students with opportunities to supply answers to questions is good pedagogy. Teacher 1 also thought that although there was no psycholinguistic rationale for a Seek Solution, she may have often used it when she was not quite sure how to answer the Trigger, as a way of gaining time before she would attempt a Provide Solution. Teacher 2 provided a very similar rationale and agreed that in her early years as an ESOL teacher, she would have used Seek Solution more readily. Now, after several years of studying grammar by herself, she would use Seek Solution only when she expected at least one student in her class to be able to answer the Trigger as illustrated in Example 34.

Example 34: Episode 18 ( T2/38/79)

S: I have...um... ( asks another student) what is past of *wear*?

T2: *Wear* – past participle form is...?

S: *Wore*.

T2: That's past... *wore* is past. What's the past simple?

S: ?

T2: Past participle...?

S: *Wear*.

T2: Nearly but not quite.

S: *Wore*.

T2: No, that's past simple. *I wore my jeans on Saturday*. But: *I have worn my jeans every day for a month*. That's your Past Participle!

#### 4.7.3.1.3 Uptake

As in TIPFFE, Uptake is an optional third-part move in which the student who produces the Trigger reacts to the response given to it. Three categories of Uptake were identified: Recognize, Apply and None. These are exactly the same categories of Uptake as in Teacher –Initiated pre-Emptive FFEs and those have already been identified and described earlier.

#### 4.8 The Reliability of the Coding System

In order to investigate the reliability of the coding of form-focused episodes, an inter-rater coded a random sample of 41% of the FFEs (n = 33). After coding the episodes, the researcher and the inter-rater compared their results and established a high percentage of agreement of 97%. Very few of the differences stemmed from differing perceptions and a lack of contextual information. Whereas the researcher was familiar with the context of each episode, the inter-rater was not familiar with the context, and

as a result, did not possess some of the information needed to code certain episodes accurately. Such information included the discourse preceding a FFE.

#### 4.9. Summary

Now that this chapter has presented the methods and procedures used for collecting and analysing the data, the subsequent chapter will outline the results of the research questions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### 5.1 Introduction

The principal purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the category system, which has been presented in previous chapters, in action. The chapter presents the results of an analysis of the FFEs that arose in the classrooms where the lessons were recorded. The results illustrate how the system can account for the way focus-on-form is accomplished in two different classrooms with two different teachers.

#### 5.2 Total FFEs

Overall there were 80 FFEs in the 6 hours of lessons that were recorded. This gives a rate of one FFE every 5 minutes. By way of comparison it can be noted that Lyster (1998b) reports 558 responding FFEs in 1,100 minutes of immersion instruction, a rate of one FFE every 1.97 minutes. Lyster did not examine initiating FFEs. The rate observed in the study by Ellis, Loewen and Basturkmen (1999) was one FFE every 1.6 minutes (448 FFEs in the 12 hours of lessons they observed ).

In the present study, however, the rate observed cannot be considered comparable to those reported by Lyster (1998b) or Ellis et al. (1999) because the participants in Lyster's study were 4 and 6 grade students ( 9-11 years of age) in immersion classrooms. It was mentioned earlier in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.1, p.54) that age is a

significant factor in language acquisition and that secondary school learners, especially those over 15 years of age, undergo different cognitive processes in SLA than the younger learners ( Lenneberg, 1967; Long, 1990). The learners in the study conducted by Ellis et al. were adults, who were committed to improving English, and Ellis assumed that "the learners in this study were more motivated and more cognitively able to attend to form than Lyster's immersion students"(pp. 311-312). In the present study, the students were at the beginners level and intermediate level of proficiency. The age of the students in the former, Teacher 1 class, ranged between 13 and 16, whereas in the latter, Teacher 2 class, the students were between 16 and 18 years of age.

Another reason may lie in the fact that the present study was conducted in a secondary school where often the focus on developing thinking skills and writing skills inevitably slows down the frequency at which FFEs occur. Teacher 2 explained that as much as language accuracy was important in the secondary school ESOL classes, there was a need to teach Language across the Curriculum as well as the elements of New Zealand ‘culture’. It was observed that, during these episodes, the focus was primarily on communication and as long as there was no need to negotiate meaning, FFEs did not occur.

**Table 1: Total Number of Focus on Form Episodes**

	<i>n</i>	%
Teacher 1	42	53
Teacher 2	38	47

The number of FFEs in the two classes was not significantly different. There were a few more FFEs in the Elementary level class taken by Teacher 1 (42) than in the Intermediate level class taken by Teacher 2 (38), as shown in Table 1. In the Teacher 1 class, the majority of the students were juniors (13 – 15 years of age), Korean and Japanese boys, who are reputedly more responsive, vocal and who, therefore, greatly affect the dynamics of the class work. In the Teacher 2 class, the majority of the students were senior (16-18 years of age) Korean and Chinese girls and few senior Chinese boys. These students are reputedly less responsive. They prefer to listen and answer if prompted, and will rarely ask questions or initiate FFEs. These students are also quite focused on their academic reading and writing skills.

Having taken the general characteristics of the two classes into consideration, there was likely to be some difference in the way form-focused instruction was approached, and in the way it was affected by the dynamics of the two classes.

The outlined differences clearly stood out and just by looking at the transcripts of the lessons, it became obvious that Teacher 2 often had very long moves and that the students had to be prompted and responses carefully elicited as opposed to Teacher 1, whose moves were brief and in whose classroom the pace of the lesson seemed to be faster. However, looking at the transcripts of her lessons and having been asked if she would have approached some FFEs differently, Teacher 1 said that she would have certainly “lingered” over some FFEs and tried to elicit better Responses. She found this exercise (looking at the transcripts of her own lessons) a very valuable tool in reflecting on her practice and developing her professional practical knowledge

### 5.3 General Characteristics of FFEs

This section considers the two most relevant characteristics of FFEs for the present study: **Approach** ( reactive or initiating) to FFEs (overall and by participant) and **Instigator** (teacher or student) of the FFEs (overall and by class).

(i) Approach

**Table 2: Initiating and Reactive FFEs**

	Initiating FFEs		Reactive FFEs	
	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1	27	64	15	36
Teacher 2	28	74	10	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 2 above shows the proportion of Responding and Initiating FFEs overall and in the two classes separately. Overall, there were almost twice as many Initiating FFEs as there were Responding ones (55 initiating and 25 responding). There were no major differences noted in the two classes with two different teachers. There were **64%** Initiating FFEs in the class with Teacher 1, and **74%** in the class with Teacher 2. It is notable that a substantial proportion of the FFEs were Initiating. This supports a clear gap in the research to date, as it has examined reactive focus on form almost exclusively, except for Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001), who examined the rate of correct uptake in reactive and initiating episodes. For instance, early studies on error treatment by Allwright (1975), Long (1977), Chaudron (1977) are the examples

of earlier research of reactive FFI. More recent studies by Ellis (1994b) and VanLier (1998) provided accounts of classroom language such as turn-taking and **repair** whereas Doughty and Varela (1998), Mackey and Philp (1998), Long, Inakagi and Ortega (1998) exclusively examined ‘**recasts**’ as a particular type of feedback. These studies were primarily concerned with reactive FFEs and initiating episodes were hardly mentioned.

(ii) Instigator

The vast majority of pre-emptive FFEs were teacher initiated. Overall, the teachers initiated 55 FFEs (69%) and the students 25 (31%) (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Instigator (Teacher or Student) by Class and Overall**

	n	%
Teacher 1	24	30
Teacher 2	31	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>69</b>
Student (Teacher 1 class)	18	22
Student ( Teacher 2 class)	7	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>

Some differences were evident in the two classes with two different teachers. In the first class, Teacher 1 initiated 30% of all FFEs in her class whereas Teacher 2 initiated 39% of the total number of FFEs in her class. However, it is clear that in both classrooms, the students were active in initiating FFEs, especially in the first class with Teacher 1 (22%) compared to the second class with Teacher 2 where the students initiated 9% of FFEs. This difference in the number of FFEs initiated by the

students could be attributed to the different nature of the two classes. The rationale for this was given by Teacher 2, who explained that the first class was mainly composed of junior students, Korean boys, who tended to be lively, vocal and very responding. The second class was mainly composed of senior Chinese students who, on the other hand, tended to be more introvert and very academic in their approach to studying. This kind of issue of variation in focus on form is discussed more thoroughly in Loewen (2003) where it is suggested that cultural background, classroom atmosphere and personality factors all may play a part in influencing how focus on form occurs in the classroom. For example, Loewen found that European background students had higher frequencies of student-initiated FFEs than did East Asian learners.

While such differences may be explained in part by learners' previous educational experiences (Cortazzi and Jin 1996), this is not an adequate explanation when many of the students came from similar cultural backgrounds. Another possible explanation could relate to students' perceptions of their role in the classroom (Cotterall 1995). It may be that students who felt that it was the teacher's role to highlight linguistic forms may not have initiated many FFEs, while students who were more autonomous, and took more responsibility for their learning, initiated more FFEs. Further research investigating learners' reasons for initiating attention to form would be useful.

