UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

AN ANALYSIS OF FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF GA WEST MUNICIPALITY

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A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (Teaching English as a Second Language – TESL) in the University of Education, Winneba

**DECEMBER, 2023**

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Irene Abaidoo, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published work which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………….

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
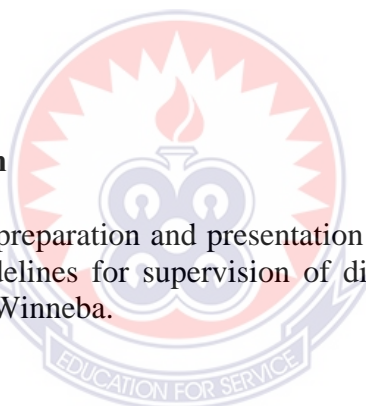
PRO. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………….

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my kids Alice Naa Kwacheo George, Mercedes Abena George, Festus Nii Dromo George for their courageous and resilient in the face of adversity

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Glory be to God almighty God for his manifold blessings and for giving me the grace to complete this work. I am most grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Charlotte Fofo Lomotey for her constant support toward the completion of this project and for being an inspiration to me.

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Finally, to all those who helped in diverse ways to the birth of this research work, I say God bless you.
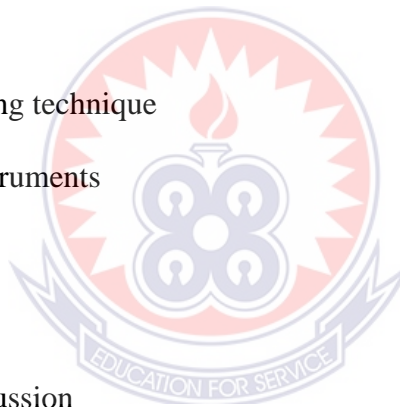
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CR	Comprehension Reading
CRT	Consciousness Raising- Task
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FFI	Form- Focused Instruction
GWM	Ga West Municipality
MA TESOL	Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
NS-NNS	Native Speaker- Nonnative Speaker
SHS	Senior High School
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEL	Task Essential Language

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at examining how Ghanaian high school English language teachers implement FFI in their teaching practice and as well as how it impacts on their students' language acquisition. A qualitative textual analysis design was adopted to analyze lesson recordings and focus group discussions from 15 teachers and 862 Form 3 students in three public senior high schools in the Ga West Municipality. The results showed that teachers utilized diverse implicit and explicit FFI techniques including recasts, repetition, elicitation, explicit correction and input-flooding. With this, it found that usage of these techniques was predominantly intuitive rather than planned applications of specific methods. The results also revealed that the FFI episodes focused on lexical/morphological, morphosyntactic, and phonological forms in addition to semantic and pragmatic forms. This suggests that teachers make real-time decisions to address errors or difficulties related to vocabulary and pronunciation; representative of broader intuitive FFI behaviour. Lastly, students reported perceiving positive effects on learning outcomes from FFI techniques, especially on linguistic accuracy. The study also revealed potential drawbacks of form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques. Students felt it discouraged risk-taking and participation, leading to peer mockery. Rapid instruction pace also made it difficult to process and recall target forms, indicating potential ineffectiveness. These results have valuable practical implications for teacher development and optimizing language policy to curriculum implementation in Ghana. The recommendations therefore emphasize teacher education on both reactive and preemptive FFI techniques to consciously embed within lessons to maximize accuracy gains without sacrificing communication.
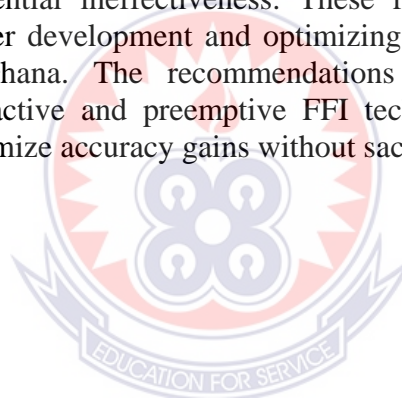
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, and organization of the study

1.1 Background to the study

Over the years, teachers of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) all over the world, especially in Ghana, have faced several challenges that relate to how to present linguistic forms to their students in the classroom. They have therefore made frantic efforts to identify the best methodologies, strategies, and interventions that would be most effective in the context they find themselves (Apau, 2022; Kumi-Yeboah & Amponsah, 2023). Like most African countries, Ghana is characterized by massive diversity in terms of language and culture (Ibrahim et al., 2020). As a result, teachers are often saddled with the daunting task of having to decipher and select the methodology or technique they deem most appropriate to meet all the needs of their students in the face of the massive diversity and capabilities. Undoubtedly, this quest has sparked a kind of enthusiasm in teachers towards the need to explore different methodologies that are available to them and invariably be innovative enough to navigate around various content to enhance students' understanding. Sadly, some ESL teachers utilize many methodologies in their classrooms that they do not usually work, probably, because they do not have much knowledge and information about them.

According to Hatch and Clark (2021), teaching methodologies refer to a set of practices and principles used by teachers to make the process of teaching and learning

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highly effective for their students. In other words, a teaching methodology is essentially the way in which a teacher chooses to explain or teach the material to students so they can learn the material. There are many different methodologies that can be utilized by a teacher, and the methods chosen often depend on the educational philosophy, preferences of the teacher, as well as interactions that emerge both within and outside delivery, which in a way add variety. Teaching methodologies are usually also based on various beliefs regarding the nature of the language used and how it is learned. It is also not uncommon for a teacher to utilize multiple methods within a single lesson or over the course of several lessons. A methodology of teaching can include the use of lecturing, group or small group discussion activities, and engaging students as teachers for their peers (Hatch & Clark, 2021).

Teaching methodology refers to the use, or employment, of some method(s), whereas teaching "a method" refers to the use of that one specific method or way. In other words, teaching methodology is the science of methods, whereas teaching method is how to do something. Hatch and Clark (2021) define teaching methods as the broader techniques used to help students achieve learning outcomes, while activities are the different ways of implementing these methods. This is the method chosen to achieve a teaching goal. This is normally defined by the teacher of a given subject so that the student can then follow it. It should be designed in such a way that students acquire the knowledge and skills for which the subject was included in the curriculum. Teaching methods help students to master the content of the course and to learn how to apply the content in particular contexts

Hatch and Clark (2021) argue that instructors should identify which teaching methods will properly support a particular learning outcome. Its effectiveness depends

on this alignment. To make the most appropriate choice, an instructor should consider learning outcomes, student needs, and the learning environment. To achieve the goal of teaching, the teacher must adopt effective teaching methods in education. The teacher has many options to choose from different teaching techniques designed specifically for teaching and learning. Writing lesson plans is a foremost thing that a teacher must do before executing any teaching strategy in the class. The teaching method should be adopted on the basis of certain criteria like the knowledge of the students, the environment and the set of learning goals decided in the academic curriculum. In addition, students respond differently to different methods of teaching.

According to Hatch and Clark (2021), students become easily bored if their teacher does not use a variety of teaching methods to make each lesson unique and interesting. Hence, in a classroom, teachers usually apply a combination of different teaching methods to better fit the needs of that particular batch of students. These methods can be customized to solve problems that are faced specifically by the students in reference. A facilitator can convey any information to students in a variety of ways. Some are simple to understand and remember, while others are more difficult. The combination of various teaching methods is something that every professional teacher should be aware of and put into practice.

The task-based approach was created by Prabhu (1987) to fill the gaps of the communicative approach (Yildiz, 2020). It tries to define what should be taught from an analysis of language as a tool for communication, not as a formal system. It is based on an approach where various tasks as the central unit of planning in learning the language are used. In this approach, the focus is on activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning, and language that is

meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. It also focuses on process rather than product, tasks in communication and meaning are essential, students learn the language through communicative and intentional interaction. Again, activities and tasks are sequenced according to their level of difficulty, and on how to get students to acquire communicative competence through which they act and communicate in a real way in the target language.

This teaching approach is based on teaching communicative activities that integrate and promote different processes related to communication. In the classroom, students must also deploy other strategies used to solve specific problems in relation to the proposed task. It focuses not on syntactic structures or functions but on activities using the language. And since learning processes necessarily include communication processes, then the approach aims to promote learning through actual use of the language being learnt. With the use of task-based approach, teachers can integrate the instruction of structural language forms with meaning-based activities as it is necessary to focus on form for student language learning. Thus, a form-focused instruction (FFI) can be adopted within this approach.

Khezrlou (2021) identifies FFI as "any pedagogical practice undertaken by second language (L2) teachers with the goal of drawing their students' attention to language form" (p. 568). Language forms in this case may refer to spelling conventions, punctuation, grammatical structures, or a range of other possibilities. Mansouri et al. (2019) make the distinction between integrated and isolated forms of FFI. In integrated FFI, students' attention is drawn to language forms during communicative activities, whereas in isolated FFI, form-focused lessons are conducted independently and place meaning in a secondary role. As Spada and Lightbown (2022) argue, if learners are beyond early childhood and have exposure to

English only in the classroom where learners share the same L1, both integrated and isolated FFI can be valuable.

Evidence suggests that FFI helps learners pay attention to forms in the input, and without the explicit focus, learners may fail to notice and take up new forms in the language (Karami & Bowles, 2020; Mansouri et al., 2019). Form in this case can be lexical (phonological and orthographic), grammatical, or pragmalinguistic (Peng & Barrot, 2023). There have been numerous attempts to distinguish FFI types, one of which is the distinction made by Long (1998) who argues that there are three types: (1) focus-on-forms, (2) focus-on-meaning, and (3) focus-on-form, depending on the way attention to form or structure is approached in the classroom.

1.2 Statement of the problem

English language teaching in Ghana has undergone many changes over the years, with varying degrees of success in improving student outcomes. Currently, most English programmes follow a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach focused on developing learners' communicative competence and ability to use the language effectively for purposeful communication (Afful, 2007). Research shows that an exclusive focus on meaning can lead to gaps in students' linguistic accuracy and knowledge of the target language system (Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Ellis, 2006). This way, students may develop fluency but continue to struggle with specific grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation features of English. Form-focused instruction (FFI) has been proposed as a method to balance communication-focused activities with attention to developing linguistic competence (Shah & Kumar, 2019). Form-focused instruction draws students' attention to language forms within meaning-based activities (Ellis, 2001). It aims to develop accuracy alongside fluency

and provides opportunities to notice and practice problematic language areas (Williams, 1998). Studies have shown that FFI leads to gains in the use of grammatical forms compared to purely meaning-focused approaches (Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

However, research also indicates that FFI does not automatically guarantee full acquisition of target forms (Ellis, 2006). Effects seem contingent on how forms are addressed. Isolated focus on forms separately from communication appears ineffective (Long, 2016; Long et al., 2001), while integrated focus on forms arising incidentally during communication shows more promise (Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2002). The frequency and meaningfulness of forms also impact learning outcomes (Ellis et al., 2002). This suggests teachers require support in learning how to effectively integrate attention to form within communicative lessons to benefit accuracy. Unfortunately, research examining how English teachers implement FFI in Ghana is severely limited. A few studies point to potential gaps in how teachers apply form-focused techniques. Teachers seem to pay little attention to grammar in observed English lessons, with minimal explanation or practice of difficult grammar areas (Afful, 2010; Algharabali et al., 2019). Pronunciation instruction is also lacking, though this is an area Ghanaian students struggle with (Asante-Nimako, 2018). More research is needed to determine how teachers are utilizing FFI, which language features they focus on, whether their techniques align with principles from current FFI literature, and how instruction could be improved through training and materials development. The current study aims to help fill this gap and provide insights into maximizing the benefits of FFI for Ghanaian junior high school students learning English.

1.3 Objectives of study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the types of Form-focused instruction applied by Form 3 English language teachers in Ga West Municipality in the classroom;

2. explore the language features that Form 3 English language teachers in the Ga West Municipality pay attention to using FFI in the classroom;

3. investigate the effects of FFI on students' language acquisition in classroom.

1.4 Research questions

1. What types of Form-focused instruction techniques are applied by the Form 3 teachers in Ga West Municipality in their ESL classrooms?

2. What language features do the Form 3 teachers in Ga West Municipality pay attention to in using FFI in the classroom?

3. What are the effects of FFI on the students' language acquisition in ESL classroom?
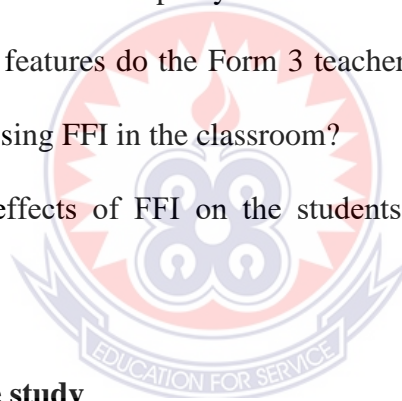
1.5 Significance of the study

This study aims to examine the types of form-focused instruction (FFI) applied by Form 3 English teachers in the Ga West Municipality, the specific language features targeted through FFI, and the effects of this instructional approach on student language acquisition. While FFI has been well-researched in some contexts, few studies have looked specifically at how FFI is utilized by Ghanaian English teachers at the basic school level. Understanding how teachers in Ga West Municipality implement FFI and which forms they focus on will provide valuable insights into current instructional practices. The findings could reveal strengths and gaps in how teachers are leveraging FFI techniques, and pinpoint areas where

additional training or support may be beneficial. For example, if teachers are found to use only isolated explicit teaching of grammar rules, results would suggest training is needed on integrating focus on form into communicative activities (Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2002). Seeing which language features are prioritized or overlooked could also inform materials development and curriculum design.

Furthermore, investigating observable effects of teachers' FFI approaches on students' acquisition of targeted forms will shed light on which techniques are most effective for this context. This could guide teacher training and practice towards FFI methods that best support students' linguistic development. Overall, this study produces context-specific knowledge on FFI techniques that support English language development for Ghanaian basic school learners. It stands to directly inform efforts to strengthen instruction and boost student outcomes in Ga West Municipality and similar settings. The research also stands to make an important contribution to the limited body of literature on FFI implementation in Ghana and beyond.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study involved three Senior High Schools comprising Amasaman Senior High Technical School, Adjen Kotoku Senior High School, and Akramaman Senior High School. The study involved both the Teachers and the students of the school and the focus of the study was to promote awareness of the FFI approach and throw more light on the techniques and the effect of the approach.

1.7 Limitations to the study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research only examines teachers in one municipality in Ghana (Ga West), so the results may not be generalizable to other geographic contexts within

the country. The focus on solely Form 3 teachers and students provides helpful insights about FFI at this specific educational level, but reduces understandings of how FFI may be applied by teachers and experienced by students at lower or higher grade levels. Additionally, the number of teachers and classrooms included in observations is relatively small, which limits the ability to make broad claims or draw definitive conclusions based on the findings. More time spent gathering data across a wider range of classrooms could provide a fuller picture.