#### 5.4 Types of FFEs

It has already been noted that there was a reasonable balance between **Responding** (Teacher-initiated reactive FFEs (**TIRFFE**s) and Student-initiated reactive FFEs (**SIRFFE**s)) and **Initiating** episodes (Teacher-initiated pre-emptive FFEs (**TIPFFE**s) and Student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs (**SIPFFE**s)).

**Table 4: FFE Type Overall**

	n	%
TIRFFE	15	19
SIRFFE	10	12
TIPFFE	45	56
SIPFFE	10	13

Table 4 above shows the breakdown for the Types of FFEs. Interestingly, it reveals that of the Initiating FFEs, most were teacher (TIPFFE)s rather than student initiated (SIPFFE)s (45 or 56% of total FFEs as opposed to 10 or 13%).

Another observation is that in Teacher 1 class, the students were less hesitant to raise linguistic problems although they were less competent in terms of their English language proficiency. There is a possibility that the age of the students (juniors), the dominant gender factor (mainly Korean boys), as well as personality factor (in the post-recording interview Teacher 1 said that she thought that the majority of her students were rather autonomous learners) contributed to a higher rate of student-initiated FFEs in the elementary level class taken by Teacher 1.

Table 5 below shows that in the first class (with Teacher1) there were 7 or 17% of student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs as opposed to 3 or 8% in the second class (with Teacher 2). The ratio does not seem to be well balanced since there are fewer TIPFFEes in the first class (20 or 48%) than in the second one with Teacher 2 ( 25 or 66%). The teachers' contribution to focus on form was primarily through Initiating Pre-Emptive FFEs.

**Table 5: FFE Type by Class**

	REACTIVE / RESPONDING				PRE-EMPTIVE / INITIATING			
	TIRFFEes		SIRFFEes		TIPFFEes		SIPFFEes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
T 1 Class	11	26	4	9	20	48	7	17
T 2 Class	6	16	4	10	25	66	3	8

Again, the differences between the two classes with regard to Types of FFEs point to the fact that the different composition of the classes often dictates the teachers' different approach. Recent research in motivation, anxiety, and classroom dynamics has begun to look at the effects of specific classroom variables, including the abovementioned grouping factors (Oxford & Shearin, 1994), on motivation and anxiety. According to that study, which indirectly supports Teacher 2's and Teacher 1's earlier mentioned rationales, personality factors, such as risk-taking and extroversion have generally been shown to contribute to learners' ability to engage in and maintain negotiation, and so develop pragmatic abilities and fluency.

### 5.4.1 Reactive FFEs

Here, we consider the FFEs where the learners were provided with information as to what was unacceptable (incorrect) in their utterance from the perspective of their teacher and fellow students.

**Table 6: Reactive FFEs by Participant**

	n	%
SIRFFEes	10	13
TIRFFEes	15	19

As Table 6 reveals, there was a total of 25 (32%) Reactive FFEs. All the triggers of these FFEs were utterances containing an actual or perceived error. In both cases (Teacher 1 and 2 class), the teachers were responsible for most Responses to errors (see Table 7 below). Overall, the teachers produced 57 Responses and the students just 12. The low rate of student Responses was expected since it was also unusually low in the previously mentioned study performed by Ellis et al. (19 student responses as opposed to 249 made by the teachers). Note that the total number of Responses (69) is greater than the total number of Responding FFEs (25) because in some FFEs more than one Response occurred.

**Table 7: Reactive FFEs Responses by Participant**

	TEACHER RESPONSES		STUDENT RESPONSES		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1 Class	33	48	8	11	41	59
Teacher 2 Class	24	35	4	6	28	41

In most cases, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 dealt with learner errors by providing rather than seeking a solution. Thus, Table 8 shows that out of the 69 Responses, 62 were Provides and only 7 Seeks. The differences between two classes with regard to Categories of Responses were small.

**Table 8: Reactive FFE Responses by Category**

	PROVIDE SOLUTION RESPONSES		SEEK SOLUTION RESPONSES	
	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1	38	55	3	4
Teacher 2	24	35	4	6
TOTAL	62	90	7	10

If we turn to the nature of the Provides (see Table 9), we find that the majority were Prompts (19 or 31%). The remainder of the Responses were fairly evenly divided among Informs (13 or 21%), Recasts (12 or 19%), Request Clarifications (9 or 14.5%), and Repeats (9 or 14.5%).

**Table 9: Reactive FFE Response by Subcategory**

	PROMPTS		INFORMS		RECASTS		REQUEST CLARIFICATION		REPEAT	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1	8	13	6	10	8	13	4	6	2	3
Teacher 2	11	18	7	11	4	6	5	8.5	7	11.5
TOTAL	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14.5</b>

A few differences were noted with regard to the two teachers' responses to their students' erroneous or ambiguous utterances. There was a very minor difference in the number of Prompts, which seemed to be a slightly more preferred choice of Teacher 2. However, the Prompt as the preferred choice of addressing a student's

error was quite unexpected since the study by Ellis et al. (1999) showed that Recasts made up for the vast majority of the Provides ( 75% of the Responses). In the present study, Teacher 1, a Primary School trained teacher, explained that prompting students had always been a major part of her teaching style, especially if she was certain that the students had some prior knowledge on the topic or linguistic issue. Prompting gave her more opportunity to “utilise” that prior knowledge, bring it forward from “the depths of long term memory”. She also said that the students were often unaware that they knew something they thought they did not know and that she found Prompt a useful tool in addressing an error. Teacher 2 had a similar rationale for the preferred use of Prompts over other subcategories of Provide. She particularly favoured Prompts when she was sure that a student knew what the correct form of the linguistic item was or if she knew the student had previously been instructed about the linguistic item in question. Teacher 2 saw Prompts as Elicitation and used them to give explicit feedback rather than implicit. Her ESOL teaching experience showed that prompt explicit feedback was more beneficial to her students’ language acquisition than implicit feedback. Similarly, Carroll, Swain and Roberge (1992) reported that the conscious knowledge gained through implicit correction faded in a short time as opposed to the knowledge gained through explicit correction where the learner(s) were supplied with an explanation and a rule.

Much of the teachers’ analytical focus in the episodes where Prompts were used appeared to be unplanned. The focus emerged from what Borg (1998a) described as the instructional context in response to the teachers’ own decision-making and on a few occasions, from issues raised by the students. It also went along the lines of Long’s (1996) theoretical position which held that meaning-focused instruction

provided the best context for negative feedback through an incidental and transitory focus on form. One manner in which this might happen was, in the case of the two teachers in the present study, by ‘scaffolding’ interaction. By using Prompts, the teacher might address both form and meaning to provide, in Vygotskian terms, a zone of proximal development.

In such a manner, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 appeared at times to be scaffolding students’ language. They both believed that prompting led to ‘noticing’, **noticing** being one of the most critical factors in L2 acquisition as studies by Schmidt (1990, 1995), Ellis (1994), and DeKeyser (1995) showed. Students must pay attention to input and have the momentary subjective experience of "noticing" it, if they are to subsequently learn.

There was a surprising difference in the number of incidences of Recasts and Repeats between two teachers. Teacher 1 used Recasts as many times as she used Prompts (each accounted for 28.5% of her Provides) and twice as many times as Teacher 2, who simply resorted to Recasts only when she wanted to keep the dynamics of the class up and when the linguistic item was not of essential importance for that particular moment in the lesson. Teacher 1, however, was not sure what her rationale with regard to the use of Recasts was. She believed that it was only her “gut feeling” and she was not quite sure if a Recast was the right choice. This kind of explanation was not a surprising one for the researcher. Borg’s (1999) study concluded that form-focused instruction was defined by teachers’ interacting decisions about a range of issues. These decisions were influenced by their often conflicting cognitions about language, form-focused instruction, students, and self. Another important conclusion

that came out of Borg's project was that cognitions underlying formal instruction were generated by key educational and professional experiences in teachers' professional lives. Teacher 1 had only one year of ESOL teaching experience behind her and therefore, it was not unusual in any way that she was sometimes unsure whether her instructional choices were the right ones. However, the present study showed that Teacher 1 resorted to Recasts most frequently when practising similes with her students. It often seemed from the transcripts of those episodes that she deliberately induced her students to make errors and then corrected them (see Example 39 below).

Example 39: Episode 38 (T1/42/80)

T1: What else have got? *As cunning as...*

S1: Spider??

T1: Not quite, but I must admit spiders are cunning...

S2: Wolf?

T1: *As cunning as a spider or wolf or...* none of these. C'mon, think harder...

Studies by Tomosello and Herron (1988, 1989) found that such an approach worked better than traditional grammar instruction involving production practice.

Teacher 2 used Repeat almost three times more than Teacher 1. She actually saw Repeat as a subcategory of Prompt and believed that if the student knew the correct form of the linguistic item in question, a Repeat uttered in the questioning or quizzical tone would work as effectively as a Prompt or Clarification Request towards producing a pushed output.

Finally, of particular note, given their hypothesised role in promoting pushed output, is the low incidence of Request Clarification (6% and 8.5% for Teacher 1 and 2

respectively). The reason could be that the corpus of data is too small to make any significant conclusions. Teacher 1 commented that there were very few instances where the breakdown in communication actually happened and there was no reason either for her or the students to Request Clarification. Teacher 2 confirmed that she had often used Request Clarification. However, in order to make the instruction more effective and to provide variety, she combined a number of different options and varied her instructional approach from lesson to lesson.

#### 5.4.2 Reactive FFE Uptake

As seen in Table 10 below, out of the 25 Reactive FFEs, 15 (60%) resulted in correct Uptake and 10 (40%) in incorrect Uptake. Thus in general, the students were likely to attempt some form of Uptake.

**Table 10: Reactive FFEs Uptake by Participant and Overall**

	Correct Uptake				Incorrect Uptake			
	TIRFFEes		SIRFFEes		TIRFFEes		SIRFFEes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1 Class	4	27	5	33	0	0	6	40
Teacher 2 Class	4	40	2	20	2	20	2	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><i>Correct Uptakes</i></b>				<b><i>Incorrect Uptakes</i></b>			
<b>OVERALL</b>	n		%		n		%	
	<b>15</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>40</b>	

With Teacher 1, there were 15 Reactive FFEs out of which 4 (27%) were teacher-initiated ( TIRFFEes) and 11 (73%) were student-initiated (SIRFFEes). All of the TIRFFEes ended in correct Uptake whereas 5 (33%) of SIRFFEes ended in correct Uptake and 6 (40%) in incorrect Uptake, as shown in Table 10.

With Teacher 2, there were 10 Reactive FFE Uptakes out of which 6 (60%) were teacher-initiated and 4 (40%) were student-initiated. Four TIRFFEes ended in correct Uptake (40%) and 2 (20%) in incorrect Uptake. 20% of SIRFFEes ended in correct and incorrect uptakes respectively.

There is a correlation between the number of Recasts and incorrect Uptakes in Student-Initiated Reactive Episodes in the two teachers' classrooms. As noticed earlier, Teacher 1 resorted to Recasts more frequently than Teacher 2. Similarly, there were twice as many incorrect Uptakes in Student-Initiated Reactive FFEs. Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that Recasts were the least effective in terms of successful uptake. All other techniques (elicitation, informs, prompts, clarification requests, repetition) were the most effective because they "pushed" learners to self-correct.

Although the Uptakes were seemingly differently distributed across the two classes, the students in both classes were able to correct the errors that triggered the focus on form in nearly three quarters of the Reactive FFEs. Again, this demonstrated what Ellis (1998) had already concluded: '...that negative feedback directed at errors made in communication can accelerate interlanguage development' (p.53).

#### 5.4.3 Initiating FFEs

Here, we consider the FFEs where interlocutors (both teachers and students) take time out from a communicative activity to initiate attention to a form that is perceived to be problematic even though there may have not been any perceived production error or difficulty.

There were a total of 55 Initiating FFEs out of which 45 were teacher-initiated and 10 were student-initiated. The study by Ellis et al. (2001) found that pre-emptive FonF and Reactive FonF occurred with equal frequency. In this study, however, there are almost twice as many pre-emptive FFEs. Long and Robinson (1998) included **pre-emptive** negative evidence in their taxonomy of input, but they did not discuss it in detail. Unlike Williams's (1999) report, which found that pre-emptive focus-on-form occurred most frequently when learners requested assistance from the teacher, the present study showed that most of the pre-emptive FFEs were teacher-initiated.

Since there has been very little research to date addressing pre-emptive focus-on-form, it is hard to make any comparisons and draw firm conclusions as to why the number of TIPFFE and SIPFFE accounts for almost two thirds of all FFEs in the two classrooms in the present study. However, by looking at the background of the pre-emptive episodes, there were some common factors noticed in the two classrooms, and those will be discussed later see Section 6.3.3, p. 103).

Table 11 illustrates that in regard to Student-Initiated Pre-Emptive FFEs, 3 (30% of the total number of pre-emptive episodes) were initiated by means of a Free Question, 4 (40%) by a Request Confirmation and 3 (30%) by a Solicited Question.

**Table 11: SIPFFEs Trigger**

	n	%
Free Question	3	30
Request Confirmation	4	40
Solicited Question	3	30

**Table 12: SIPFFE Response by Participant**

	Provides		Seeks		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1	4	29	2	14.5	6	43
Teacher 2	3	21	2	14.5	5	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>79</b>
Students T1 Class	2	14	0	0	2	14
Students T2 Class	1	7	0	0	1	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>

The teachers mainly took responsibility for making a Response, as seen in Table 12. Thus, out of 14 Responses (again, note that there were multiple responses coded in some SIPFFEs), the teachers supplied 11 (79%) and the students only 3 (21%). Figure 12 also shows that the supplied responses were achieved principally by means of Provides (10 or 71%). In other words, both teachers typically gave the students the information they requested. However, there were also some Seeks (4 or 29%) where the teacher sought to obtain a response from another student. Overall, the table shows minimal differences in the two teachers' Responses.

There was a total of 45 TIPFFEs. Table 13 shows that the Triggers comprised 32 (71%) Queries and 13 (29%) Advises. However, the two teachers differed quite markedly in how they initiated FFEs. Teacher 2 showed a clear preference for 'queries' over 'advises', while Teacher 1 favoured both equally.

**Table 13: TIPFFEs Trigger**

	QUERY		ADVISE	
	n	%	n	%
Teacher 1	11	24	9	20
Teacher 2	21	47	4	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

To refer to the earlier mentioned common factors found in both classes, it was noted that the highest number of TIPFFEs occurred in the pre-planned lessons. The intention of both teachers was the same. Teacher 1 wanted to expand her students' knowledge of some well-known similes used in the previously studied text. She found some interesting similarities and differences in similes in the students' native languages and thought that this linguistic item would be an easy one for students to acquire.

Quite similarly, Teacher 2 pre-planned her lesson on The Present Perfect Tense revision. This was not a new linguistic item for her students, but certainly was the one on which many students “stumbled”. Teacher 2 knew that acquisition could occur in the context of meaning-focused communication and pre-empted most of the FFEs in order to get the responses from the students, in which they would use the structure correctly.

In the course of their lessons, however, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 decided to depart from their lesson plans because they noticed a gap in their students' knowledge: in distinguishing adverbs from adjectives ( in Teacher 1 class), and the

correct Past Participle forms of irregular verbs ( in Teacher 2 class). Therefore, their decision was advised by two of the principles mentioned by Bailey (1996): (1) to serve the common good and (2) teach to the moment. Teacher 1 did it by incorporating a more explicit treatment of grammar within a text-based curriculum, by building a focus on form into task-based teaching through activities focusing on **consciousness raising** or **noticing** grammatical features of input or output (Sharwood Smith 1993), and by using activities that require “stretched output”, i.e. which expand or ‘restructure’ the learner’s grammatical system though increased communicative demands and attention to linguistic form (Ellis, 2002).

Interestingly enough, Teacher 2 resorted to the activity that did not quite reflect her principles about L2 teaching. During the same lesson on Present Perfect Tense revision, Teacher 2 modified her plan on the basis of unexpected difficulties (she did not expect such poor knowledge of Past Participle forms of irregular verbs) and engaged in the production- practice, which did not reflect her principles (Ulichny, 1996, came up with similar findings). Correct language use was achieved through a drill and practice methodology and through controlled speaking and writing exercises that sought to prevent or minimize opportunities for errors. By making a series of queries about different incidents her students’ everyday life, Teacher 2 did the following:

- A specific grammatical feature was isolated for focused attention.
- The learners were required to produce sentences containing the targeted feature.

- The learners were provided with opportunities for repetition of the targeted feature.
- There was an expectancy that the learners would perform the grammatical feature correctly, therefore practice activities were success oriented.
- The learners received feedback on whether their performance of the grammatical structure is correct or not.

Sometimes, these lessons had an echo of the 1970s' controlled practice emphasis (McCarthy, 2001) yet, due to the communicative nature of the whole lesson, the tasks had characteristics of communicative tasks.

The higher rate of correct Uptake in Teacher 2 class can be explained by Pienemann's (1985) 'teachability hypothesis', i.e. the students were ready to learn the selected linguistic item since their interlanguage was close to the point when the taught structure is acquired in a natural setting.

Generally speaking, a feature of TIPFFE's is a high proportion (11 or 20%) of incorrect Uptakes without any marked differences between the two teachers' classrooms (see Table 14).