As this is an observational study, it can reveal correlations between teachers' use of FFI and student outcomes, but cannot conclusively determine causality or prove that the FFI techniques directly caused gains in students] acquisition of target forms. The effects on student language learning are measured over a fairly short timeframe, but longitudinal data may be needed to ascertain longer-term impacts of the instructed forms. While the study investigates acquisition through student assessments, there could be wider effects of the FFI approaches on other areas like fluency or confidence that are not fully captured. Examining only one aspect of teaching methodology (FFI) in isolation means the research does not shed light on how other instructional choices and factors may interact with or contribute alongside FFI to shape students' language development. Additionally, the narrow focus on a few selected language features prevents insights into effects on other form-related areas of English language learning. Finally, the presence of an observer in the classroom has the potential to influence teacher and student behaviors in ways that limit the naturalness of interactions during lessons.

1.8 Organization of the study

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 contextualizes the current study within existing knowledge and prior research. It provides an introduction, discusses relevant theories, models, and frameworks, and critically reviews previous studies related to the research objectives and variables. The review aims to provide an integrated narrative, highlight key themes, and identify gaps for further investigation. An effective literature review synthesizes findings, weighs evidence contradictions, and provides insights into the research problem. It critically examines methodological strengths, weaknesses, biases, and assumptions. The review links to the purpose of the study, laying the groundwork for future research. It concludes with a summary, highlighting gaps and issues. Chapter 3 is the methodology of the study and discusses the design, population of the research, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, methods of data collection, data processing, and data analysis.

In Chapter 4, a comprehensive overview of the results obtained from the data analysis conducted in this study is addressed. The chapter not only presents the findings but also provides a detailed explanation and interpretation of these results. Additionally, it offers a platform for discussing the implications, significance, and limitations of the study's outcomes. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the research, analyzing data, trends, patterns, and insights. It discusses the findings' significance, relevance, and implications. Suggestions are offered for future research and practical actions to address gaps, contributing to knowledge advancement and practical application for practitioners and policymakers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The role of form-focused instruction (FFI) in second language acquisition has been extensively studied in the past few decades. Research has provided valuable insights into the potential benefits of drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms, in conjunction with meaning-focused communication. However, the effective implementation of form-focused techniques poses challenges for mainstream language teachers, given various contextual constraints. This literature review aims to provide an overview of key research findings regarding the viability of FFI for facilitating second language acquisition. It summarizes the reported benefits of incorporating some degree of focus on forms, along with the practical challenges teachers face in doing so effectively. The review also explores significant factors that shape teachers' practice of FFI, including their cognition, beliefs, efficacy and the techniques they employ. The chapter concludes by highlighting the need for further research on how teachers can best integrate implicit and explicit attention to form within authentic communication activities, given the realities of their teaching contexts. This review of literature lays the foundation for an examination of how in-service English language teachers actively employ FFI strategies within their classrooms to facilitate the development of their students' interlanguage. By reviewing relevant studies, it provides direction for an investigation into the relationships between teacher-related variables and their use of implicit and explicit form-focused techniques to complement and strengthen their meaning-focused language instruction.

2.1 Form-focused instruction (FFI)

Form-focused instruction (FFI) is considered as an umbrella term for any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form (Arslan & Doğan, 2020). The term is also used to describe both approaches to teaching forms based on artificial syllabi, as well as more communicative approaches, where attention to form arises out of activities that are primarily meaning-focused (Arslan & Doğan, 2020). In other words, FFI involves a method of instruction that is used to shift students' attention toward language forms within meaning-based lessons. Takano (2019) defines FFI from pedagogical angle where he notes involves any pedagogical effort which is used to draw learners' attention to form, either implicitly or explicitly within meaningful, communicative activities. Collins (2012) as cited in Kellem & Halvorsen (2018, P. 28) identifies FFI as "any pedagogical practice undertaken by second language (L2) teachers with the goal of drawing their students' attention to language form" (p. 2187).

Chen and Li (2022) also claim that FFI is understood as occasional moments of linguistic focus (language as an object) within more general moments focus on content (meaning as an object; language as a vehicle). On techniques, Gümüş (2021) mentions that FFI techniques draw attention to target language features that learners would otherwise not use or even notice in communicatively oriented classroom input. Unlike more traditional language instruction, FFI entails "a set of psycholinguistically motivated pedagogic options" (Cintrón-Valentín & Ellis, 2016, p. 1284). Ellis (2001, p. 12) as cited in Saito and Lyster (2012, p. 596) that are considered most effective when implemented in communicative contexts to ensure that learners will be able to transfer what they learn in the classroom to communicative interaction outside the classroom. Form-focused instruction (FFI) is one of the ways to attend to learners to

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concentrate on forms which are necessary for production of language. Form-focused instruction (FFI) thus refers to attention to the formal aspects of language. Lloyd (2020) opines that FFI has been popular in the world and plays an important role in task-based language teaching.

In their studies, Lloyd (2020) and Peng & Barrot (2023) provide the solid foundation for further studies of FFI. It is thought that FFI was developed in the context of grammar learning, but it can be extended to vocabulary as well (Gümüş, 2021). For example, when we read a text, or engage in a group discussion, we may come across unfamiliar words and look them up in a dictionary. This constitutes focus-on-form instruction because the words attended to are necessary tools for task completion. However, when learners' attention is drawn to words in non-communicative, non-authentic language tasks, for instance, matching words that were taught and are listed in column A to their definitions in column B, or filling in these words in given sentences, one word in each sentence, these activities constitute focus-on-forms instruction. This is because they entail teaching and practising discrete lexical items, which are treated as the objects of study and not as tools of language use.

According to Mart (2019) SLA researchers have debated about whether or not to pay attention to linguistic forms. Some argue that language learning is a fairly autonomous process that occurs spontaneously if instruction provides plentiful opportunities to deal with the target language. Others have claimed that effective second language instruction involves explicitly teaching the rules of the target language. Mart (2019) indicates that after many years of debate on the advantages and disadvantages of FFI and meaning-focused instruction in the late 1980s and early

1990s, the mainstream view on this issue seemed to agree that second language teaching that is primarily meaning-focused can be improved if some degree of attention is paid to forms.

Peng and Barrot (2023) claim that an approach that includes a focus on the grammatical form and a major issue in language acquisition is the role of FFI in teaching a language. There is also another debate around the degree to which teachers need to direct learners' attention to understanding grammar and keep the focus on the communication at the same time. While Azaz (2023) advocates no interruption in communication, Jahangard (2023) advocates separate attention to grammar and subsequent integration of the knowledge provided in increasingly communicative activity. Many researchers cite many uses of FFI in language teaching. For example, Chen and Li (2022) argue that FFI serves as a generic term for analytic teaching, FonF, FonFs, corrective feedback/error correction, and negotiation of form. Chen and Li (2022) further add that FFI can help second language (L2) learners notice the forms of language, which is conducive to the acquisition of linguistic forms.

Other researchers such as Spada (2011) indicate that FFI is beneficial to second language learning, helping learners notice language forms and promote linguistic form acquisition. Saito and Wu (2014) assert that Form-focused instruction (FFI) promotes learners' attentional shift from vocabulary to sound learning and facilitates access to new phonetic and phonological categories. Ellis (2001) as cited in (Hojjat & Hasim, 2022) also proposes that FFI is needed to address L2 features that (a) differ in non-obvious or unexpected ways from the L1; (b) are irregular, infrequent, or otherwise lacking in perceptual salience in the L2 input; and (c) do not carry a heavy communicative load. Hojjat and Hasim (2022) observe that the core

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objective of FFI is the content teachers' effort to provide students with activities that direct their attention to specific aspects of the target language.

2.2 Types of form-focused instruction

De La Cruz et al. (2018) opines that regarding the types of FFI, different types have been proposed: explicit, implicit, isolated, integrated, planned, incidental, proactive, reactive, intensive, extensive and Pre-emptive Focus on Form (FonF). Explicit FFI occurs when teachers provide "overt instruction and corrective feedback, including the use of meta-language and clear signals to the learners that there was a right and a wrong way to say/write something" (Spada, 2011, p. 227). And implicit FFI which is implemented in an indirect way by massively exposing students to a specific language feature but without making them aware of the language feature they are being exposed to (Trahey & White 1993; Trahey, 1996 as cited in Spada, 2011, p. 227). The rest are isolated or integrated is another type (Spada et al., 2014) and planned and incidental FFI proposed by Ellis, et al. (2002). Lyster (2015) refers to Ellis et al.'s (2002) classification and calls these types of FFI proactive and reactive. Either way: planned or proactive FFI refers to the type of FFI that is well planned in advanced and aims to allow the students to see and to use structures of the target language that are unlikely to be learned by just being exposed to them through input in the classroom (Lyster, 2015, p.5).

On the other hand, incidental or reactive FFI "occurs in response to students' language production during teacher-student interaction and includes corrective feedback as well as other attempts to draw learners' attention to the target language." (Lyster, 2015, p.5). Main differences between these two types of FFI lay in the following: proactive FFI is planned well *before a lesson* takes place; during the

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planning stage of a lesson, the teacher selects the language feature that he or she wants his or her students to focus their attention on; whereas reactive FFI addresses language challenges *in the moment* students make mistakes related to a given language feature (Tedick & Young, 2014), this means, while a lesson is in progress in the language classroom.

According to De La Cruz et al. (2018), the number of language features that are addressed during FFI is another distinctive aspect or better named by Ellis (2001), intensive or extensive. In proactive FFI, the instruction is intensive given that students deal with only one language feature a good number of times (Ellis, 2001, p.16). In the case of reactive FFI, the instruction is extensive "because a range of linguistic forms (grammatical, lexical, phonological, pragmatic) are likely to arise as candidates for attention" (Ellis, 2001, p.16). During a lesson, a teacher may draw students' attention to more than one linguistic form as a teacher considers it necessary. Another important difference between Proactive and Reactive FFI is that "proactive FFI strategies often draw on components from cognitive theory that include noticing, language awareness, and practice activities" (Tedick & Young, 2014, p. 786). At least "two phases are required for learners to notice target features in a manner robust enough to make the form available as intake: a noticing phase and an awareness phase" (Lyster, 2007, p. 66). The noticing phase is important as it serves as a catalyst for "drawing learners' attention to problematic target features that have been contrived to appear more salient and/or frequent in oral and written input" (Lyster, 2007, p. 66). During the awareness phase, students engage in activities in which they have to carry out some analysis of the language features; these can be implemented through tasks in which students have to work out the rules underlying a specific language feature as well as to carrying out comparisons and contrasts of patterns of

the target language accompanied by some metalinguistic information (Lyster, 2007, p. 66).

There have been numerous attempts to distinguish FFI types, one of which is the distinction made by Long (1998). FFI was first used by Michael Long (Long, 1998). According to Ellis (2001) and Hojjat and Hasim (2022), FFI was first used by Michael Long (Esfandiari, 2021). Esfandiari identifies three types of FFI forms: focus-on-forms (FonFS), focus-on-form (FonF), and focus-on-meaning (FonM). Long intimates that FFI depends on the way attention to form or structure is approached in the classroom (Ellis, 2001). These types re discussed as follows:

2.2.1 Focus-on-forms (FonFS) instruction

In differentiating between these three focal types, Long (1998) notes that focus-onforms is now considered the traditional approach to grammatical instruction whereby teachers and course designers create lessons, materials, and textbooks centered on structural components of the language (phonemes, sentences patterns, grammatical structures). Classroom instruction and practice emphasize student understanding of the forms themselves and their related rules. Focus-on-forms instruction, where learning a preselected target form is the primary focus, has options of explicit and implicit instruction. Explicit focus-on-forms can be done deductively and inductively; the rule is presented by a teacher deductively, or learners inductively analyze the input and discover the rule by themselves (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2001, 2016).

Focus-on-forms (FonFS) instruction is informed by a strong interface view and occurs when parts of a grammar are taught as discrete units in order of their linguistic complexity. This is the traditional approach to grammar teaching (and is

based on an artificially reproduced as opposed to an organic syllabus). According to Esfandiari (2021), FonFS is a traditional language teaching consisting of the presentation and practice of items drawn from a structural syllabus or an approach equated with the 'traditional' method, which entails teaching discrete linguistic structures in separate lessons in a sequence determined by syllabus writers. In this approach, language is treated as an object to be studied and language teaching is viewed as an activity to be practiced systematically. Furthermore, learners are seen as students rather than users of the language (Sadeghi, 2022). Esfandiari (2021) notes that FonFS is now considered the traditional approach to grammatical instruction whereby teachers and course designers create lessons, materials, and textbooks centred on structural components of the language (e.g. phonemes, sentences patterns, grammatical structures).

Classroom instruction and practice emphasize student understanding of the forms themselves and their related rules. Focus-on-forms instruction, where learning a preselected target form is the primary focus, has options of explicit and implicit instruction. Explicit FonFS can be done deductively and inductively; the rule is presented by a teacher deductively, or learners inductively analyze the input and discover the rule by themselves (Sadeghi, 2022). Aydin (2023) claims that implicit learning allows students to infer and acquire rules without awareness. Focus-on-forms can include a structured input approach with which learners are exposed to sufficient examples of the target structure and asked to be engaged in the tasks to notice and use the target structure (Sadeghi, 2022).

In this strategy, language items are broken down into words, and grammar rules are presented as models to learners in a linear sequence. Acquisition is a process

of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure has been built up (Nozimjon o'g'li, 2023). The clearest form of FonFS is an approach often referred to as Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) (Shaby & Joy, 2021), which is the outcome of the interface position (Qian, 2019). According to the PPP model, the target grammatical item is first presented explicitly and then practised until it is fully proceduralised (Sadeghi, 2022). In this model, Kiss and Rimbar (2021) explain that the teacher models and explains the language point to be taught, then the learners practice the language point through exercises which carefully control the language they use. Finally, the learners are given more open activities where they can use the language point more freely and internalize it for future use. The teacher may or may not finalize a lesson with an explicit statement of the rule. Teachers are often advised to present new grammar items meaningfully, in some kind of communicative context, in a way which will make their use clearer.

2.2.2 Focus-on-form (FonF) instruction

Ellis, (2016) defines FonF as "overtly draw(ing) the students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (p. 405). He states FonF often "consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (Ellis, 2016, p.405). Thus, this approach focuses primarily on meaning, but with attention being paid to form, as necessary, in the context of meaning-focused activity. The capacity for learners to process second language is limited and learners often have difficulty in focusing on meaning and form at the same time and will often prioritize meaning over form when performing a communicative activity (Saito & Plonsky, 2019). It is therefore important to find ways of drawing learners' attention to form

during communicative activities (Kian & Gorjian, 2018). This approach does not use the binary choices inherent in the form-meaning debate, and instead, emphasizes the act of drawing students' attention to specific language forms within the context of communicative and meaning-based activities. This might mean, for example, following up an information gap activity with a focused discussion of a grammatical form that emerged as a challenge during the activity. This approach allows for a level of responsiveness to students' needs in the classroom that is not possible when materials are designed to address certain forms in isolation from one another. By embedding FonF within communicative activities, instructors encourage students to attend to both meaning and form.