**Table 14: Initiating Pre-Emptive FFEs Uptake by Participant and Overall**

	SIPFFE <sub>s</sub>				TIPFFE <sub>s</sub>				TOTAL			
	Correct Uptake		Incorrect Uptake		Correct Uptake		Incorrect Uptake		<i>Correct Uptake</i>		<i>Incorrect Uptake</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher1 Class	5	9	2	4	14	25	6	11	<b>42</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>
Teacher2 Class	3	5	0	0	20	36	5	9				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>				

Out of 55 Initiating FFEs where 10 or 18% were SIPFFE<sub>s</sub>, 8 or 14% ended in correct Uptake. Table 14 also shows that Teacher 2 elicited more Responses, which ended in 20 or 36% correct Uptake. To put it another way, the students were able to address a teacher’s Trigger about language on 34 out of 45 possible occasions (or 61% of the time), which is quite contrary to the findings of Ellis et al. (1999) where the students were able to address a teacher’s Trigger on only 28 of possible 60 occasions (46% of the time). The number of correct Uptakes in the present study was particularly high in Teacher 2 classroom, as observed earlier. The teacher’s longer experience in ESOL teaching, and the fact that the students in her class were taught by this same teacher second year in a row, could account for a relative success of Teacher-Initiated Pre-Emptive FFEs as the means for focusing on form in the communicative classroom.

### 5.5 Summary

This chapter has provided a general picture of how focus-on-form was accomplished in the two secondary school classrooms with two different teachers.

First, the results reveal that there is an amazing amount of attention to form that occurred in lessons that purported to be ‘communicative’ and certainly were so. Second, it is clear that in these classes, a focus-on-form was not just a reactive

phenomenon, it was also notably proactive. Third, it is clear that the students played an important part in both initiating and responding focus-on-form episodes. Fourth, in both classes, 'form' meant Grammar and Vocabulary in the first place. Fifth, much of the focus-on-form that arose was triggered by a problem in using English correctly or accurately, not by a problem in communication. That means that, although the lessons were 'communicative', the students regularly paid attention to language for its own sake. Sixth, the level of uptake was high and by and large successful. Lastly, Teacher-Initiated Pre-Emptive FFEs were the least effective as they were less likely to be correctly uptaken by the students.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the results found in this study in Section 6.2. Next, Section 6.3 goes on to consider some limitations of the research. In Sections 6.4 and 6.5 respectively the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the findings will be considered and finally, in Section 6.6, some recommendations for future research are made.

#### 6.2 Results Summary

In this study, form-focused instruction was found to occur, with 80 episodes in six hours of meaning-focused instruction. There were no considerable variations in the occurrence of FFEs between two classes (beginners and intermediate level). However, the nature of FFEs differed between these two classes and the following patterns and trends emerged:

1. Overall, Initiating FFEs occurred two times more frequently than did Reactive FFEs (69% versus 31%). In the Intermediate level class taken by Teacher 2, this rate was even higher, with Initiating FFEs occurring almost three times more often than Reactive ones ( 74% versus 26%). This is important because until recently, reactive

focus on form has received considerable attention, from both theoretical and empirical perspectives, while pre-emptive focus on form has been largely neglected.

2. General characteristics of the classes affected the way in which the two teachers approached form-focused instruction. In the majority of Initiating FFEs, the instigator was a teacher (69% versus 31%) although students were active in bringing up the linguistic issues. The study found that the junior students in the Elementary level class taken by Teacher 1 were more autonomous and initiated more episodes than the senior students in the more advanced class taken by Teacher 2. While the cultural background, classroom atmosphere and personality factors all may play a part in influencing how focus on form occurs in the classroom (Loewen, 2003), it is likely that the students in these two classes had different perceptions of their role in the classroom (Cotterall, 1995) and that the students taken by Teacher 2 believed that it was the teacher's role to highlight linguistic forms. The same factors probably affected the different dynamics of the lessons and the frequencies of FFEs in the two classrooms: Teacher 1's moves were brief and the pace of her lessons was quicker; Teacher 2 had much longer moves and the pace of the lessons was slower due to the time-consuming process of eliciting responses.

3. Initiating episodes showed a very high rate of teacher initiated pre-emptive FFEs. Out of 55 Initiating FFEs, 45 were teacher-initiated pre-emptive FFEs (TIPFFE) and only 10 student-initiated pre-emptive FFEs (SIPFFE). The highest number of TIPFFE occurred in pre-planned lessons. The two teachers differed markedly in how they initiated FFEs. Teacher 2 showed a clear preference for 'queries' over 'advises' while Teacher 1 favoured both equally. The main feature of TIPFFE is a high proportion (11 or 20%) of incorrect Uptakes without any marked differences between the two teachers' classrooms.

3. Reactive FFEs showed a low rate of student Responses. Both teachers dealt with students' errors by providing rather than seeking a solution (62 Provides versus 7 Seeks). A surprising finding was that Recasts were not the preferred choice of either of the teachers in dealing with the learners' erroneous utterances as the results of some earlier studies suggested (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Ellis et al., 1999; Oliver, 2000). A much higher rate of Recasts was noted in the Reactive FFEs initiated by the less experienced Teacher 1 compared to more experienced Teacher 2 (13% versus 6%). Teacher 2, however, applied a variety of FFE options while responding to students' errors: she prompted the students more carefully and the responses were elicited more frequently in order to make the students "notice" the gap in their interlanguage. This resulted in a higher rate of correct uptakes in Teacher 2 class (60% versus 54%). Ellis's (1998) conclusion that negative feedback directed at the errors made in communication makes the interlanguage development faster can be supported by the fact that in this research, nearly three quarters of the Reactive episodes in the two classes ended in correct Uptake.

4. In the course of their respective pre-planned lessons, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 departed from their lesson plans when they felt that their decision would serve the common good and that they should, in that case, "teach to the moment" (Bailey, 1996). This, with Teacher 2 in particular, occasionally resulted in instruction related to three focus on formS options: explicit instruction, production practice, and the provision of negative feedback. In her planned focus on forms activities, Teacher 2 included the provision of combined feedback techniques – clarification requests, elicitation, and metalinguistic information in order to ensure effective treatment. Evidence suggested that this combined category resulted in noticing and correct

uptake but did not push learners to self-repair. Therefore, the treatment was effective because learners' attention was explicitly drawn to form.

5. Based on the analysis of the linguistic focus for each teacher, the present study corroborated the earlier findings of Ellis et al. (2001) and Williams (1999) that the pre-emptive FFEs, both teacher- and student-initiated, related to lexical and grammatical forms.

6. Both teachers' instructional decisions were informed by their different teaching experiences and their different technical knowledge that was constantly transformed into personal practical knowledge. Technical knowledge relates to theories of language and language learning and practical knowledge is knowing what to apply, when and where. This is where most of the differences between the two teachers become obvious. Teacher 1 did not have any formal ESL training. She was a primary teacher who had initially been familiar with only one approach to literacy – genre approach. She abandoned this kind of approach as she was willing to try out new ideas and examine her own practice when she started teaching English overseas and later on, as an ESOL teacher in New Zealand. Teacher 1 felt that she was not “well-equipped” with the knowledge of SLA theories and relied on her “gut” feeling most of the time at the very beginning of her ESOL teaching career. At the time when this research was conducted, Teacher 1 felt more confident about making the right instructional decisions mainly due to her regular consultations with the colleagues and the Head of her ESOL Department. Her pedagogical practice is strongly informed by the belief that language should be contextualised. This belief is illustrated by her practice of encouraging whole class interaction in exploring the language of similes, grammar and vocabulary.

The comments and classroom practice of Teacher 2 reflect an effort to turn technical knowledge into a personal pedagogical system based on practical knowledge. She showed a tendency in her practice to address individual concern by providing a focus for the whole class. Similar to Borg (1998a), Teacher 2 was quite critical of the uncertain terrain of form-focused instruction and agreed with Teacher 1 that SLA classroom research had to be made more meaningful for classroom practitioners. That, in her opinion, would contribute to better ESOL teacher training and improve the teachers' level of confidence, which beginning ESOL teachers often lack. She felt quite strongly about combining both focus on form and focus on formS in her approach to teaching grammar. Teacher 2 was quite enthusiastic about this study; she found it had greatly contributed to her on-going professional development and encouraged her to experiment with different ways of addressing form in the classroom as a means of getting students to "notice the gap" between their interlanguage and the target language.

### 6.3 Limitations

A small comparative study like this one inevitably has many limitations. First but not least, is the criticism directed at interpretative research employing qualitative methods in that they are often subjective, lacking in evidence supported by measurable data that will produce trustworthy, dependable results. To address this issue, the credibility of interpretations was strengthened by obtaining the teachers' feedback and involvement.

Also, the method in which the study is conducted positions the research as one about teaching. Therefore, it was not possible to examine learner perspectives. It would have been interesting to investigate certain form-focused practices in relation to learning.