Focus-on-form (FonF) instruction, which draws on a weak interface view, involves strategies that draw learners' attention to the form or properties of target structure within a meaningful context. This is done primarily with structures that are potentially difficult, that are learnable according to the stages put forward in Pienemann's Teachability Hypothesis which predicts that some structures are best learned if the specific instruction coincides with the learner's next stage of development, and that are likely to be used or needed in future communication (Zhang & Lantolf, 2015). Saito and Plonsky (2019) argue that FonFS and FonF should not be seen as separate approaches to language teaching and refute the claim that teachers should not intervene when learners engage in communicative activities. This, however, does not come without its challenges as overuse of FonF strategies can undermine the purpose of creating the conditions for incidental language learning if students realize they need to treat language as an object rather than a tool for communication (Saito & Plonsky, 2019).

The incidental learning of FonF serves as a complementary approach to the intentional learning of FonFS as learners pick up new linguistic forms when attention is drawn to it with reactive and pre-emptive strategies in communicative activities (Saito & Plonsky, 2019). Thus, focus-on-form can be either pre-emptive or reactive. Reactive focus-on-form can occur as corrective feedback, such as recast, clarification request and repetition. Pre-emptive focus-on-form instruction is about what form to use and can be introduced. During the last two decades, many studies have focused on the relative effectiveness of two strategies of learning, focus on meaning and focus on form, which some other researchers call experiential and analytical strategies respectively (Ramanee & Phoocharoensil 2020).

2.2.3 Focus-on-meaning (FonM)

Sun and Zhang (2022) note that focus-on-meaning in the classroom has helped in enabling a transition toward more communicative-based approaches to language instruction. However, research has suggested that L2 learners progress more quickly in their language development when emphasis is placed on specific language forms (Kiss & Rimbar, 2021). The compromise then is what Sun and Zhang (2022) has termed focus-on-form (FonF). According Norris and Ortega (2011), focus-on-meaning provides rich input and meaningful use of L2 in context, which is intended to lead to incidental acquisition of L2. More specifically, while focus-on-meaning based instruction creates opportunities for authentic communication, incorporation of focus-on-form techniques have been shown to better facilitate accuracy in lexical, grammatical, and phonological forms. For example, Kiss and Rimbar's (2021) experimental study on adult EFL students demonstrates significantly higher gains in use of target language features for those receiving FonF instruction including recasts and prompts compared to meaning-focused approaches alone.

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Although sole emphasis on meaning can still lead to eventual acquisition of some implicit system knowledge, explicit form-focused strategies better equip the interlanguage system earlier on. Norris and Ortega's (2011) synthesis of FonF research indicated average effect sizes ranging from .80 to 1.29 for FonF groups over meaning-focused alone across a range of instructed language contexts. In summary, FonM lays a foundation for communicative fluency while judiciously applied FonF accelerates specific aspects of language encoding and development. In essence, focus-on-meaning represents "a radical pendulum shift: a shift of allegiance to Option 2, and an equally single-minded focus on meaning" (Long, 1998, p. 38). While a focus on meaning in the classroom has helped enable a transition toward more communicative-based approaches to language instruction, it has also created challenges, not the least of which is research suggesting that L2 learners progress more quickly in their language development when emphasis is placed on specific language forms (Kellem & Halvorsen, 2018)

2.4 Techniques in FFI approaches in second/foreign language teaching

What makes FFI a promising endeavour in second/foreign language teaching is its potential to draw the learners' attention to recurring forms during the lesson; hence, attending to both form and communicative meaning (Akbana & Yavuz, 2021). Unlike the Grammar Translation Approach, which divides language into discrete segments with no regard to meaning, the FFI lesson responds to learners' needs (Akbana & Yavuz, 2021), as communicative tasks and meaningful practice blend in activities which draw the learners' attention to language forms (Azaz, 2023) (or consciousness-raising) by noticing to promote fluency and accuracy alike (Basturkmen & Fu, 2021). Much empirical research suggests that FFI is effective in the second/foreign language classroom. Nikouee (2021) reports that even though

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explicit instruction and implicit instruction are effective for the acquisition of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, explicit instruction or a combination of the two is relatively more effective.

In addition, Lee and Lyster (2020) note a positive FFI effect on the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, automaticity, and fluency, especially when more than one technique is combined. Hence, FFI becomes a good tool for second/foreign language learning, as language is easier to remember when it is noticed and rehearsed for storage in the long-term memory (Lee & Lyster, 2020). Martakush (2020) argues that the combination of noticing and rehearsal is essential, as cognitive processes connect the information in the short-term memory with that previously stored in the long-term memory and into the learners' schemata. Martakush (2020) further identifies consciousness-raising tasks, input enhancement, output- based FonF, task-essential language, input flood, negotiation, recast, output enhancement, interaction enhancement, dictogloss, input processing, and garden path as some FFI techniques highlighted in the literature. Targeting these techniques was driven by the feasibility of carrying them out within the time and content constraints of the treatment. The following sections discuss these techniques.

2.4.1 Consciousness-raising

Consciousness-raising (CR) comprises providing students with explicit instruction of the form and function to help them notice language features they may not notice otherwise and, thus, build conscious knowledge of how language works (Goetz, 2023). In CR, learners do not produce language but rather engage in tasks to become aware of specific linguistic features and, ultimately, the way language works (Khezrlou, 2022). More specifically, CR activities orient the learner's attention to

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understand grammatical rules, morphosyntactic patterns, phonological constraints or other complex properties of the target language. Examples include structured input tasks like examining a set of sentences to identify use of a particular tense or grammatical structure. Researchers like Fotos (2002) argue CR facilitates development of explicit knowledge about the L2 earlier than learned implicitly, allows conscious monitoring of output, and aids noticing of forms to promote acquisition.

However, some studies have questioned the efficacy of CR for implicit proceduralization of target features without further communicative practice (Leow, 2015). Teachers also face challenges in selecting appropriate language points for CR and designing consciousness-raising tasks at suitable difficulty levels (Manchon, 2012). Still, as part of a program integrating meaning-focused experience with form-focused instruction, CR provides an important route for internalizing explicit knowledge to support fluent L2 production. In the context of this literature review, consciousness-raising research offers insights into teacher implementation of form-focused techniques. Factors shaping their utilization of CR as an explicit FFI approach merits investigation, including influences of teacher knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy regarding grammar instruction. This ties into the study's examination of why and how teachers employ particular FFI strategies.

2.4.2 Input enhancement (IE)

Mustafa (2020) notes that there has been considerable work on manipulating input to make it easier for students to understand. Hence, teachers began to simplify the grammar and vocabulary of written or audio materials, decrease sentence length, reduce the speed of audio materials, and provide meaningful interactions during the

input process. These include physically highlighting important grammar points and/or lexical items during communicative activities as a proactive way to promote students' noticing of a particular grammatical structure in a given text in some fashion. Mustafa (2020) as cited in Goetz (2023) suggests that enhancing the input might be an especially effective way to focus students' attention on grammar structures. Input enhancement is defined by Smith, (1991) as "pedagogical techniques designed to draw L2 learners' attention to formal features in the L2 input" (p. 118). It is based on Goetz's (2023) suggestion that changing the quality of input can stimulate learners' processing of linguistic material (Alobaid, 2020). Truscott's (1998) Noticing Hypothesis provides a theoretical rationale for the use of input enhancement, the aim of which is to draw learners' attention to linguistic forms via formatting techniques such as bolding, italicizing or underlining.

Namaziandost et al. (2020) also add that input enhancement involves some attempt to highlight a certain target feature, thus drawing learners' attention to it. According to Lee and Révész (2020), input enhancement has a decisive role in the input the learners receive and causes L2 proficiency to develop. He believes that the method of instruction can facilitate the process of input selection by L2 learners and points to the possible effects of focusing learners' attention to specific aspects of the input, which could lead to a more robust cognitive processing. Techniques such as typographical enhancement (i.e., color coding, boldfacing, underlining, capitalizing, or highlighting selected input forms, use of gestures, special stress, and intonation and non-linguistic signals) are among the actions that can accentuate language input so that learners are induced to pay attention to them (Révész, 2020).

2.4.3 Output-based FonF

It refers to instruction directed at enabling or inducing learners to produce utterances containing the target structure. In this approach, learners' otherwise elusive attention is directed towards selected aspects in the input through production processes. According to MacDonald (2013), most production practice is aimed at enabling learners to produce the correct target language (TL) forms by avoiding errors. Swain and Zhang et al. (2021) observe that if learners are left to their own devices when solving immediate production difficulties, they may engage in various thought processes that can consolidate existing knowledge or perhaps generate some new knowledge on the basis of their current knowledge. The act of producing language is believed to increase the likelihood of learners becoming sensitive to what they can and cannot say in the TL, which eventually makes them reassess their interlanguage capabilities.

2.4.4 Task-essential (TE) language

Language comprises using the forms for the completion of tasks (Trahey & Spada, 2020). According to Robayna (2020), task-essential language is where learners are required to perform a task which entails the use of a particular language feature. The task provides learners with frequent opportunities to use the target form, and hence, internalize knowledge of the rule. For instance, the learner needs to use the comparative forms of the language to compare between the two cities. For instance, compare Accra and Kumasi. You will need to use comparative forms. In the second example, the use of "there is" and "there are" in affirmative and interrogative forms is necessary where the students are to identify differences in the pictures. The students can ask their mates questions using *is there* and *are there* respectively.

2.4.5 Input flooding

According to Hwang (2023), input flooding is a focus-on-form intervention in which the input that is provided to learners is seeded with multiple examples of a target structure. The expectation is that ample exposure to the same target form in the input will make it more salient, and in doing so, will draw learners' attention to the linguistic form. Input flooding remains one of the FFI techniques that can contribute to L2 vocabulary acquisition. Borro (2021) explains that input flood increases the salience of a target language feature through artificially engineered frequency. The effectiveness of input flooding is based on a large body of work showing that repetition is an important factor in the process of attaining proficiency in an L2 (Kersten, 2021). Hwang (2023) adds that research on individual words demonstrates that L2 learners need to encounter unknown items several times before any learning occurs (MacDonald, 2013). Pawlak (2021) also claims that by adopting input flooding, language teachers choose texts in which a particular grammatical structure is especially frequent.

It is clear that such high frequency of occurrence would enhance structural saliency and promote the learners' noticing. Input flooding enlists input that has been enriched by numerous examples of a target feature without using any extra devices to draw the learner's attention to a particular feature. It means that language learners are presented with a frequently used new target form in order to increase the chance of noticing. All in all, the idea behind input flooding is that frequently presented forms are noticed more than infrequent ones and this increases the chance of learning (MacDonald, 2013; Pawlak, 2021).

2.4.6 Negotiation of meaning

Negotiation of meaning is a process that speakers go through to reach a clear understanding of each other. Lee et al. (2019) argue that non-native speakers (NNSs) could obtain comprehensible input by conversing with native speakers (NSs), and this would help them acquire the target language. This account, widely known as the Input Interaction Hypothesis, was founded on Krashen's Monitor Theory, which explains that being exposed to a large amount of comprehensible input was the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA (Hassan, 2022). However, Kersten (2021) notes that Bailey and Fahad's (2021) hypothesis differes from Abbaspour (2021) as the former view interaction as the primary source of comprehensible input, rather than listening or reading as argued by Krashen.

As argued by Bailey and Fahad (2021), comprehensible input was provided to learners when they and their NS interlocutors were faced with some kind of communication problem and the NSs modified the structure of the interaction. This could occur, for example, when a learner did not understand the NS interlocutor's utterance and asked them to confirm or clarify, and the NS reacted by rephrasing the utterance in a way the learner could understand. Comprehensible input would also be available to a learner when the NS interlocutor checked the learner's understanding of his/her previous utterance by asking "OK?" or "Did you understand?" and adjusted the utterance in response to the learner's signal of incomprehension. Thus, building on Krashen's model, Long formulated a more dynamic account of SLA, which explains that comprehensible input was created by two interlocutors as they worked together to establish a common understanding of meaning, the process now widely known as *negotiation of meaning*. Kitajima (2009) mentions asking for clarification, rephrasing,

and confirming what you think you have understood as strategies for the *negotiation of meaning*.

2.4.7 Recast

Recast can be defined as an utterance that rephrases another utterance "by changing one or more of its sentence components (subject, verb, or object) while still referring to its central meaning" (Kersten, 2021, p. 24). Research has also shown that recasts are by far the most frequent type of feedback in a range of classroom settings: elementary immersion classrooms (Jalal & Alahmed, 2022), university-level foreign language classrooms (Ioannou & Tsagari, 2022), high school English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, and adult ESL classrooms (Buchari, 2022). A recast occurs when a communication teacher repeats something a student says with more detailed language, or more correct language.

Student: "Kofi school"

Teacher: "Yes! Kofi is in school"

Student: "want pencil"

Teacher: "I want pencil"

2.4.8 Output enhancement

Zalbidea (2021) defines output as a reconstruction task involving learners in the production of input passage as accurately as possible after reading it. Output, as Renandya and Nguyen (2022) put it, has been viewed not only as an end product of learning but also as an important factor that can promote L2 learning. It is argued that producing output provides learners with great opportunities for a level of processing (i.e. syntactic processing) which may be necessary for the development of target-like proficiency or accuracy (Nguyen & Le, 2023). Zalbidea (2021) opines that by being

pushed to produce output, learners are required to pay attention to syntactic features of their language in order to formulate precise, meaningful and appropriate language. Furthermore, during the production of output, they formulate and test hypotheses about the accuracy of their language. It is argued that while producing output, learners are forced to process language more deeply than during input processing.

2.4.9 Interaction enhancement

Interaction enhancement is a form-focused instructional approach that facilitates attention to language form through modified interactions and strategic scaffolding during communicative tasks (Winkler et al., 2021). More specifically, interaction is enhanced when teachers or peers alter the flow of discussion to highlight, clarify or question the use of particular linguistic features. This draws students' focus to specific target forms within the context of meaning-oriented activities. For example, a teacher may recast a student's erroneous utterance by changing the grammatical structure while still referring to the content, or request clarification on the intended meaning to elicit self-correction. Learners thus must modify their language output in response to resolve these communication breakdowns or implicit feedback on form errors. Over time, the progressively more complex negotiations guide students to build conscious knowledge of the forms and incorporate them accurately into spontaneous speech.

Researchers have found interaction enhancement leads to greater noticing and uptake of feedback on target language structures (Rassaei, 2018). However, designing tasks that stimulate rich negotiation sequences requires expertise and adaptation to learner levels. Teachers also need training in employing interaction modification strategies like recasts, clarification requests, repetition and elicitation in motivating

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communication without overly interrupting flow (Wu & Jang, 2020). When effectively implemented though, interaction enhancement provides an implicit focus-on-form technique to draw attention to accurate language use through interpersonal exchange and scaffolding. In the context of this literature review, research on interaction enhancement sheds light on naturalistic FFI approaches teachers can readily integrate to prompt students' development. Factors influencing whether and how mainstream teachers employ these interactive FFI techniques merit research, including their beliefs on corrective feedback and perceptions of efficacy in conducting negotiation on form.