#### 6.4 Theoretical Implications

SLA theorists (e.g. Ellis, 2001; Huljstin, 1995; Loewen, 2002) have called for an integration of message-focused and form-focused instruction in the L2 classroom. Additionally, Borg (1998), Ellis (1997), and Richards (1996) have called for studies of teacher cognition in L2 grammar teaching as well as for teachers to undertake their own research in the context of their own classroom. The present study, conducted in the context of the researcher's own workplace, found the integration of message-focused and form-focused instruction in the secondary ESOL classroom, albeit to differing degrees. At the same time, the study found that these differences were partly due to the differing approaches to form-focused instruction employed by the two teachers, and their different ESOL teaching backgrounds. Since the recordings of the lessons were conducted without the presence of the observer (researcher), it may be assumed that the observations generally reflect the teachers' and students' natural behaviour and interactional patterns in the classroom, particularly in relation to incidental focus on form.

The current study goes further by adding to our understanding how incidental focus on form occurs. One finding, that both reactive and pre-emptive focus on form occurred in the lessons, underscores the need to incorporate both types of focus on

form into theoretical and descriptive models. As mentioned earlier, reactive focus on form has received considerable attention while pre-emptive focus on form has been largely neglected. However, recently, research has begun to examine the occurrence and role of pre-emptive focus on form (Ellis et al., 2001; Williams, 1999). Ellis et al., clearly posit a role for pre-emptive focus on form, noting that it constituted 50% of the focus on form occurring in their observations. The current study supports these findings, with student-initiating and teacher-initiating focus on form constituting an average of 69% of the focus on form. Thus, pre-emptive focus on form warrants continued investigation alongside reactive focus on form.

One of the obvious implications of this study concerns the role of output. Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis argues that pushed output forces learners to process syntactically and that this processing contributes towards greater linguistic accuracy. The results of this study would tend to support the Output Hypothesis. The results indicated that the correct uptake was influenced by the nature of the response type. Elicitation of responses in Teacher 2's class was significantly better for getting students to produce correct uptake than was the provision of the linguistic information by the teachers. This corresponds with Lyster's (1998) notion of negotiation of form in which students are prompted to produce the linguistic items themselves rather than have them provided by the teacher.

Finally, another finding of this study, which relates to the way how general characteristics of the classes (cultural background and learning styles, personality factors, etc.) may influence the way in which teachers approach form-focused instruction, supports the findings of the earlier study by Cotterall (1995). To speak of

cultures of learning is to generalise. However, in the class taken by Teacher 2, it was clear that the Chinese culture of learning would seem to run contrary to autonomous learning, with Chinese students relying heavily on their teachers as the providers of knowledge. Learner expectations of teacher authority can be problematic for teachers who desire their learners to assume responsibility for their learning (Cotterall, 1995; Loewen, 2003) and who have their own set of principles that inform their instructional choices. This study complements SLA research by helping to construct a broader understanding of the factors that affect teachers' approaches and decisions in form-focused instruction.

## 6.5 Pedagogical Implications

While the previous section has dealt with more theoretical implications, this section addresses pedagogical implications of the study.

This comparative study is grounded in practice and offers a description of what two teachers actually do in ESOL classrooms in regards to form-focused instruction. The study also contributes towards an understanding of what informs such practice. Case studies and comparative studies of this type can complement SLA research by helping to construct a broader understanding of form-focused instruction (Borg, 1998a).

The results suggest that focus on form, both incidental and pre-planned, as well as well-premeditated and carefully applied focus on formS are tools that help students improve their linguistic accuracy. Incidental focus on form may not result in students' learning every targeted linguistic item or structure, but there are several ways

suggested by the data in which the effectiveness of incidental focus on form can be maximised. The teachers should strive to have students produce correct uptake as much as possible because without it, the time and energy put into negotiation may not pay off.

The data further suggest ways in which teachers may encourage students to produce successful uptake. The type of response move was an important factor. The analysis of the results showed that elicitation responses were most likely to produce successful uptake. Teachers may want to consider incorporating more elicitation moves into their focus on form. Lyster (1998a) also argues that response strategies that elicit linguistic items from students are preferable to response moves that provide students with the linguistic item. Teachers may accomplish these moves through clarification requests, prompts, or repetitions. Although it may be beneficial to have elicitation moves in incidental focus on form, it should be noted that they were relatively infrequent in the data. Other studies have made similar observations (e.g. Loewen, 2003; Ellis et al., 2001; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b). Here, the implication may be that while elicitation may be desirable from a theoretical perspective, it may not be practical pedagogically. This study has found that Teacher 1 preferred providing the linguistic information because it was less disruptive of the flow of communication and the pace of the lesson.

Another implication is that comparative and case study reports of this nature can offer insights for teacher education programmes. The accounts of teachers' practices and their reasoning in action, in a variety of instructional situations, can best illustrate how teachers come to a conclusion as to what to do about a particular topic or

linguistic item with a particular group of students in a particular time and place (Johnson, 1996).

A final implication, related to the previous ones, takes us to the concerns expressed by the two teachers in this study. Both teachers clearly stated that they had felt rather insecure and often ill-equipped with knowledge of SLA theories at the beginning of their respective careers. It seems that teacher education programmes need to empower prospective L2 teachers with the knowledge of different focus on form options and give them fresh insights into ways of incorporating such a focus into practice as a means of getting learners to ‘notice the gap’ between their own language and the target language.

## 6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis points to some directions for further studies that can examine the process factors that influence FFI and consequently, improve our understanding of how, in the context of communicative teaching, teachers and students can attend to linguistic form. Possible research questions include:

- To what extent does teacher training/educational background impact on the quantity and quality of the focus on form that occurs in their classrooms?
- What effect does teacher training/education have on teachers’ preparedness and ability to provide focus on form?
- To what extent does the composition of the class affect focus on form?

- To what extent do learners differ in their preparedness to initiate and respond to a focus on form and what can explain the differences?
- What effect does the nature of the communicative activity/kind of task have on opportunities to engage in focus on form?
- What environmental factors influence students' successful uptake of a focus on form?
- What is the relationship between various discourse patterns in the classroom and uptake of corrective feedback?
- What factors can account for teachers' willingness or unwillingness to provide corrective feedback?
- Do learners benefit more from pre-emptive or reactive focus on form?

These questions are of relevance to language pedagogy. On the other hand, it is not easy to design a confirmatory study that would address all these issues. Probably the only solution is to carry out a 'global' comparison of the classrooms where a focus on form takes place regularly and the classrooms where it is relatively rare. However, it is questionable how effective this method could be since it would be too complex and difficult to keep track of such global comparisons.

## POSTSCRIPT

There is a long tradition in SLA research of listening to and analysing the classroom learners. In contrast, we have not often heard what teachers have to say and how they go about grammar teaching and form-focused instruction in general. However, the teacher is the major factor in classroom life (Ellis, 1997). Researching what language teachers do and participating with them in their work offers numerous ways of bringing their insights into language pedagogy and also enriching the domain of SLA because 'SLA and language pedagogy are interdependent pursuits' ( Van Lier, 1994b:341 as cited in Ellis, 1997).

## LIST OF REFERENCES :

- Allen, J. F., Hendler, J., & Tate, A. (Eds.) (1990). *Readings in Planning*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers: San Mateo, CA.
- Allen, P., Swain, M., Harley, B. & Cummins, J. (1990). Aspects of classroom treatment: toward a more comprehensive view of second language education. In B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins & M. Swain (Eds.), *The development of second language proficiency* (pp. 57-81). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, L. Q. (2000). Form-meaning connections and the French causative: An experiment in processing instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 22 (1), 69-84.
- Allwright, R. L. (1975). Problems in the study of the language teacher's treatment of error. In M. K. Burt & H. D. Dulay (Eds.), *On TESOL '75: New directions in second language learning, teaching, and bilingual education*, 96-109.
- Anderson, J. (1993), *Rules of the Mind*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Anderson, L., & Burns, R. (1990). The role of conceptual frameworks in understanding and using classroom research. *South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 18, 5-18.
- Baddeley, A. (1976). *The psychology of memory*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bailey, F. (1996). The role of collaborative dialogue in teacher education. In D. Freeman & J. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher Learning in Language Teacher* (pp. 260-280). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Beach, R. (1993). *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Borg, S. (1998). Teachers' pedagogical systems and grammar teaching: A qualitative study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 9-38.
- Borg, S. (1999). Studying Teacher Cognition in Second Language Grammar Teaching. *System*, 27, 19-31.
- Borg, S. (1999a). Studying teacher cognition in second language grammar teaching. *System*, 27, 19–31.
- Borg, S. (1999b). Teachers' theories in grammar teaching. *ELT Journal* 53, 157–16.
- Breen, M. P. (1991). Understanding the language teacher. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood-Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research* (pp. 213-233). Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters.
- Brumfit, C. (1996). Teacher professionalism and research. In G. Cook. & B.Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principles and Practice in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 75-129). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Burns, A. (1992). Teacher beliefs and their influence on classroom practice. *Prospect*, 7(3), 56–65.
- Burns, R. (1996). A study of combination class achievement. *Focus on Learning*, 1(2), 11-25.
- Bialystok, E. (1988). Levels of bilingualism and levels of linguistic awareness. *Developmental Psychology*, 24, 560-567.