2.4.10 Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity where learners listen to a passage, note down key words and then work together to create a reconstructed version of the text. It was originally introduced by Kurtaj (2020) as an alternative method of teaching grammar. The original dictogloss procedure consists of four basic steps:

i. **Warm-up:** when the learners find out about the topic and do some preparatory vocabulary work.

ii. **Dictation:** when the learners listen to the text read at a normal speed by the teacher and take fragmentary notes. The learners will typically hear the text twice. The first time the teacher reads the text, the students just listen but do not write. The second time, the students take notes.

iii. **Reconstruction:** when the learners work together in small groups to reconstruct a version of the text from their shared resources.

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iv.   ***Analysis and correction*** when students analyze and compare their text with the reconstructions of other students and the original text and make the necessary corrections (Kurtaj, 2020).

Kurtaj (2020) argues that this method gives students a more precise understanding of English grammar than do other approaches and consequently leads to higher accuracy in language use. Compared to other more traditional approaches to teaching grammar, the value of dictogloss is in its interactive approach to language learning. Text reconstruction promotes both the negotiation of meaning and the negotiation of form. It is a co-operative endeavour which forces learners to stay actively engaged in the learning process. Through "active learner involvement, students come to confront their own strengths and weaknesses in English language use. In so doing, they find out what they do not know, then they find out what they need to know" (Widhiasih, 2019, p 321). Widhiasih further argues that this integration of testing and teaching stimulates the learners' motivation. Rather than having the teacher select specific grammatical features and have the students practice them, the students identify their grammar problems and the teacher teaches in response to their needs.

2.4.11 Input processing

Input processing theory (Niswa et al., 2022) refers to how learners initially perceive formal features of language input, and the strategies or mechanisms that might guide them in processing them. Learners seem to process input for meaning (words) before they process it for form (grammatical features). They seem to parse sentences by assigning subject or agent status to the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence. These default strategies cause a delay in the acquisition of

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formal properties of the target language. According to this theory, instruction is effective and beneficial if it manipulates input so that learners process grammar more efficiently and accurately. The pedagogical intervention derived from this theory is called processing instruction. Learners should be exposed to meaningful input that contains many instances of the same grammatical meaning-form relationship (e.g., verb ending in *-ed* encodes a past event). Grammar instruction should be designed to circumvent false default processing strategies and replace them with appropriate ones. Angelovska (2022) adds that Input Processing refers to the initial process by which learners connect grammatical forms with their meanings as well as how they interpret the roles of nouns in relationship to verbs.

2.4.12 Garden path

The garden path technique is a means of providing language learners with focused, immediate feedback on certain oral production errors. Learners are taught a linguistic rule with regular forms, and exceptions are provided during practice drills. Learners are induced to overgeneralize the rule with the exceptions and then immediately provided with the target form as a recast. Some empirical evidence suggests that this technique is more effective than explaining the exceptions to learners (Xu & Li, 2021). Ćeman and Dubravac (2019) used "down to the garden path" technique to prove it a promising technique to teach grammar to second language students. This technique follows a guideline through which the typical errors were induced and immediately corrected. Down the garden path technique appears to support learners to make a distinction between their own erroneous utterances and the correct target-language utterances. Esmailizadeh et al. (2019) asserts that "in order to encourage students to process the target structure somewhat more deeply than they might otherwise do, the task is set up to get students to overgeneralize. It thus leads

them into error. This is a technique base on inductive learning" (p. 51). The techniques are illustrated in Figure 2.4.

2.4.13 Summary

This literature review excerpt explores various techniques that have been studied for implementing effective form-focused instruction (FFI) alongside meaning-based approaches in second/foreign language classrooms. The techniques discussed include consciousness-raising tasks to build explicit knowledge of linguistic features, input enhancement through formatting devices to highlight forms, output pushing to prompt noticing of production difficulties, task-essential language requiring use of target structures, and flooding input with examples of a form. Additional FFI approaches covered are negotiation of meaning to create comprehensible input, recasts to implicitly correct learner errors, interaction enhancement via confirmation checks and clarification requests, dictogloss reconstruction tasks for collaborative discovery of gaps, input processing guidance to promote accurate form-meaning connections, and the garden path technique to induce overgeneralization and provide corrective feedback.
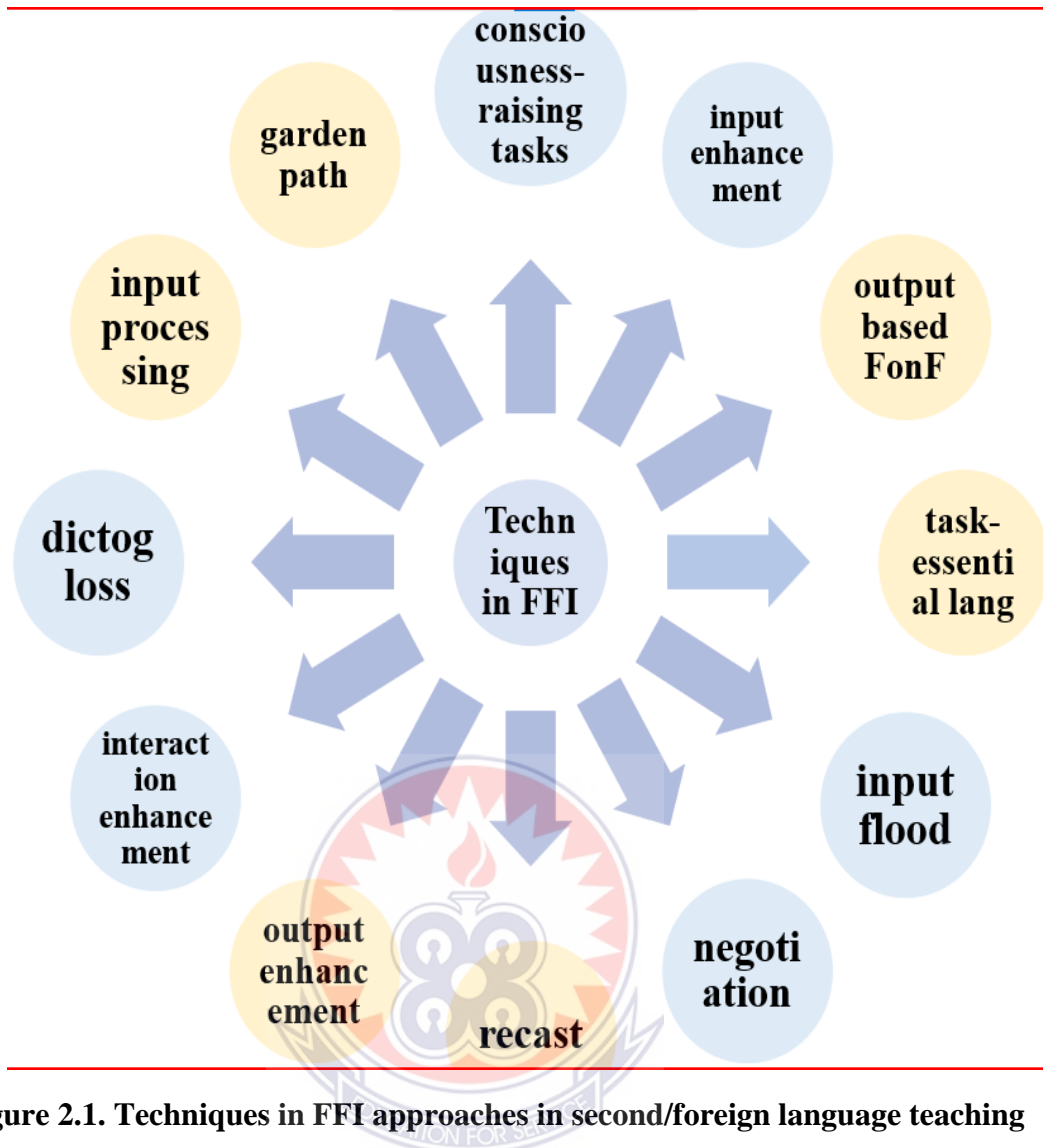
Figure 2.1. Techniques in FFI approaches in second/foreign language teaching

The review highlights research evidence on the effectiveness of individual and combined FFI techniques for facilitating acquisition of grammatical accuracy, complexity, and fluency. However, factors like teacher confidence, expertise, and contextual constraints are noted as potential barriers to successful implementation. More research is called for examining teacher cognition and actual classroom employment of implicit and explicit FFI strategies to benefit interlanguage development. Overall, this literature synthesis provides strong support for the incorporation of both meaning-focused and form-focused instruction through well-designed communicative activities and strategic focus on challenging linguistic

features to aid robust second language learning. Key FFI techniques offer routes for teachers to draw students' attention to form while maintaining meaningful practice and communication.

2.5 Timing of form-focused instruction

Xu and Li (2022) note a distinction between *integrated* and *isolated* forms of FFI which some other researchers refer to the timing of FFI and refers to when teachers should focus on form. Xu and Li (2022) and Maleki (2020) examined teacher and learner views on the timing of grammatical instruction and distinguished between isolated form-focused instruction (Isolated FFI) and integrated form-focused instruction (Integrated FFI). They indicated that both types are construed as taking place in meaning-based communicative classrooms.

2.5.1 Isolated FFI

Isolated FFI is defined by Maleki (2020) as an instruction in which students' attention is drawn to form separately from the communicative activity, which could be in preparation for or after the activity. That is, isolated FFI involves focus on language forms separate from the communicative practice. Thus, in isolated FFI, attention is given to forms and they are isolated from content-based and communicative activities, but this does not mean that it is exclusively distinct from what is being done in communicative   practice. The former is conducted always in a meaningful relation to the latter. In isolated FFI, the linguistic forms are taught in isolation, often in preparation for a communicative activity or after a communicative activity where learners are found to have experienced problems with a specific language feature. Isolated FFI is concerned with the application of content-based and communicative activities before or after the instruction of language forms and such

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focus on language forms is separated from the content of the communicative activity. As Spada and Lightbown (2008) suggest, isolated FFI implies intentional learning and explicit instruction.

2.5.2   Integrated FFI

Integrated FFI is defined as an instruction in which students' attention is drawn to form during communicative activities. Maleki (2020) points out that both isolated and integrated FFI are beneficial for different aspects of second language learning and do not need to be mutually exclusive. The author concluded that teacher and learner views on the timing of grammatical instruction in communicative classrooms are very similar, both within and across EFL and ESL contexts. The majority of teachers and learners preferred integrated FFI, but they still acknowledged the benefits of isolated FFI, which could be seen in the qualitative analysis of the teacher and learner comments from the open-ended question (Maleki, 2020).

Integrated FFI takes place in classroom activities in which the main emphasis centres on meaning. In these activities, brief explanations and largely implicit and sometimes explicit feedback are offered to help learners to express meanings more accurately (Maleki, 2020). In integrated FFI, learners' attention to language forms is drawn during communicative and content-based instruction. Integrated FFI can be planned or incidental. In the former, the focus on form, which emerges during communicative activities, may have been anticipated and planned by the teacher beforehand and s/he may attract the attention of the learners to the relevant point/s during communicative activities. Besides, it is also likely for the teacher to come across language features and instruct them incidentally during such activities. Maleki (2020) observes that it may be difficult to make a choice between these two types of

form-focused instruction, and the best way to apply the most suitable one depends on the language feature to be learned, characteristics of the learner, and the learning conditions.

Isolated FFI and integrated FFI have been a part of few comparison studies with mainly experimental designs. For example, Karami and Bowles (2020) as cited in Kemaloglu-Er (2021) investigated the influence of isolated FFI and integrated FFI on the vocabulary, grammar, and writing development of primary level foreign language learners in two different classes in Turkey. The findings showed that the learners receiving integrated FFI performed better than those provided with isolated FFI in all measures. In addition, integrated FFI was preferred more by the learners. Trahey and Spada (2020) also compared two groups of adult learners of ESL who received integrated or isolated FFI on the 'passive' construction and explored their progress on a written grammar test and an oral communication task. The findings revealed no significant differences between the instructional groups.

It was noted that as long as learners receive a synthesis of form- and meaning-based practice, differences in the timing of FFI may matter less. The results were also said to imply that isolated FFI is advantageous compared to integrated FFI with respect to learners' explicit L2 knowledge, and integrated FFI has an advantage over isolated FFI in terms of the development of learners' implicit L2 knowledge. In another experimental study conducted by Xu and Li (2022), integrated FFI was found to be more effective for teaching forms than isolated FFI. It was also observed that motivation increased when the learners were involved in purposeful activities integrating content and language learning.

2.5.3 Summary

The review discusses two main approaches to timing explicit attention to linguistic forms - isolated FFI and integrated FFI. Isolated FFI involves focus on structures separate from communicative activities, either preparing forms needed for tasks or addressing issues afterwards. In contrast, integrated FFI draws learners' attention to language points implicitly or explicitly during fluency-oriented meaning-focused activities. Research covered finds both isolated and integrated FFI can facilitate acquisition, with the former more beneficial for explicit knowledge and the latter for implicit knowledge. While most teachers and learners prefer integrated approaches, isolated FFI still has advantages in targeting challenging forms. Comparisons reveal integrated FFI promotes better vocabulary, grammar and writing, while differences diminish when both groups get form-meaning practice.

Remaining issues include determining optimal timing and type of FFI based on feature, learner level and contexts. Teachers also face challenges preparing isolated explicit instruction and providing integrated FFI spontaneously during communication. More research on implementation factors could inform teacher development on blending isolated deliberate and integrated incidental FFI for well-rounded interlanguage growth. Overall the review highlights the promise of strategic incorporation of focus on form into meaning-based instruction. Isolated and integrated FFI play complementary roles in building accuracy, complexity and fluency when teachers judiciously employ techniques suited to learning needs and communication goals.

2.6 Form-focused instruction and grammar teaching

Form-focused instruction (FFI) encompasses a variety of techniques for drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms, including grammar structures, within meaning-focused communication. Research has explored numerous approaches through which second language teachers can incorporate helpful focus on grammar points and patterns to facilitate well-rounded language development. This section will provide an overview of methods for achieving effective integration of form-focused grammar instruction, including explicit teaching of grammatical rules and concepts to build conscious declarative knowledge, input enhancement to highlight target features and aid noticing during activities, output pushing to prompt learner-generated attention to grammar gaps, and process-oriented grammar tasks to guide construction of structures. The rest are interactional feedback via negotiation routines to foster uptake and self-repair, recasts of learner errors to provide implicit negative evidence on forms, dictogloss and text reconstruction to collaboratively uncover grammatical problems, consciousness-raising tasks to induce cognitive comparison and restructuring, and the garden path technique to lead learners to overgeneralize rules and provide correct forms

Research on the viability of these form-focused grammar interventions will be analyzed in light of factors that may shape mainstream teachers' confidence and skills in implementation within primary language instruction. The potential and challenges of blending focus on grammar forms with communicative fluency goals will be discussed in relation to teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and contextual realities. By reviewing empirical studies on the above integrated and isolated FFI techniques, this section establishes directions for examining teacher-based variables that determine

whether and how attention to grammar is employed to strengthen interlanguage development in the classroom.

2.6.1 Proactive FFI

Proactive form-focused instruction involves pre-planned instruction designed to enable students to notice and to use target language features that might otherwise not be used or even noticed in the classroom (Oba, 2019). Furthermore, Michaud and Ammar (2023) claim that the proactive type involves making an informed prediction or carrying out some observations to determine the learning problem in focus. Michaud and Ammar (2023) believe that by taking this stance, there is no need to restrict focus-on-form to classroom learner errors which are pervasive, systematic, and remediable for learners at that particular stage of development, which is a burdensome selection process. Long (as cited in Arias et al., 2019) holds the view that proactive form-focused instruction is especially useful for learners in communicative and content-based classrooms where learners might otherwise process the target language exclusively through content and meaning-based activities. Sun and Zhang (2021) state that:

> Proactive focus-on-form is where the teacher chooses a form in advance to present to students in order to help them complete a communicative task. This can be done explicitly through formal instruction, while a less explicit focus might involve asking students to alter or manipulate a text that contains a target form. … The choice of form is determined by the communicative needs of the learners. The choice of forms is also influenced by other factors such as individual learner differences, developmental language learning sequences, and L1 influences (p. 28).

Sun and Zhang (2021) further argue that advanced planning in proactive FFI does not mean imposing learners externally with linguistic syllabus; rather, it requires the

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analysis of learners' needs in order to plan what the teacher is supposed to teach in advance.

2.6.2 Intensive and extensive FFI

Another distinguishing element of FFI is the sheer volume of language features that are covered; this is also known as intensive or extensive FFI (Oba, 2019). Given that students only encounter one language feature frequently in proactive FFI, the education is intensive (Oba, 2019). Because a variety of language features (grammatical, lexical, phonological, and pragmatic) are likely to become candidates for attention in the case of reactive FFI, the training is extensive (Oba, 2019). A teacher may bring students' attention to multiple linguistic forms during a class if they deem necessary. The fact that "proactive FFI tactics frequently depend on components from cognitive theory, including noticing, linguistic awareness, and practice tasks" (Sun & Zhang, 2021, p. 33) is another significant distinction between proactive and reactive FFI At least two phases, "a noticing phase and an awareness phase, are necessary for learners to detect target features in a way robust enough to make the form available for intake" (Sun & Zhang, 2021, p. 33). In order to "bring learners' attention to problematic target traits that have been manufactured to look more prominent and/or frequent in oral and written information", the noticing phase is crucial (Chuyen, 2023, p. 126). Students participate in activities that require them to analyze language features during the awareness phase; these can be tasks that require them to determine the rules underlying a particular language feature or to compare and contrast patterns of the target language with some metalinguistic information (Gogoi & Harnsberger, 2009, as cited in Sun & Zhang, 2021).

2.6.3 Pre-emptive focus-on-form

Calma et al. (2022) calls proactive FonF as pre-emptive FonF, which occurs when the teacher or student focuses on linguistic forms even though no error has been committed. According to Calma et al. (2022), pre-emptive focus on form can either be initiated by students or by the teacher. In the case of student initiation, a student might ask a question about a linguistic feature and a teacher initiation might occur when they briefly focus on a form before a communicative activity, for example, advising students to use a specific linguistic form like past tense in an activity involving reporting an event.

2.6.4   Reactive FonF

Reactive FonF instruction enables learners to put into practice during purposeful interaction, the target language knowledge they gain from proactive instructional activities (Chuyen, 2023). Hence, Chuyen thinks, reactive FonF has to appear in the form of corrective feedback and any other attempt aimed at drawing learners' attention to language form during interaction. In other words, as Doughty and Williams (1998) cited in Canals et al. (2021) explain, reactive FonF encompasses responses to communication problems occurring after the event. Seo et al. (2021) observe that reactive FonF is considered as a good source for negative evidence since it typically occurs when learners state some unacceptable form and the teacher tries to correct them or asks other students to correct them. Furthermore, reactive FonF involves a responsive teaching intervention that involves occasional shifts in reaction to salient errors using devices to increase perceptual salience (Seo et al., 2021).

Adloo and Rohani (2019) found reactive teaching more effective than proactive teaching. They argue that it is easier to follow each learner's developmental

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trajectory by responding to their communicative errors rather than to preselecting the errors through pre-teaching. He then elaborates on a typical example of reactive FonF in which each learner asks their partner questions about their last weekend in five minutes and then spends five minutes writing a paragraph. The teacher then collects the texts and prepares a list of 15 to 20 sentences to focus on their tense and aspect. In the next session, the learners are asked to work in small groups or pairs to select well-formed sentences and correct the wrong ones. As it can be seen, reactive focus-on-form is a treatment which deals more specifically with student output where the focus is on structures that students themselves have used, or have tried to use, during a communicative task (Adloo & Rohani, 2019). In simpler terms, reactive instruction of grammar entails responding to communication problems of learners occurring after the event (Adloo & Rohani, 2019). Blašković (2022) adduces three major characteristics for reactive FonF:

1) it helps prevent fossilization: Learners are alerted to the fact that they still have some way to go in mastering a given fact.

2) if used sparingly it helps motivate learners: Almost all language learners expect and want correction. They see it as a necessary part of the teacher's role.

3) it provides useful negative feedback: Sometimes negative feedback is the quickest and most efficient way of putting learners on the right track.

Seo et al. (2021) in reacting to reactive FonF, comment that it occurs when a teacher or student responds to an error made by a student in the context of a communicative activity. Reactive FonF can be either conversational, which occurs when the attention to form arises when dealing with a communication problem resulting in the negotiation of meaning, or it can be didactic, which occurs when

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attention to form arises even though no communication problem has occurred in which negotiation of form, rather than negotiation of meaning, takes place (Seo et al., 2021). Seo et al. (2021) further provide examples of how conversational and didactic reactive FonF could occur:

Example 1 demonstrates <u>conversational focus</u> on form where the teacher fails to understand the name of S1's group because the student fails to pronounce 'best' clearly. A confirmation check from the teacher pushes S1 to articulate 'best' more correctly and subsequently resolves the problem.

> S1: My group has a name
>
> T: What name?
>
> S1: Bes.
>
> T: Bess' group?
>
> S1: Best
>
> T: oh, best, okay
>
> S2: Best
>
> T: Best, not group three, the best, that's a lovely name
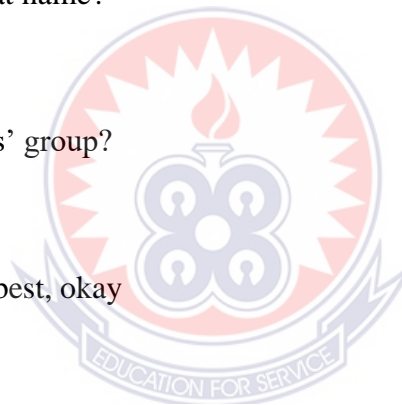
Example 2 demonstrates <u>didactic focus</u> on form where the focus on form centres on the student's utterance "I was in pub", which is missing the definite article *the* (Ellis, 2015). The teacher apparently understands what the student means but still recasts the utterance in the form of a confirmation check *in the pub*.

> T: What are you doing?
>
> S: I was in pub
>
> S: I was in pub
>
> T: In the pub?
>
> S: Yeah, and I was drinking beer with my friend

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According to Seo et al. (2021), a teacher's response to an error can also be in the form of implicit or explicit feedback when focusing on language errors. Implicit feedback may come in the form of a recast when the teacher responds to an error without directly indicating that an error has been made. Explicit feedback, however, is when the teacher directly indicates that an error has been made by responding to an error using meta-language to draw attention to it. Naz (2023) points out that research in support of reactive FonF instruction shows that learners benefit most from a focus-on-form precisely at the moment when they have something to say and postponing a focus on language until a subsequent language lesson is not as effective.

According to Seo et al. (2021), analysis shows that both reactive and proactive FonF can help improve the writing skill of students. For instance, students who received the proactive FonF significantly outperformed the students in the other group and this underlines the effectiveness of proactive FonF. The interesting point about the results is that the students in the reactive FonF class could not present the same level of skill four months after the intervention was completed. That is, proactive FonF is significantly more effective in improving writing skill among the students.

The first reason of outperformance by the group who received proactive FonF could be the repeated opportunities for attention to the preselected grammar forms which were available for learners in the group. Since reactive FonF involves a responsive teaching intervention in the form of occasional shifts to important errors (Naz, 2023), it inevitably becomes more time consuming, giving fewer opportunities to elaborate on key grammar points of the lesson, the learners had less production, hence, fewer errors to be reactively corrected. In addition, the researchers clearly

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noticed that learners were not patient enough to allow the teacher to go over their few errors one-by-one. These could have put the reactive group at a disadvantage.

In contrast, learners in the proactive group were exposed to language more than the learners in reactive group and the teacher had more time for practicing grammar points. Rungwichitsin (2020) had a similar observation: students' continuous questioning did not allow the teacher or other students to react to their errors through explicit correction or the use of metalanguage to draw attentions to the problematic structures. This could be due to the fact that they preferred to know the target form as soon as possible, so they asked repeated questions about their erroneous forms. As an example, in one of the sessions, the teacher tried to put the learners in a situation to ask questions using the past perfect but two of the learners asked some questions about conditional sentences (Rungwichitsin, 2020). During one of the studies, in the reactive group, there was no continuous questioning and only rarely did the raising of one question lead to another question. The results of this study are in accordance with Lee and Lyster (2022) who demonstrated that learners who receive proactive instruction of grammar performed significantly better than those who receive reactive instruction of grammar. They further noted that for all students, more than half the feedback focused on form. Teachers are primarily interested in improving students' long-term language accuracy and students think that repeated feedback would eventually help them note their errors and get rid of them.

2.6.5 Explicit and implicit FFI

Explicit form-focused instruction (FFI) involves direct explanation of linguistic rules and features, often with metalinguistic terminology. As Cruz et al. (2019) notes, it utilizes overt grammar teaching, corrective feedback on errors, and

clear indication of accurate versus inaccurate forms. Benefits of explicit FFI include building conscious declarative knowledge about language structures, fast initial learning of explicit rules, ability to monitor output, and facilitating noticing of gaps (Ellis, 2016). However, overreliance on explicit FFI alone may not lead to implicit acquisition and automatic proceduralization of target features (Brunfaut & McCray, 2015).

In contrast, implicit FFI draws attention to forms indirectly during communicative activities without metapragmatic rules. Techniques like input flood, textual enhancement, recasts and prompting provide abundant target language samples and feedback on errors without direct emphasis on rules. Implicit FFI allows for incidental acquisition of structures through meaningful input processing and output generation (Marsden & Heffernan, 2021). It aids development of intrinsic perceptions of grammaticality and enhances automaticity. However, implicit FFI requires more exposures over time and may not suffice for complex features without explicit instruction (Valeo, 2013).

An integrated curriculum would ideally blend explicit explanation and negative feedback on difficult aspects with ample meaningful practice and implicit highlighting of patterns to nurture both explicit and implicit knowledge of forms. The optimal mix likely depends on learner profile and language stage (Han & Ellis, 2021). Teacher-based variables like beliefs, knowledge and contextual realities also mediate the choice and implementation of implicit versus explicit FFI. More research can uncover how teachers combine focused grammar instruction with communicative interaction to drive interlanguage growth.

According to Cruz et al. (2019), explicit FFI happens when teachers give students "overt instruction and corrective feedback, including the use of meta-language and clear indications that there was a right and a wrong way to say/write anything" (Cruz et al., 2019, p. 26). By heavily exposing students to a certain language feature without disclosing to them what language feature they are being exposed to, implicit FFI is accomplished in an indirect manner (Cruz et al., 2019) as cited in (Khalifeh et al., 2023).

2.6.6 Summary

This section explores techniques for integrating focus on grammar within meaning-based language instruction. Form-focused grammar interventions discussed include explicit rule teaching, input enhancement, output pushing, process-oriented tasks, interactional feedback, recasts, dictogloss, consciousness-raising, and the garden path method. Distinctions are drawn between proactive/reactive FFI based on whether forms are pre-determined or addressed spontaneously, with respective merits cited. Intensive/extensive FFI differentiates concentrated attention on one versus multiple complex features. Pre-emptive FFI involves focus on forms even without errors, while reactive FFI responds to learner problems. Explicit FFI relies on direct explanation and metalinguistic terminology for fast initial learning, while implicit FFI subtly draws attention to structures over time to build intrinsic knowledge. An effective curriculum integrates both approaches suited to learner needs and stages. Teacher-based variables, like knowledge, beliefs, contextual factors and self-efficacy are noted as influencing whether and how teachers employ focused grammar techniques within larger meaning-centered agendas. More research can clarify how teachers leverage both isolated deliberate and integrated incidental FFI to advance robust grammatical competency along with communicative fluency. Overall, FFI

offers routes for teachers to highlight challenging forms, guide constructive processes, provide feedback on errors, and prompt self-repair - key mechanisms for internalizing linguistic concepts and rules to support accurate language production.

2.7 When to commence form-focused instruction in teaching Grammar

There is a debate as to whether FFI should be delayed until later in the learning process or it should be delivered to even absolute beginners and this brings into focus two major perspectives. The first perspective maintains that it is best to emphasize the teaching of grammar in the early stages of L2 acquisition, whereas the second perspective suggests that it is best to emphasize meaning-focused instruction to begin with and introduce grammar teaching later when learners have already begun to form their interlanguages (Lee & Lyster, 2022). Advocates of the first perspective suggest that beginning-level learners cannot engage in meaning-centred activities because they lack the necessary knowledge of the L2 to perform tasks. Thus, a form-focused approach is needed initially to construct a basis of knowledge that learners can then use and extend in a meaning-focused approach (Lee & Lyster, 2022). Teaching grammar early is valuable because it provides a basis for real learning that follows (Lloyd & Lee, 2022). It is noted that FonF works well for students with a good grounding in grammar, but it is not sufficient for students without an understanding of the nature of language. On their part, advocates of the delayed FFI argue that grammar should be delayed because early interlanguage is typically agrammatical (Elwerfalli et al., 2019; Lee & Lyster, 2023). Sharif et al. (2023) argue that emphasis on early grammatical accuracy may impede the development of communicative ability.

In another breath, there is debate as to whether explicit focus on forms should begin early or be delayed until learners have developed basic interlanguage systems (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Those arguing for upfront grammar instruction cite lack of linguistic knowledge impeding beginners from communicative tasks, and early rules providing a foundation for acquisition (Lee & Lyster, 2022). For example, Saeidi and Sahebkheir (2011) found Iranian EFL students with initial explicit grammar teaching significantly outperformed meaning-focused only groups in reading, listening and vocabulary over 3 years. However, others note early interlanguages are simple and inaccurate, so forcing complex accuracy may hinder fluency (Elwerfalli et al., 2019). Fiantika et al. (2018) found Indonesian high school students acquired English grammar features more successfully from meaning-focused input and output over 1 year compared to explicit isolated instruction on the same forms. These contradictory findings suggest both positions have validity for different aspects of language proficiency based on learner age and literacy levels. Young beginners may benefit more from meaning-focused activities with integrated feedback (Guo & Feng, 2022), while adolescent/adult learners have cognitive skills for explicit rule linkage (Park, 2020). Ultimately a synthesis approach tailoring the timing of focused grammar to stage of acquisition and needs may optimize outcomes (Ren, 2022).