- Calderhead, J. (1988). The development of knowledge structures in learning to teach. In J. Calderhead (Ed.), *Teachers' Professional Learning* (pp 51-64). Lewes: Palmer Press.
- Carroll, S., Swain, M., & Roberge, Y. (1992). The role of feedback in adult second language acquisition: Error correction and morphological generalizations. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 13, 173-198
- Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback. An empirical study of the learning of linguistic generalization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 357-386.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. 2nd ed. New York: Newbury House.
- Chaudron, C. (1977). A descriptive model of discourse in the corrective treatment of learners' errors. *Language Learning*, 27, 29-46.
- Clandinnin, D. J. & Connely, F.M. (1987). Teachers' personal knowledge: What counts as personal in studies of the personal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 19, 487-500.
- Clark, C. & Peterson, P. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd edition) (pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. L. (1990). Research on teaching and teacher research: The issues that divide. *Educational Researcher*, 19/2: 2-11.
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of AppliedLinguistics*, 5(4), 161-169.

- Cortazzi, M, & Jin, L. (1996). Cultures of learning: language classrooms in China. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom* (pp. 169-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cotterall, S. (1995). Readiness of autonomy: investigating learner beliefs. *System*, 23(2), 195-205
- Day, R. & Shapson, S. (1991). Integrating formal approaches to language teaching in French immersion: An experimental study. *Language Learning*, 41, 25-58.
- De Graaff, R. (1997). The eXperanto experiment: Effects of explicit instruction on second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 249-268.
- DeKeyser, R. (1994). How implicit can adult second language learning be? *AILA Review*, 11, 83-96.
- DeKeyser, R., & Sokalski, K. (1996). The differential role of comprehension and production practice. *Language Learning*, 46 (4), 613-642.
- Diller, K. C. (1978). *The Language Teaching Controversy*. New York: Newbury House.
- Doughty, C. (1991). Second language instruction does make a difference. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 431-469.
- Doughty, C., & Varela, E. (1998). Communicative focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 114-138). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Doughty, C. and Williams, J. (Eds.) (1998a). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Doughty, C. and Williams, J. (1998b). Issues and terminology. In C. Doughty and J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp.1-11). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998c). Pedagogical choices in focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 197-261). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eckman, F.R., Bell, L., & Nelson, D. (1988). On the generalisation of relative clause instruction in the acquisition of English as a Second Language. *Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 1-20.
- Ellis, R. (1984). The role of instruction in second language acquisition. In D. Singleton & D. Little (Eds.), *Language Learning in Formal and Informal Contexts*, (pp. 19–37). Dublin: IRAAL
- Ellis, R. (1989). Are classroom and naturalistic acquisition the same? A study of the classroom acquisition of German word order rules. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11, 305-328. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1994b). Uptake as language awareness. *Language Awareness*, 4, 147-160.
- Ellis, R. (1994). A theory of instructed second language acquisition. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of language* (pp. 79-115). London: Academic Press.
- Ellis, R. (1997a). SLA and language pedagogy: An educational perspective. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 19: 69-92.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *SLA research and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Ellis, R. et al. (1999). Focusing on Form in the Classroom. Occasional Papers, 13: Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, University of Auckland.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 4, 193-220.
- Ellis, R. et al. (2001). Pre-emptive focus on form in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*. 35, 3: 407-432
- Ellis, R. (2001). Investigating form-focused instruction. *Language Learning* 51, Supplement 1: 1-46.
- Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Learner uptake in communicative ESL lessons. *Language Learning*, 51, 281-318.
- Farrar, M. J. (1992). Negative evidence and grammatical morpheme acquisition. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(1), 90-98.
- Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. R. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ferris, D. R. (2004). The “Grammar Correction” debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime...?). *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13: 49-62.
- Fotos, S. (1993). Consciousness raising and noticing through focus on form: Grammar task performance vs. formal instruction. *Applied Linguistics* 14(4), 385-407.

- Fotos, S., & Ellis, R. (1991). Communicating about grammar: A task-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly* 25(4), 605-628.
- Freeman, D. (1996). *Teacher learning in language leaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gass, S. (1982). From theory to practice. In M. Hines & W. Rutherford (Eds.), *On TESOL '81* (pp.120-139). Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Gass, S. M. (1991). Grammar instruction, selective attention, and learning processes. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research* (pp. 134–141). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Harley, B., P. Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain (Eds.) (1990): *The development of second language proficiency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatch, E. (1978). Discourse analysis and second language acquisition. In E. Hatch (Ed.), *Second language acquisition: A book of readings* (pp. 401-435). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Hulstijn, J. (1995). Not all grammatical rules are equal: Giving grammar instruction its proper place in foreign language teaching. In R. Schmidt (Ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (pp. 359-386). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (1997). Mnemonic methods in foreign language vocabulary learning: Theoretical considerations and pedagogical implications. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 203-224). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Johnson, K. (1996). *Language teaching and skill learning*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Johnson, K. (1996). The role of theory in L2 teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30: 765-771
- Konopak, B. C., & Williams, N. L. (1994). Elementary teachers' beliefs and decisions about vocabulary learning and instruction. *Multidimensional aspects of literacy research, theory, and practice*. National Reading Council, 43rd Yearbook, 485-493
- 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: issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
- Labov, E. (1972). *Language in the Inner City*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Larsen Freeman, D., & Long, M. H. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. New York: Longman.
- Lazaraton, A. (1995). Qualitative research in applied linguistics: a progress report. *TESOL Quarterly* 29 (3), 455-472.
- Lenneberg, E. (1967). *Biological Foundations of Language*. New York: Wiley.
- Lightbown, P. M. (1983). Exploring relationships between developmental and instructional sequences in L2 acquisition. In H.W. Seliger & M.H. Long

(Eds.), *Classroom Oriented Research in Second Languages* (pp.217-43).  
Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Lightbown, P.M., & Spada, N. (1990). Focus-on-form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching: Effects on second language learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, 429-448.

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

Lightbown, P. (2000). Classroom SLA research and second language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 21(4): 431-462.

Loewen, S. (2003). Variation in the frequency and characteristics of incidental focus on form. *Language Teaching Research*, 7(3), 315-345.

Long, M.H. (1977). Group work in the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language - problems and potential. *English Language Teaching Journal* 31/4.

Long, M.H. (1988). Instructed interlanguage development. In L.Beebe (Ed.), *Issues in second language acquisition: Multiple perspectives* (pp.115-141). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Long, M.H. (1991). Focus on form: a design feature in second language teaching methodology. In K. De Bot, R. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign Language Research in a Cross-Cultural Perspective* ( pp. 39-52). Amsterdam: John Benjamin.

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie and T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp.413-468). New York: Academic Press.

- Long, M. H. & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 15-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Long, M. H., Inakagi, S., & Ortega, L. (1998). The role of implicit negative feedback in SLA: Models and recasts in Japanese and Spanish. *Modern Language Journal*, 82(3).
- Lyster, R. and Ranta, L., (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66.
- Lyster, R. (1998a). Negotiation of form, recasts, and explicit correction in relation to error types and learner repair in immersion classrooms. *Language Learning*, 48, 183-218.
- Lyster, R. (1998b). Recasts, repetition, and ambiguity in L2 classroom discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20, 51-81.
- Mackey, A., & Philp, J. (1998). Conversational interaction and second language development: Are responses red herrings? *Modern Language Journal*, 82(3).
- McCarthy, M. J. (2001). *Issues in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell, R. (1994). Foreign language teachers and the teaching of grammar. In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn and E. Williams (Eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher* (pp 215-223). London: Prentice Hall.
- Nelson, K.E. (1991). On differentiated language-learning models and differentiated interventions. In N. A. Krasnegor, D. M. Rumbaugh, R. L. Shciefelbusch, & M. Studdert-Kennedy (Eds.), *Biological and behavioral determinants of language development* (pp. 399-428). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Oliver, R. (2000). Age difference in negotiation and feedback in classroom and pairwork. *Language Learning*, 50, 119-151.
- Oxford, R. & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal* 78, 12-28
- Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62 (3), 307-332.
- Pavesi, M. (1986). Markedness, discursal modes, and relative clause formation in a formal and an informal context. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 8(1), 38-55.
- Pica, T. (1983). The article in American English: What the textbooks don't tell us. In N. Wolfson and E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition* (pp. 222-233). Rowley, MA: Newbury House
- Pica, T. (1988). Interlanguage adjustments as an outcome of NS-NNS negotiated interaction. *Language Learning*, 38, 45-73.
- Pienemann, M. (1984). Psychological constraints on the teachability of languages. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 6(2), 186-214.
- Pienemann M. (1985). Learnability and syllabus construction. In K. Hyltenstam & M. Pienemann (Eds.), *Modelling and assessing second language acquisition* (pp. 23-75). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters,
- Pienemann, M. (1989). Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and hypothesis. *Applied Linguistics*, 10(1), 52-79

- Richards, J. (1996). Teachers' maxims in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(2), 281-296.
- Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, P. (1997a). Individual differences and the fundamental similarity of implicit and explicit adult second language learning. *Language Learning*, 47, 45-99.
- Rosa, E., & O'Neill, M. (1999). Explicitness, intake, and the issue of awareness: Another piece to the puzzle. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 511-556.
- Saxton, M. (1997). The contrast theory of negative input. *Journal of Child Language*, 24, 139-61.
- Scherer, G., & Wertheimer, M. (1964). *A Psycholinguistic Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11(2), 17-46.
- Schmidt, A. (1991). Language attrition in Boumaa Fijian and Dyirbal. In H. W. Seliger & R. M. Vago (Eds.), *First Language attrition* (pp. 113-124). Boston, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmidt, R. (1995a). 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 Hawai'i Press

Schmidt, R. (1994). Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics. In J. Hulstijn & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Consciousness in second language learning* (pp. 11-26): AILA Review, Vol. 11

Schwartz, B. (1993). On explicit and negative data effecting and affecting competence and linguistic behavior. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15(2), 147-163.