2.8 Form-focused instruction as a form of communicative language teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT) originated in Britain in the 1960s as a replacement to the structural method. Many methods such as the Grammar Translation Method, Structural Approach, and Direct Method have been tried out. However, they failed to enable learners to use English for practical benefits (e.g. to

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get a job) and everyday communication (Hasibuan, 2020). It had been observed that students were able to write and read the sentences in the target language correctly, but when it came to communicating in the target language, they failed to do so. According to Hasibuan (2020), making the students able to communicate in the target language, required more than mastering only the linguistic structures. It had been accepted by educators that to be able to communicate in the target language, communicative competence is required with linguistic competence (Hasibuan, 2020).

There had been a shift from the linguistic-structure-centred approach to the communicative approach in the late 1970s and 80s (Benoumechiara & Zine, 2019). In recent years, many teachers have embraced the concept of CLT to meet their students' English language demands. Toro et al. (2019) as cited in Hasibuan (2020) describe the communicative approach as follows:

> It concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts, and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds. The content of a language course is now defined not in terms of forms, words and sentence patterns, but in terms of concepts, or notions, which such forms are used to express, and the communicative functions which they are used to perform (p. 26).

Communicative language teaching is not a term for one particular type of teaching theory or methodology, but a cover term for various types of teaching procedures which have evolved a couple of decades ago when communication came to be generally recognized as the ultimate goal of language teaching (Hasibuan, 2020). Given the dynamic features of CLT, it seems necessary to incorporate it effectively in the teaching of English. Over the years, scholars who have advocated for CLT have also endorsed FFI as a creative example of a methodology that allows

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teachers to stimulate students' ability to use English correctly. As a procedure, FFI is a form of CLT that allows the representation of grammar through exemplary sentences instead of explicit linguistic terminology to ensure that linguistic structures are merely supplementary to communicative functions in the syllabus (Toro et al., 2019).

2.8.1   Principles/features of CLT

The communicative approach is rather broad-based and it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. Sreehari (2012) as cited in Hasibuan (2020) five features of CLT include:

i.   An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

ii.   The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

iii.   The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.

iv.   An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

v.   An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

2.8.2   The role of the teacher and students in CLT

On the roles of teacher and students in a communicative classroom, Hasibuan (2020) observes that the teacher facilitates communication in the classroom. In this role, one of his major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. During the activities he acts as an adviser, answering students' questions and monitoring their performance. He might make note of their errors to be

worked on at a later time during more accuracy-based activities. At other times he might be a co-communicator engaging in the communicative activity along with students. Students are, above all, communicators. They are actively engaged in negotiating meaning - in trying to make themselves understood and in understanding others - even when their knowledge of the target language is incomplete. Also, since the teacher's role is less dominant than in a teacher-centered method, students are seen as more responsible managers of their own learning. Commenting on the nature of student-teacher interaction and student-student interaction, Hasibuan (2020) states "the teacher's role varies - sometimes presenting linguistic forms, facilitating activities without intervening, or enabling student-student communication in pairs, groups or as a class" (p. 12)

2.8.3   Summary

This section established FFI as an effective manifestation of CLT principles rather than a distinct method, allowing grammar to play a supportive role in meaning-centered instruction. CLT evolved recognizing communication as the ultimate goal beyond structural mastery. FFI aligns as it draws attention to forms implicitly while prioritizing fluency. Principles of CLT covered include: emphasizing interaction for functional uses, incorporating authentic input, allowing learner self-reflection, linking class and real-world language, and facilitating personal expression. Within this framework, the teacher facilitates communicative situations, monitors and provides feedback, while joining activities as a co-communicator. Students actively negotiate meaning and take responsibility for learning. FFI fits as the teacher selectively focuses on certain forms during or around activities responsive to learner needs. The variability of the teacher's role is highlighted - from direct FFI presentation to non-intervention, while ultimately enabling student interaction driving acquisition. FFI

thus exemplifies CLT in practice by embedding targets for accuracy alongside meaningful tasks aimed at fostering fluent language use in contexts. In summary, FFI represents both an underlying approach and a set of techniques for developing grammatical competence without sacrificing communicative goals - consistent with current CLT principles for well-balanced language education.

2.9   Theoretical orientation: Interactionist Hypothesis

The Interactionist Hypothesis posits that not only input but also output and interaction are important for language learning (Long 1980; as cited in Djumaniyazova, 2022). Long (1980) proposes that learners notice the linguistic forms when they are difficult to understand and have a chance to negotiate the linguistic meaning during meaning-based communication. This negotiation helps the learner to highlight the linguistic forms that are hard to understand and to notice the gap between the input and their own interlanguage. It also gives learners the opportunity to produce output. This kind of meaning negotiation focused on specific forms will improve L2 acquisition.

Chen and Li (2022) interaction hypothesis evolved from work by Long (1980) on the importance of conversation to developing grammar and from claims by Ren (2022) that comprehensible input is a necessary condition for SLA. Chen and Li (2022) argue that interaction facilitates acquisition because of the conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in such discourse and that provide learners with the input they need. Through one type of interaction, termed negotiation non-native speakers (NNSs) and their interlocutors signal that they do not understand something (Chen & Li, 2022). Through the resulting interaction, learners have opportunities to understand and use the language that was incomprehensible. Additionally, they may

receive more or different input and have more opportunities for output (El-Gawad & Abou Sree, 2022). According to Chen and Li (2022), conversational moves used to negotiate for meaning in dyadic interaction include:

a. input modifications (e.g., stress on key words, partial self-repetition);

b. semantically contingent responses (e.g., recasts, repetition); and

c. conversational modifications (e.g., confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests).

A prime importance has been given to the role of input comprehension in the second language acquisition (SLA) research and theory, and most second language acquisition researchers have accepted the idea that exposure to the target language input is necessary for the SLA. Input is "all types of data from a target language that the learners are exposed to and from which they" (Maleki & Pazhakh, 2012). The input received by second language learners is often modified in order to make it more comprehensible and therefore to improve the process of SLA. Comprehensible input is a hypothesis that was first proposed by White (1987). They claim that L2 learners can acquire language by understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. The studies on comprehensible input (see Krashen, 2009; Mason & Krashen, 2019; Panggua et al., 2023) have concerned with how to make the input comprehensible to the learners or non-native speakers (NNSs) through studying the native speakers' (NSs) speech or teacher talks in different classrooms and contexts.

This research on the facilitative roles of negotiation routines, modified input and generation of output during communicative activities has key implications for FFI in the language classroom. Specifically, it provides insights into how teachers can integrate focus on certain challenging forms in a meaning-focused curriculum to

promote acquisition. Techniques like negotiation of form, recasts, and interactional modifications draw attention to difficult features within authentic communication without disrupting flow. Comprehensible output tasks also push learners to recognize gaps in encoding abilities when trying to convey ideas. Structured input enhancement further highlights forms without simplifying quality. Thus, FFI manifested through interactive feedback, input manipulation and pushed output aligns with core tenets from the Interaction Framework and Comprehensible Input Hypothesis. Such integrated incidental focus-on-form techniques allow form-meaning connections to be forged while keeping communicative goals foremost. This literature ultimately validates both implicit and explicit FFI as mechanisms for facilitating noticing, intake and integration of challenging L2 features through interactive meaning-focused activities.

The Interaction Hypothesis posits that input, output, and interaction are all crucial for driving second language acquisition. At its core, it claims negotiation of meaning facilitates learning by causing interlocutors to modify interaction when communication breakdowns occur. This highlights linguistic gaps and draws attention to difficult forms. Specifically, the framework outlines three main processes (Long, 1996; Pica, 1994):

1. Negotiation of meaning via clarification requests, confirmation checks etc. when input is not understood

2. Modified interactional moves to resolve these issues, like recasts, repetitions, simplification

3. The resulting modified output produced by the learner in response to resolve the problems

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Through these cycles of negotiation, input modification and output generation centered around linguistic issues, the forms in focus become salient and the learner builds conscious and subconscious knowledge of the target language. The framework is illustrated in Figure 2.9.
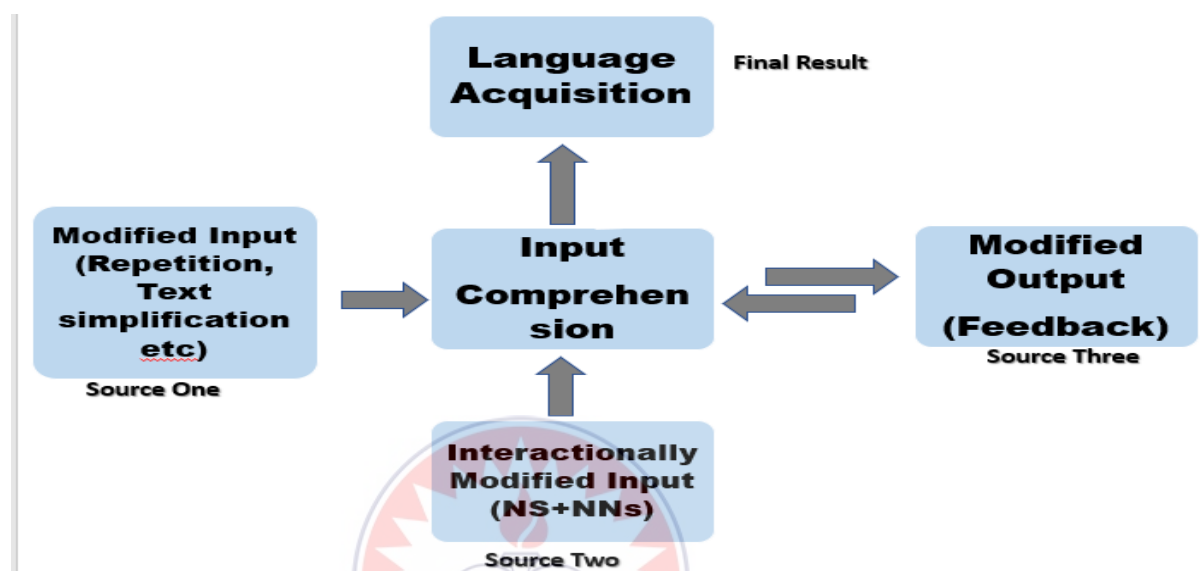
Figure 2.2. The Interactionist Hypothesis

2.9.1 Modified input

Kelch (1985) observes that L2 researchers have tried to identify the factors that make the input comprehensible to the learners. Input comprehension was considered in different kinds of linguistic environments. The first type is termed as *Modified input* as indicated in Fig 2.3. In this approach, Native speakers (Ns) modify their input to facilitate non-native speakers' (NNSs) comprehension (Long, 1983). By adaptation, English Language teachers would play the role of the native speakers (Ns) since they serve as facilitators in the L2 acquisition by the students (NNSs). This modification can be maintained in different forms, like repetitions, paraphrase of words or sentences, and reduction of sentence length and complexity, among others. According to Ellis (1995), it has been assumed that language acquisition can be

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fostered by the modified input in the environment; i.e., when the native speakers as proficient speakers adjust their language to the level of low-level learners (foreigners) to make it more comprehensible. So, this kind of linguistic environment is characterized by the input which has been modified or simplified before the learner sees or hears it.

2.9.2 Interactionally modified input

The second potential source of comprehensible input for L2 learning is interactionally modified input as indicated in Fig 3; which is characterized by the opportunities for native speaker- nonnative speaker (NS- NNS) interactions in which both of them have to modify and reconstruct the interaction in order to arrive at a mutual understanding (Long, 1980). In this case, English Language teaches would play the role of the native speakers (Ns) since they serve as facilitators in Interactionally Modified Input in the L2 acquisition by the students (NNSs). In fact, it was Gass (2013) who made an important distinction between modified input and interaction. This interaction has special features which help the participants negotiate meaning. He has asserted that NNSs and NSs employ some strategies in their social discourses, including some aspects of conversations such as comprehension checks, clarification requests, topic shifts and self and other repetitions and expansions. He has claimed that speakers modify interactions using these strategies in order to avoid or solve conversation problems and repair discourse when misunderstanding sequences arise. When L2 learners face communicative problems and they have the opportunity to negotiate on solutions to them, they are able to learn language (Gass, 2013).

2.9.3 Modified output

According to Al Kendi (2020) the theoretical basis on the importance of output was first put forth by Swain's (1985) Comprehensible Output Hypothesis where he argued that while comprehensible input and the emphasis on interactional negotiation is essential, the role of interactional exchanges in second language acquisition "may have much to do with comprehensible output as it has to do with comprehensible input". Hence, in modified output, as indicated in Fig. 2.3; second language learners try to reformulate their own utterances. Al Ellis (2009) stated that this type of modification has been attracting researchers' interest as an important component of learner interactions, and as a manifestation of interlanguage development and psycholinguistic processing. This hypothesis has been used as a theoretical framework to investigate the relationship between modified output and L2 learning (Ogino, 2008). It has been assumed that the input which is comprehensible and interaction which has been modified can facilitate the process of second language acquisition.

2.9.4 Output and comprehension in the context of interaction

Swain (1995) has argued that it is having to actually produce language that forces learners to think about syntax. According to Liu (2022), Swain argued for the importance of comprehensible output in the SLA process. That is, in the learners' effort to be understood in the target language, they are *pushed* in their production and may try out new forms or modify others. Mackey (1999) suggested the use of think-aloud procedures during dictogloss tasks that may tap into some of learners' introspective processes. Mackey (1999) discussed what they termed "collaborative dialogues" in "language-related episodes", in which the learners talk about the

language they are producing or writing (p, 557). They suggested that such conversations may be a source of second language learning.

According to Gass and Mackey (2014), based on the output hypothesis, it would seem that, for interaction to facilitate SLA, learners need to have opportunities for output during interaction. In many second language classrooms as well as naturalistic contexts, however, learners often observe the output of others without producing their own output. Is it helpful for learners to observe output without actually taking part in it? With regard to comprehension, Swain (2000) suggested no significant differences between learners who observed interaction and learners who took part in interaction and therefore suggested that it may not be necessary for learners to take part in interaction for it to have a beneficial effect on comprehension; simply observing interaction may be sufficient. Gass (2013) compared the developmental outcomes for learners who were in the same class and carried out the same task. Some learners actively participated in interaction and some learners listened. Scores for vocabulary acquisition and comprehension were not significantly different for these learners. Ellis et al. concluded that active participation may be less important for acquisition than has been claimed, but they noted that it is not detrimental either (Swain, 2000).

2.9.5 Summary

The Interactionist Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of input, output, and interaction for second language acquisition. It proposes that when learners encounter communication difficulties and have to negotiate meaning, this interaction facilitates learning. Misunderstandings cause speakers to modify their speech by simplifying vocabulary, adjusting grammar structures, clarifying meaning, and so on. This

highlights gaps in the learner's language abilities and draws conscious attention to linguistic forms they find challenging. The learner is then pushed to produce modified output, reformulating their utterances in response. Through these iterative cycles of negotiation, input modification, and output modification centered around resolving issues, language forms become salient and the learner builds both conscious and subconscious knowledge of the target language.

The text also discusses how input can be made more comprehensible to learners when native speakers adjust their speech, such as simplifying vocabulary and sentence structure. Observing interactions may help comprehension, but active participation provides additional benefits for acquiring language by forcing learners to process syntax and try out new linguistic forms as they struggle to make themselves understood. In summary, the Interactionist Hypothesis proposes that meaning-focused interaction facilitates second language acquisition because the negotiations it triggers help make input comprehensible, push learners to modify their output, and draw attention to linguistic gaps.

2.10 The role of input in SLA

Input has a major role in second language learning and is regarded a prerequisite for successful language acquisition. Klein(1986) suggest that input is as important for the acquisition to happen as gas is for an engine to run. Littlewood (2004) in his Input Hypothesis states that "comprehensible input is the only causative value in SLA". Language learning is a subconscious process that works only when learners receive written or oral comprehensible input (p. 501). Comprehensible input is a term that encompasses Krashen's view of SLA theory where Krashen suggests that the type of input that promotes language learning has to be comprehensible and

slightly above learners' current interlanguage development "i+1" (Hsu, 2001, p. 33). Hsu (2001) suggests that acquisition and learning are different processes and what we learn does not automatically being acquired.

In the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis he asserts that there are two independent systems of language performance: The acquired system and the learned system (Mac Whinney, 2005). Acquisition is a subconscious process of language similar to the mechanisms that being involved when children acquire their first language while learning is a conscious process that involves rules knowledge. In Active Filter Hypothesis, which is an extension of the input hypothesis, VanPatten and Williams (2014) explains why there are variations in successful second language learning. Besides input, motivation, self-aptitude and anxiety are parameters that believed to affect acquisition. According to VanPatten and Williams (2014), learners with high motivation, willingness to learn and low anxiety have their filter down and acquisition takes place successfully and learning is automatic. Bahrani and Nekoueizadeh (2014) argued that the greater the amount of input the faster the acquisition. Using Interaction Hypothesis, Krashen (1989) suggested that modification to the interactional structure of conversation could promote comprehension of input.

Among other benefits negotiation of meaning increases input comprehensibility without denying access to unknown L2 vocabulary and grammatical forms as occurs with linguistic simplification. Long believes that "…negotiation for meaning and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustment by the N.S or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, selective attention and output in

productive ways" (Miyazaki, 2001, p.39). Through interaction and negotiation of meaning which includes comprehension checks, confirmation checks and clarification requests and learners can solve comprehension problems and acquire new language items. Long's Interaction Hypothesis motivated written input modification studies (Gass & Mackey, 2014; Long, 1983).

2.10.1 The role of input enhancement in SLA

Input enhancement theory, previously known as consciousness raising, was introduced by Smith (1991)) as a reaction to the assumption that comprehensible input is the only prerequisite for acquisition to happen in second language. According to Ellis (1993) "it is quite possible that the L2 learner, even though exposed to certain structures, will fail to perceive them in naturalistic input. In other words, the input does not become intake" (p. 91). Gass (2013) defines input as language data that is provided to learners either by instruction or by chance whereas intake is the part of the input that has been processed by the learner. Input enhancement is the process of input manipulation by a teacher or a textbook writer with the purpose to make more salient and thus comprehensible (Loschky, 1994). Starwood-Smith argues that drawing learners' attention to specific L2 features of written or spoken input is a necessary and sufficient condition that helps input to be processed and become intake (Santos, 1994). The pedagogical techniques that instructors use in focus on form instruction in order to make learners notice target language forms has been called consciousness raising or input enhancement. Input enhancement comes in two types: typographical (written) input enhancement and intonational (oral) input enhancement.

2.10.2 Text simplification

According to Rodrigo et al. (2004) in ESL classrooms instructors, especially at beginning levels modify oral or written input in order to increase comprehensibility. There are two types of input modification in the written mode: simplification and elaboration (Long, 1983). Researchers have investigated modifications in different linguistic levels: phonology, lexis, syntax, discourse (Gotti, 2008; Rubin, 1994; Wang, 2015). Researchers define simplification as an effort to control the text and remove difficult vocabulary, unknown grammatical constructions and complex syntactic structures in order to increase comprehensibility (Crossley et al., 2012; Siddharthan, 2014). Graded readers are a representative example of simplified text. Elaboration on the other hand differs from simplification in that it retains difficult vocabulary and complex syntactic structures and, instead, elaborated versions provide definitions of vocabulary items and paraphrases of complex sentences.

2.10.3 Pre-modified input in the context of interaction

According to Loschky II (1989) pre-modified input has also been studied by Markina, (2019) in the context of interaction. Pre-modified input is generally operationalized as input that has been carefully targeted at the level of the learner in order to facilitate learner comprehension. Negotiation is generally not necessary when input is premodified. Ellis (1993) suggested that premodified input may be found in many second language textbooks where the linguistic structures are ordered in a supposed difficulty hierarchy. For instance, the simple present tense is usually presented early on in most ESL texts. Examples, dialogues, and surrounding text are often premodified so that learners will not have difficulties with comprehension. Loschky (1994) notes that Conversational interaction that utilizes premodified input such as partially scripted role plays, for examples, dialogues and others may result in

better comprehension because learners do not have to negotiate for meaning and make adjustments. However, in terms of the interaction hypothesis, premodified input may be less beneficial for learners because their opportunities to listen for mismatches between their own output and the target language are obviously limited when the input has been premodified to ensure comprehension. Premodified input is sometimes termed "scripted" (Gor & Long, 2009)).

When input is premodified in the context of interaction, learners seldom have occasions to misunderstand, negotiate for meaning, and produce errors; and therefore, opportunities for language learning as a result of their mistakes are limited. The interaction hypothesis suggests that conditions and processes for second language learning are met by negotiation for meaning and the resulting interactional modifications that take place. Thus, premodified input, such as that obtained through scripted interaction, which results in few or no opportunities for negotiation or misunderstandings, may not be helpful for SLA. Learners who participate in negotiation in the context of interaction may have more learning opportunities.

2.10.4 Feedback, interaction, and noticing

Gass and Mackey's (2014) updated version of the interactionist hypothesis claims that implicit negative feedback, which can be obtained through negotiated interaction, facilitates SLA. Similar claims for the benefits of negotiation have been made by Mackey et al. (2013). Farrar (1992) defines several terms are used in the literature to describe the information given to children with respect to the ungrammaticality of their utterances: *negative feedback*, *negative evidence*, *negative input*, and *corrective input* which are sometimes used as synonyms. However, Morgan

et al. (1995) made a distinction among *negative evidence*, *negative feedback* and *negative input*:

a) The term *negative evidence* is used to denote corrective input that is provided immediately after a child's grammatical error in the form of a correct alternative to this error.

b) *Negative feedback* corresponds to a non-specific signal about ungrammaticality of the child utterance (e.g., clarification question).

c) *Negative input* is used as "a generic term to denote any kind of adult response, contingent on child grammatical error, which embodies information conducive to the realignment of an overgeneralized grammar".

Subsequently, Morgan et al. (1995) negative feedback as an adult (usually parental) response to a child's utterance that provides (explicit or implicit) negative evidence about its ungrammaticality. According to Long, this feedback may induce noticing of some forms: "it is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity negative feedback obtained in negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of SL development". In this case speaker responds to the learner's ill-formed utterance with a reformulation, modifying the leaner's utterance by provision of the correct structure and the central meaning of the learner's original utterance is retained. Saxton (2000) stated that negative feedback may be perceived or reacted to differently in dyadic and classroom contexts.

Some researchers have suggested that input must be internalized in some way in order to affect the acquisition process (Clark, 2018; Gass et al., 2020; Mackey, 2013; Saxton et al., 2005). For instance, if learners are to make use of the possible benefits of interaction because it provides SL data at the appropriate time for them

and it provides feedback on their production, they must not only comprehend this SL data but must also notice the mismatch between the input and their own interlanguage system (Gass, 2013). Ellis (2003) also claimed that the acquisition process includes the procedures of noticing, comparing, and integrating, and that interaction that actually requires learners to modify their initial input may facilitate the process of integration. Thus, researchers have claimed that if interaction is to affect the learners' interlanguage, learners may need to notice the gap between their interlanguage form and the second language alternative (Long, 1983).

Esimaje (2012) define noticing-the-gap as a process that requires learners to make comparisons between their current state of linguistic competence (in their output) and the target language (input). Esimaje (2012) pointed out that "nothing in the target language is available for intake into a language learner's existing system unless it is consciously noticed" (p. 3). Noticing or attention to form may be facilitated through negotiated interaction. It has been argued that during negotiation for meaning, when learners are struggling to communicate and are engaged in trying to understand and to be understood, their attention may be on language form as well as meaning (Esimaje, 2013). Loschky (1994) has also suggested that, for some SL structures, it may be necessary for there to be incomprehensible input that is, for there to be a problem in order for learners to develop.

2.10.5 Summary

This section discusses how interaction, specifically negotiation routines during communication breakdowns, facilitates acquisition by drawing attention to linguistic gaps. Negative feedback, defined as responses signaling issues in learner output, provides negative evidence about forms. This may induce noticing – conscious

attention to the mismatch between interlanguage and target forms. Noticing gaps through interaction is key for intake and integration of new language knowledge. Negotiation highlights problematic features, driving comparison to moves modeling correct forms. Input must be noticed at some level to become internalized. Thus, concepts covered - negative feedback, negotiation of meaning, recasts, and noticing – relate to central FFI mechanisms. When communication issues trigger negotiation episodes aimed at mutual understanding, forms causing issues are implicitly emphasized through reformulations and clarification moves. Attentional resources concentrate on resolving form-meaning connections. Over cycles, integrating new forms perceived during finely-tuned negotiation facilitates restructuring of mental representations and gradual approximation of target language competence. FFI research must uncover how teachers elicit, sustain and extend such episodes shaping accuracy development along with fluency. In sum, literature in this area validates reactive focus on difficult forms through interactive feedback and push for modifications as an incidental route to interlanguage growth when woven into larger communicative agendas.

2.11 Language features in form-focused instruction

Form-focused instruction encompasses drawing learners' attention to challenging or error-prone aspects of the target language. Research has investigated the implementation of FFI targeting a diverse range of linguistic features, including phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, and discourse elements of the L2 (Ellis, 2016). This review will analyze key considerations and findings regarding utilization of FFI for these different language areas.

2.11.1 Phonological features

Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) notes that accurate pronunciation and control of phonemic contrasts represents one of the most persistent and challenging areas for many second language learners across proficiency levels. Difficulties relate to articulation habits ingrained from the first language interfering with new sound patterns, along with limitations in perception abilities. Form-focused instruction targeting phonology includes techniques aimed at addressing production, decoding and cognitive awareness of problematic sounds in the L2 (Couper, 2006). For example, learners may struggle to perceive or pronounce English interdental fricatives like 'th'. Input flooding provides repeated listening examples from the teacher or recordings highlighting distinctions between /θ/ and /ð/ across words to attune perceptual abilities. Textual enhancement via bolding or underlining draws attention to orthographical distinctions related to the sounds (Nabei & Swain, 2002). Recasts can implicitly model accurate articulation during communicative activities when errors are made. Explicit instruction also builds cognitive awareness of how positioning affects air flow and voicing for precision (Kissling, 2015). Form-focused instruction thus targets phonological challenges through input manipulation, interactional feedback and explicit concepts - facilitating cognitive comprehension, controlled practice and fluent application.

2.11.2 Lexical features

As Nagy (1997) discussed, vocabulary acquisition entails incremental building of a complex matrix of interrelated nodes at semantic, morphological and phonological/orthographic levels for accurate production and recognition. Yet many learners over rely on very basic words for conveying ideas. Form-focused instruction scaffolds this integration through focused activities aimed at efficient lexical

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development. Techniques include input flood of texts where a teacher pre-identifies 10-15 sophisticated terms that suit topic goals and are at an appropriate frequency level for the learners' stage (Webb, 2007). Repeated contextualized input elaborates finer nuances between related words and collocation tendencies. Output pushing tasks then require students use certain marked terms in original written or spoken production – forcing deeper processing and controlled practice (Newton, 2013). Over cycles, network integration strengthens with both comprehension and generation. Research shows gains in both recall and spontaneous usage of target vocabulary from such FFI highlighting (Boers et al., 2017). Thus explicit attention to accurate semantics, form associations and contextual constraints of challenging lexis facilitates acquisition.

2.11.3 Morphological and syntactic features

As Housen et al. (2019) expound, grasp of interfaces between meaning and form stands as a pivotal challenge in attaining native-like proficiency in morphosyntax – encompassing inflectional markers like noun/verb alternations and broader structures for building accurate, complex utterances. Accessing universal grammar foundations from childhood, first language biases often lead learners to overgeneralize or misanalyse properties. This results in persistent errors or avoidance even at advanced fluency levels (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Form-focused instruction provides pathways for unpacking difficult L2 concepts and internalizing accurate mappings. Consciousness-raising tasks deliver explicit rule explanation paired with structured input analysis to cement declarative knowledge (Fotos, 2002). Output-pushing production then stresses applying concepts to encode ideas, revealing gaps. Dictogloss reconstruction collaboratively resolves comprehension and mapping issues through peer feedback (Adams, 2009). Over cycles, provision of explicit intensives

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and meaning-focused practice allows proceduralization and automaticity to develop in utilizing complex grammar (Ellis, 2016). Teachers must carefully determine structures for focus based on inherent complexity and learner readiness (Spada & Tomita, 2010). But formal attention and communicative experience together combines understanding and skill-building.

2.11.4 Discourse features

Lastly, as Byrnes (2009) indicates, ultimate attainment entails communicating with cohesion, rhetorical finesse and logical flow matching native expectations across paragraphs, not just accuracy at a sentence level. Yet many advanced students still produce writing lacking clear chains of ideas or maturity in style tone. Even oral fluency includes pauses, connectors and elaborations signaling tighter organization (Tyler 2020). Form-focused instruction on rhetorical or organizational elements provides support at this macro level. For example, Adams (2003) used text reconstruction to draw attention to transition words and explicit signals guiding readers across ideas. Teachers highlight or elicit certain markers missing between utterances that cause confusion in understanding writer goals or positions (Byrd & Rex, 2008). Over revisions, students resolve gaps in application of functions like compare/contrast signals, thesis statement fronting, supportive detailed chains, cohesive ties between points etc. (Ferris, 2012). Attention on these discourse features strengthens precision on how ideas relate and progress for clear communication meeting norms.

2.11.5 Summary

In summary, research provides extensive evidence for benefits of FFI targeting all core aspects of linguistic competence - from sounds to words to complex grammar

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to textual fluency. But particular techniques suit certain features based on cognition requirements, with explicit isolated instruction more fitting for initial rule learning while implicit highlighting during communication enables acquisition of forms in context over time (Lo & Murphy, 2010). Ultimately studies support that overt attention to a full range of error-prone L2 features allows accurate encoding and interpretation skills to catch up with functional fluency.

2.12   The role of form-focused instruction in teaching and learning Grammar

Although grammatical knowledge is necessary, it should not be learned for its own sake (Abadi & Rezaei, 2021). Gumede (2019) notes that if instructors contextualize grammar points, students can also learn the social use of the language and develop their sociolinguistic and discoursal competence in addition to their linguistic competence. Kiss and Rimbar (2021) add that explicit presentation of grammar can facilitate and speed up learning, and provide input for noticing patterns and communicative use as well as stylistic variation of language. As a result, Saito and Plonsky (2019) emphasize that FFI can boost students' proficiency and help to strengthen their communicative competence. As to which type of FFI forms to use, Wang (2021) says that FonF is better than FonFS because FonF is non-interfering and the students' attention is drawn to grammatical forms whenever necessary during the lesson where the emphasis is on use, meaning, and communication whereas in FonFS, the stress is mainly on language forms to the exclusion of their function in discourse environment.

Abadi and Rezaei (2021) raise the issue of which grammatical items should be included in a textbook and how they should be sequenced and taught. They observe that the choice of the grammar points can be selected and sequenced from simple to

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complex and the selection should be based on the known errors produced by learners (Kiss & Rimbar, 2021). Abadi and Rezaei (2021) call for focus on the form of the language by the instructors because the form of the language is as important as its function. This is because if students acquire the correct grammatical structure of the language, they will able to produce accurate sentences and utterances. However, if the form and function of the language are not internalized concurrently, the students will not be able to use language in written or spoken discourse. Abadi and Rezaei (2021) conclude that the instructors must provide students with clear and elaborate explanations of language rules and enough examples because grammar cannot be acquired in out of context sentences and in a vacuum.

While communicating meaning should be the ultimate goal, focus on grammatical forms plays an important facilitating role rather than being an end in itself (Abadi & Rezaei, 2021). FFI techniques provide pathways for internalizing challenging concepts and patterns necessary for accurate encoding and interpretation. FFI helps make complex forms salient through input enhancement during meaning-focused activities (Wang, 2021). Explicit teaching also efficiently builds initial conscious rule knowledge, allowing monitoring (Gumede, 2019). Form-focused instruction aids noticing of syllabus points and stylistic variations to expand sociolinguistic competence alongside communicative skills (Kiss & Rimbar, 2021). An effective curriculum blends form-focused episodic interventions drawing attention to difficulty areas with predominant meaning-based interaction. The former strengthens accuracy, complexity and native-likeness, allowing students to produce well-formed discourse meeting expectations. The latter sustains engagement and purpose while implicitly reinforcing concepts. In summary, strategic FFI adoption fulfills a key role in balancing linguistic challenges with functional goals - cementing

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conscious knowledge and automaticity of difficult-to-acquire L2 grammar structures needed for conveying subtleties of meaning. Ongoing support tailors to developmental trajectories.

2.13   Related studies

Focus-on-form instruction has been investigated and implemented in many and different types of contexts, students, and levels. Focus-on-form instruction implies directing students' attention to language features that otherwise would not have been attended to. Mansouri and Jami (2022) describe it as a "pedagogical journey whose success is intricately linked to the quest and challenge of figuring out what language to focus on in the context of content instruction" (p. 257). As stated by Kääntä (2021), there is a need for "identifying subject-specific language use in terms of lexicon and genres for various content areas" (p. 196). Form-focused instruction research has explored attention targeting various linguistic aspects, not just vocabulary acquisition. For example, Spada & Lightbown (2008) reviewed studies focused on the effects of FFI on English question development, passive voice constructions, adverb placement, and tense-aspect morphology. A substantial portion of FFI work has involved grammar structures, with Ellis (2016) documenting attention paid to transitive/intransitive verbs, pronouns, nominal agreement, formulaic sequences, phrasal modals, negation, reference tracking, word order and more. Phonological research includes Wilkerson (2011) using recasts to improve Mandarin speakers' English syllable coda accuracy. Formulaic sequences have also been targeted, like Bamba (2012), developing pragmatic routines for requests and apologies.

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According to Rieder-Bünemann et al. (2022), when there was a focus on syntax, teachers primarily concentrated on verb tenses such as simple present or past or adjective. They also claim that "the only other structures featured - more than once - were transition words (either sequence words or comparison/contrast words), identifying parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb only), and sentence structure (involving peer correction of sentences in writing)" (Rieder-Bünemann et al., 2022, p. 18). Similarly, Kääntä (2021) in a study conducted in Italy found that the attention to form given by Italian lecturers was not very high as the total number of times in which language received some attention was very low. From the over sixteen hours of observation, there was evidence of only 76 episodes of focus on form distributed as follows: lecturers focus on lexical items in 25 episodes, basically in this type of focus on form, "a lexical element is explained or its meaning provided" (Kääntä, 2021, p. 197); only in four episodes did lecturers focus on syntax in which the lecturer dealt with a syntactic element. The only syntactic feature addressed by the lecturers was related to the use of modals.

There were 12 episodes in which there was a focus on typographical input enhancement. This means that instances in which input was made visible to students through the underlining of some key terms in the handouts occurred. Specifically, the instructor drew attention to certain target vocabulary or grammatical structures in the input materials by typographically enhancing them. For example, the past progressive verb forms (was/were + verb + ing) printed in the texts used in class were underlined to highlight this specific feature the teacher aimed to focus on. The presumption was that adding this visual salience through textual formatting techniques would increase the chance of students noticing these language forms in the input. According to theories such as the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), drawing conscious

attention to linguistic features helps facilitate the intake process of encoding information into memory for acquisition. So by perceptually highlighting target items in the written input through underlining, the instructor intended to make the forms more salient and thereby induce students' noticing and subsequent processing and internalization of the past progressive tense forms and usage patterns. Over multiple encounters in the enhanced texts, the hypothesis was that this typographical input enhancement would implicitly prompt greater awareness and more robust mental representations of the focused grammatical constructions needed for their integration into learners' interlanguage systems. Finally, 35 occurrences of code-switching were coded; that is, moments when attention is paid to explaining by translating lexis (Rieder-Bünemann et al., 2022).

In a study conducted by Karmiya (2021), two English classes in a public high school in Japan taught by a native speaker of English were observed. Results showed that the teacher proactively focused exclusively on lexicon where the instructor frequently asked students about the meaning of the new vocabulary in the material they were using. On the other hand, the teacher, most of the time, showed a reactive focus on form as "63% of the time when the teacher focused on form, concentrating mainly on pronunciation, followed by lexicon with 23% and syntax with only 14%" (Kamiya 2021, p. 393). In another study, Ordonez (2020) investigated a teacher L1 use during focus-on-form Episodes (FFEs) in Spanish as a foreign language classroom at a US university. Derived from 12 hours of videotaped lessons, the researchers identified the linguistic areas that the teacher, mainly, focused on concluding that when the teacher used the L1 and focused on form, they mainly targeted syntax (48%), followed by vocabulary (36%), and semantics (11.5%). Likewise, in a study conducted at a university in Catalonia in Spain, Ordonez (2020)

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discovered that "teachers made use of L1 or the careful planning of discourse with elaborated definitions" (p. 5). Even more, when there was a breakdown in communication, the teacher demanded for clarification from students, which generated a repair exchange on the mispronounced lexical feature.

Aiming to describe the implementation of CBI at the faculty of Arts and Sciences in a state university in Turkey, Gholami and Gholami (2020) collected data through observations and interview of participants of content classes and laboratory work courses. Data revealed that teachers explained terminology in English through morphological analysis, and "teachers explained the root and affixes of the content vocabulary. Finally, the teacher "switched to Turkish to give the Turkish equivalent" (Yataganbaba & Yildirim, 2015, p. 82). In comparison, from the Chinese context, Lo (2020) reports that when addressing language, teachers tended to direct attention to language and vocabulary for classification. Derived also from a Chinese context, Lo (2020) gave an account of four content-based second language lessons at the middle school level. Results revealed that when drawing students' attention to language, teachers mainly concentrated on syntax: the use of cause-effect, the if-conditional; on morphology: the spelling of the word lens, and the pronunciation of a few words. Martinez-Buffa (2022), in the work regarding the Mexican context, reports that from the two CBI teachers observed at a university level, whenever they drew students' attention to language, they mainly addressed vocabulary and pronunciation, followed by morphology and syntax.

Other SLA researchers have long been interested in whether FFI positively affects the second language acquisition of learners learning in predominantly communicative classrooms (Martinez-Buffa, 2022). A review of research over the last

20 years provides strong evidence to show that FFI may greatly improve linguistic knowledge. Early evidence appeared in Sakiroglu's (2020) study which investigated the effects of focus on form and corrective feedback provided in the context of communicative language teaching. They found that compared with meaning-focused instruction alone, "form-based instruction within a communicative context contributed to higher levels of linguistic knowledge and performance" (p. 443). This finding is supported by Sakiroglu (2020) experimental study, which revealed that learners who had received focus-on-form instruction improved, both in terms of the number of attempts they made to produce the linguistic target (past time reference) and the accuracy of their attempts. Sakiroglu (2020) also explored whether an early instructional focus on form could influence immersion students' acquisition of French grammatical gender, which had been found to be a persistent problem. Her study suggested that instructional focus on form could have lasting beneficial effects, not just for adult learners, but also for learners as young as 7 or 8.

Sakiroglu (2020) steered a quasi-experimental study that examined whether guiding learners to focus on form through interaction enhancement (or modifying otherwise meaning-focused interaction patterns) could help first-year Japanese college students in learning how to use articles in English. He discovered that interaction enhancement plus formal debriefing had a greater impact on learners' acquisition of English articles than interaction enhancement plus meaning-focused debriefing; feedback on form was more beneficial for learners' language development than just feedback on content. More recently, Sanosi (2022) reviewed 11 studies which examined the effects of form-focused instruction on learners' free language production and concluded that focus on form could contribute to the acquisition of implicit knowledge, defined as learners' intuitive awareness of linguistic norms and

their ability to process language automatically. Azizpour and Alavinia's (2021) observational study confirmed the earlier studies, finding again a positive impact for incidental focus-on-form instruction: learners were able to recall the linguistic target correctly or partially correctly nearly 60% of the time one day after the focus-on-form episode, and 50% of the time two weeks later.

Quite recently, Bouffard et al. (2021) investigated the effects of focus on form on 8-year-old learners' language awareness and learning. Specifically, they found that learning metalinguistic terminology and working in groups to focus on form, helped the young learners notice and analyze their own errors and improved their ability to repair them. This finding points again to the impact that focus on form can have on promoting learners' language awareness and learning. Studies have explored both proactive/preplanned FFI chosen by teachers and reactive FFI spontaneously addressing learner errors (Doughty & Williams, 1998). Remote/isolated FFI occurs before/after communication, while embedded/integrated FFI happens concurrently (Ellis, 2016). Research also contrasts explicit FFI with implicit techniques drawing attention to forms more subtly (Valeo, 2013). Furthermore, a range of FFI techniques utilized in interventions have been examined, including input flooding, textual enhancement, task essential language, dictogloss tasks, structured input activities, recasts, prompts, clarification requests and metalinguistic feedback (Shintani, 2016). Studies manipulate use of combinations of techniques or compare single strategies.

The review discusses how FFI has targeted phonology, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and discourse patterns. For example, Saito & Plonsky (2019) found benefits for phonological instruction on pronunciation of English vowel contrasts. Loewen (2021) showed gains in collocation knowledge from textual

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enhancement and pushed output on formulaic sequences. Studies have frequently focused on difficult grammar points like tense-aspect marking, word order, reference tracking etc. (Ellis, 2006). In analysis across a range of techniques, language areas and proficiency levels, meta-analyses substantiate clear benefits of FFI for linguistic development. Gains have been shown in accuracy and complexity of production, durability over time, lexical access speed and depths of knowledge (DeKeyser, 2003; Lee & Révész, 2020). FFI also enhances noticing and self-monitoring abilities aiding future autonomous learning (Ranta & Lyster, 2018). However, challenges remain regarding transferring gains to free construction without support. Overall though, FFI facilitates interlanguage growth.

2.14   Conclusion

To be able to speak and understand a second language requires more than knowing a long list of vocabulary or grammatical structures as students of high school know but are unable to communicate in English. To be proficient in a second language demands that you mutter grammatical rules in a meaningful way. It also means that material designers should design books in which the students will be guided to use structures in a meaningful way as Tran et al. (2023) argue. If the students` attention is just directed to meaning, it would be useful but for a short period of time because the structures of the language would not be internalized for future use in the long-term memory. So, some degree of attention should be paid to forms.

Comparing the structure-based proposals, the students should be involved in tasks that do not give them the feeling of pressure to produce the forms. They should use the forms in an unforced manner as Tran et al. (2023) mention in task-naturalness. To teach the students' specific structures the teacher can get help from the task-utility

which is also mentioned by Tran et al. (2023). Sanosi (2022) found that learners who engaged in communicative, focus on form activities improved their grammatical accuracy and their use of new forms. Focus-on-form instruction (FFI) activities can lead students to produce more accurate structures. The results of some researches have shown the effectiveness of FFI. Like any other language learning process, FFI has its own limitations and to overcome or lessen them demand that teachers gain mastery over the language and apply other useful methodologies. In sum, FFI alone with traditional curriculum cannot help students acquire language unless they are allowed to experience a rich mix of comprehensible input to achieve this.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims at introducing the research approach and research design used in the study. Additionally, it contains the sources of data, data collection tools and techniques that were employed in the study. Data analysis, population, sampling techniques, reliability, validity and ethical consideration are also included in the chapter.

3.1 Research approach

Different types of research are classified based on a range of criteria including the application of study, the objectives of the research, and information sought (Taherdoost, 2022). According to Taherdoost (2022), research can be categorised into qualitative, quantitative approaches considering the type of data sought. Also, a mixture of these methods is known as mixed method study that covers advantages of both methods (Taherdoost, 2022). The study adopted a qualitative approach in its work. According to Groenland and Dana (2020) as cited by Grahek et al. (2021), a qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher built a complex, holistic picture, analysed words, reported detailed views of informants, and conducted the study in a natural setting. Qualitative research is inductive, subjective, and process-oriented to achieve the knowledge being sought from the participant's point of view.

3.2 Research design

A research design can be a specification of operations for the testing or verification of the hypotheses under a given set of conditions and of procedures for measuring variables. It involves the selection of persons or things to be studied (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The research design used in this study was textual analysis, allowing the investigator to focus on texts obtained from observation and recordings of lessons which were transcribed and rigorously examined from fifteen teachers at the three secondary schools in the Ga West Municipality. Hassan (2023) defines textual analysis as the process of examining or analysing any type of text including literature, poetry, speeches and scientific papers, in order to understand its meaning. Textual analysis is a valuable tool in research which allows researchers to examine and interpret text data in a systematic and rigorous way (Hassan, 2023). It attempts to describe systematically how lessons unfolded regarding FFI, and at the same time, providing information about the type of language techniques that teachers pay attention to during FFI and finally, the effect of FFI on the students' language acquisition.

3.3 Population

According to Mohajan (2020), population simply refers to people, events, animals, things, or objects (all the possible units or elements) who or which are used in studies as defined from which a sample is drawn. It is a group of individuals who share certain characteristics such as students, teachers, and measurement results. This study involved three Senior High Schools namely Amasaman Senior High