Seliger, H. W. (1975). Inductive and deductive method in language teaching: a re-examination. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*. 13(1), 1-18.

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

Smith, M. (1996). The medium or the message: A study of speaking children using communication boards. In S. von Tetzchner & M. Jensen (Eds.), *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: European perspectives* (pp. 119-136). London: Whurr.

Smith, P. (1970). *A comparison of the cognitive and audiolingual approaches to foreign language instruction. The Pennsylvania Foreign Language Project*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.

Stern, H. (1990). Analysis and experience as variables in second language pedagogy. In B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummings, & M. Swain (Eds.), *The Development of Second Language Proficiency* (pp. 93-109). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S.M. Gass & C.G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Tanaka, Y. (1996). The comprehension and acquisition of relative clauses by Japanese High School students through formal instruction. Ph.D. dissertation. Tokyo: Temple University.
- Tarone, E. (1994). Research approaches in studying second language acquisition or “If the shoe fits...”. In Tarone et al. (Eds.), *Issues in second language acquisition research methodology* (pp 323-336). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Tarone, E., Gass, S. & Cohen, A. (1994). *Research Methodology in Second Language Acquisition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- 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: the garden path technique. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11(4), 385-395.
- Turner, D. (1979). The effect of instruction on second language learning and second language acquisition. In R. Andersen (Ed.), *The acquisition and use of Spanish as first and second languages* (pp. 127-138). Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Ulichny, P. (1996). What's in a methodology? In D. Freeman and J.C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 178-196). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ur, P. (1988). *Grammar practice activities: A practical guide for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- van Lier, L. (1988). *The classroom and the language learner: ethnography and second-language classroom research*. London: Longman
- van Lier, L. (1991). Inside the classroom: learning procedures and teaching procedures. *Applied Language Learning* 2(1), 29-70.
- van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language classroom: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity*. Harlow: Longman.
- van Lier, L.(1998). Constraints and resources in classroom talk: Issues of equality and symmetry. In Byrnes, H. (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages: Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 157-182). New York: The Modern Language Association.
- Van Patten, B. (1990). Attending to form and content in the input: An experiment in consciousness. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, 287-301.
- Van Patten, B. & Cadierno, T. (1993). Explicit instruction and input processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 15, 225-243.
- Van Patten, B. & Sanz, C. (1995). From input to output: Processing instruction in communicative tasks. In F. Eckman, D. Highland, P.W. Lee, J. Mileham, & R.R. Weber (Eds.), *Second language acquisition theory and pedagogy* (pp. 169-186). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Van Patten, B., & Oikennon, S. (1996). Explanation versus structured input in processing instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 495-510.

- White, L., Spada, N., Lightbown, P., & Ranta, L. (1991). Input enhancement and L2 question formation. *Applied Linguistics*, 12, 416-432.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1989). Knowledge of language and ability for use. *Applied Linguistics*, 10, 128-137.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1998). Communication and community: The pragmatics of ESP, *English for Specific Purposes*, 17, 3-14.
- Williams, R.S. (1994). A statistical analysis of English double object alternation. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 37-58.
- Williams, J. (1999). Memory, attention, and inductive learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 1-48.
- Williams, J. (1999). Learner-generated attention to form. *Language Learning*, 49 (4), 583-625.
- 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.
- Wyatt, M., & Pickle, M. (1993). Good teaching is good teaching: Basic beliefs of college reading instructors. *Journal of Reading*. 36 (5), 340-348.

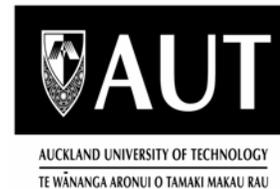
## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Ethics forms

APPENDIX B: Sample transcripts of recorded lessons: Teacher 1/ Lesson 1;  
Teacher 2 / Lesson 2

## APPENDIX A: Ethics forms

### Participant Information Sheet



**Project Title: Do teachers with different ESOL backgrounds approach form-focused**

**instruction in different ways?**

**To: Participating teachers**

---

My name is Ana Gerzic and I am a student at the Auckland University of Technology enrolled for an MA degree in Applied Languages in the School of Languages. I am conducting this research for the purpose of my thesis. You are invited to participate in my research. To address what has been called the 'observer's paradox' I cannot be too explicit on my particular focus, other than to say it involves investigating teacher cognition and their practices in relation to one aspect of classroom pedagogy. It is not my intention to evaluate your teaching. Rather, I have chosen this field of research as I believe an "insider" perspective can complement more theoretically motivated research in SLA by offering both a descriptive and interpretative account of teaching practice. Such accounts can provide the basis for teacher development.

Your assistance would involve a number of procedures. First I would like to audio-record three of your lessons over the period of three weeks. These recordings can be arranged at your convenience. I will transcribe audio-data. This will provide a description of your classroom practice. Second, following the final recording, I would like to conduct a very brief interview about what made you come up with particular choices when approaching certain tasks. I hope to begin the collection of the data in early July 2004. Your involvement would total about three hours. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw information at any time prior to the completion of data collection, or withdraw from the research at any time, without giving reasons or being disadvantaged.

You are also invited to view and sign off transcripts of audio-recordings of your lessons at your convenience. These transcripts will be kept in Dr John Bitchener's office at AUT. The time for you to view and sign off the transcripts can be arranged with Dr Bitchener and me.

All data and information will be treated as confidential and your name and institution will not be used in any reporting of the research. There may be a future opportunity to publish some aspects of the research.

As I am also a classroom teacher in the ESOL field and share much of your knowledge and understanding, I hope to conduct this study as open, collegial research for the benefit of both researcher and participant in terms of professional development and reflective practice. I hope any insights will prove worthwhile and useful for those purposes.

Thank you very much for your time and for making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please contact me at:

Rutherford College  
ESOL Department  
Phone: 834 9805  
e-mail: [gerzica@rutherford.school.nz](mailto:gerzica@rutherford.school.nz)

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), 917 9999 ext 8044.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 December 2002 AUTEK**  
**Reference number 03/03**

# Consent to Participation in Research



Title of Project: **Do teachers with different ESOL backgrounds approach form-focused instruction in different ways?**

Project Supervisor: **Dr John Bitchener, Senior Lecturer**

Researcher: **Ana Gerzic**

---

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that my lessons will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way. If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed
- I agree to take part in this research.

Participant signature: .....

Participant name: ...Jane James.....

Date: ...12th July 2004.....

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Dr John Bitchener, Senior Lecturer, School of Languages, AUT, telephone 917 9999 ext. 7830, e-mail : [john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz](mailto:john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz)

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 December 2002 AUTEK Reference number 03/03**

## Consent to Participation in Research

Title of Project: **Do teachers with different ESOL backgrounds approach form-focused instruction in different ways?**

Project Supervisor: **Dr John Bitchener, Senior Lecturer**

Researcher: **Ana Gerzic**

---

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that my lessons will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way. If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed
- I agree to take part in this research.

Participant signature: .....

Participant name: ... Janice Jones.....

Date: ...12th July 2004.....

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Dr John Bitchener, Senior Lecturer,  
School of Languages, AUT, telephone 917 9999 ext. 7830, e-mail :  
[john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz](mailto:john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz)

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee  
on 18 December 2002 AUTEK Reference number 03/03**

## APPENDIX B:

### Sample transcripts of recorded lessons: Teacher 1/ Lesson 1;

### Teacher 2 / Lesson 2

#### Teacher 1

#### Lesson 1

[**Please note:** Only the Teacher is in front of the microphone – the Students are further away and it is very difficult to pick up what they are saying].

**Teacher:** The story is written in all three tenses. So you must change tense within the story. So you'll have *then* and *than*. Right, go ... starting from now. Let's go through tenses. Name the three types of tense please.

**Student:** *Present.*

**Teacher:** Present is one. What is another type of tense?

**Student:** *Future and Past.*

**Teacher:** Future and Past, okay. Past tense – can you read what we've got on the board please for past tense?

**Student:** *(several inaudible words) she swam yesterday*".

**Teacher:** Thank you. And what is the verb in the sentence two here, "*She swam yesterday*". What are the verbs? )

**Student:** *(inaudible)*

**Teacher:** *Went* and *swam*, yes. *Went* is in 1, and *Swam* is in 2. And if sentence 2 was in present tense, the word *swam* would be what?

**Student:** *Swim.*

**Teacher:** *Swim.* And if it was in future, it would be ...?

**Student:** *Will swim.*

**Teacher:** *Will swim* – not one word but two. *Will swim, I will go swimming* or something like that. Present tense. Can you read please *(inaudible)*?

**Student:** "*I have a (inaudible) (several inaudible words)*"

**Teacher:** Okay and what's the verb in sentence 2 here?

**Student:** *Riding.*

**Teacher:** *Riding* right; *He is riding.* So if it was past tense, what would *riding* be?

**Student:** *(several inaudible words)*

**Teacher:** How do you spell it?

**Student:** *(inaudible).*

**Teacher:** *Rode, r-o-d-e, rode.*

**Student:** R-o-a-d.

**Teacher:** Oh, that's a different type of rode.

**Student:** R-o-d-e.

**Teacher:** Rode, so if this word here was over there it would be *rode*. Let's go to number 3 – future tense. Shogo? *(inaudible)*

**Student:** *(several inaudible words).*

**Teacher:** Yep, *Jin-ho?* that's him. "*I will pick up Jin-ho*". What's the verb in this word? Banton.

**Banton:** *Will go.*

**Teacher:** *Will go*, right. Because it's talking about what *will* happen in the future and number 2, the verb?

**Student:** *Will pick up.*

**Teacher:** *Will pick up.* So if *will pick up* was in past tense, what would it be – Alex?

**Alex:** *I picked up.*

**Teacher:** So what is the suffix here? You at the end of the word, we change ...?

**Student:** *ed.*

## Teacher 2

### Lesson 2

**Teacher:** Yesterday we didn't quite finish what I wanted to do with the *present perfect simple* so we're going to just carry on a little bit today and finish that off and just to recap and get your minds thinking back to where we were yesterday, open your books at the list of words that you wrote down: *know, right, want, need, hate, own* and *believe*.

Danny, how long have you owned a mobile phone?

[The teacher is speaking away from microphone and student is almost inaudible]

**Danny:** I have owned a mobile phone for three weeks.

**Teacher:** Good, good recovery. So *sense* comes (*inaudible*). Mobile phone (*inaudible*) always (*inaudible*) first. If wanted to know: How long have you owned your mobile phone? Roughly, guess – this many (*inaudible*)?

**Danny:** (*several inaudible words*)

**Teacher:** (*inaudible*). “I have owned my mobile phone for three weeks” – good.

Alex, how long have you liked soccer?

**Alex:** (*several inaudible words – also well away from microphone*) ... “... probably for ten years”.

**Teacher:** “I have liked soccer for ten years” – good.

Ayami, how long have you had (*inaudible*) incense?

**Ayami:** (*several inaudible words*)

**Teacher:** For three years? How interesting, I must (*inaudible*).

Gi-wong, how long have you been scribbling in your book?

**Gi-wong:** For two minutes.

**Teacher:** Okay, how long have you needed oxygen?

**Student:** I have needed oxygen since I was born.

**Teacher:** Good, *since you were born* – that's fine. So you've got the idea. “*for*” goes with the time-span; “*since*” goes with the date.

Now, you're going to listen to Barry who is an Australian and he's going to talk about an important event in Australia. And what I want you to do, as you're listening you will write down the answers to the questions that you have in front of you. So I'll give you a minute now to look at the questions, read through them to yourself. *[Short break here]* Have you read all the questions? Listen carefully to a conversation and write down the answers in your book:

**Teacher:** Are there any special events or festivals which everyone in Australia celebrates?

**Barry:** There's Christmas and Easter like they have in Britain.

**Teacher:** I was thinking more of national holidays like Independence Day or events that happen in your town or region; you know local festivals or something like that. I don't even know if you have Independence Day in Australia.

**Barry:** That's because we're not really independent are we? At least not yet. I suppose there's Australia Day which we celebrate on 26 January.

**Teacher:** What does that celebrate?

**Barry:** It's the day Captain Cook arrived in Botany Bay in Sydney in 1788 bringing Europeans to Australia. But the trouble is, we don't really celebrate it very much except on special anniversaries like in 1988 which was 200 years since he arrived. There's one day which people really enjoy and that's the Melbourne Cup in November.

**Teacher:** And what does the Melbourne Cup celebrate?

**Barry:** It's a horse race.

**Teacher:** I'm just pausing it there to give you a little bit of a chance to think about the questions you've got so far, to give you some time. It's a bit faster than you're expecting isn't it? But that's normal speech, and that's how people speak and you need to be able to learn how to understand what people are saying and pick out information from what they're saying. Okay, are you ready again?

**Teacher:** A horse race?

**Barry:** Yeah, the whole country stops during the horse race and everyone wants to know which horse wins ... we *love* horse racing.

**Teacher:** And you say it takes place in November?

**Barry:** Yeah, the first Tuesday in November at 2.40 in the afternoon every year.

**Teacher:** When did it first take place?

**Barry:** I think it started in 1874.

**Teacher:** Right, so it's over 120 years old. And what exactly happens?

**Barry:** Well people from all over Australia come to Melbourne on special planes and trains for the day and dress up and go to Flemington Racecourse, and they take picnics in their cars (which they eat before the race) and everyone bets on the horse they think is going to win, and then the race starts.

**Teacher:** At exactly 2.40?

**Barry:** That's right. At 2.43 it's all over.

**Teacher:** So it only takes three minutes?

**Barry:** Yeah, and if you're enjoying yourself too much you miss it. It's great fun. It's a great social occasion, a kind of social ritual at the start of summer.

**Teacher:** Is it a public holiday?

**Barry:** It is in the city of Melbourne and the whole of the state of Victoria; everybody takes a day off ... but not in the rest of Australia.

**Teacher:** So even people who can't go to Melbourne are interested in the race?

**Barry:** Oh yeah. The interesting thing is that the whole of Australia wants to know who wins the Melbourne Cup. Everybody listens to the race on the radio or watches it on television. Traffic stops and in Canberra the politicians stop work in Parliament.

**Teacher:** So everyone's involved – even people outside Melbourne?

**Barry:** That's right, it's a kind of state occasion for the whole of Australia.

**Teacher:** Okay, so did you get an answer for everything?

**Student:** No.

**Teacher:** No? Hands up who got some answers ... like there were five questions there – hands up who got four out of theirs.

*[Another short break]*

Right, we've got two days here: What's one of them called? Sam?

**Sam:** Australia ...

**Teacher:** Australia what?

**Student:** Australia Day.

**Teacher:** Notice how, because it's a special day, it gets a capital letter for the word "Day". It's not just an ordinary day with a small "d". When does it take place? Alex.

**Alex:** 26 January.

**Teacher:** 26<sup>th</sup> of January – good. Where does it take place? Do we know any more information about it?

**Students:** (*inaudible*) Sydney. [Having a conversation amongst themselves].

**Student:** The whole country.

**Teacher:** Yep, the whole country ... good. Did anyone get any more information about Australia Day? No. Then tell me, what was the other day they talked about?

**Student:** Melbourne ...

**Teacher:** Melbourne Cup – is that right?

**Student:** (*inaudible*).

**Teacher:** The Melbourne Cup. What is that?

**Student:** Horse race.

**Teacher:** Ah, but we're talking about a special ....?

**Student:** ... day.

**Teacher:** So it's Melbourne Cup Day. So when does that take place? Carl.

**Carl:** (*inaudible*).

[Students speaking amongst themselves]

**Student:** November.

**Teacher:** Just in November?

**Student:** First Tuesday.

**Teacher:** The first Tuesday. Anything else? Where does it take place? Victor ...

**Victor:** Melbourne.

**Teacher:** That was a nice easy one, wasn't it? When did it first take place? Mitz?

**Mitz:** (*inaudible*).

**Teacher:** When? Did anyone get *when*? Danny?

**Danny:** 1874.

**Teacher:** Well done ... 1874. So what happens, what happens with this?

**Students:** Horse race .... Horse runs.

**Teacher:** Yes it's a horse race but what happens?

**Students:** [All speaking together]

**Teacher:** One person ...Ernest?

**Ernest:** People come from everywhere.

**Teacher:** And what do they do?

**Ernest:** They have picnic in the car before horse race.

**Teacher:** Okay. People come from everywhere, they have a picnic ... what else do they do?

**Student:** Bet.

**Teacher:** Bet? What is that?

**Student:** Bet horse. If you win you have the money.



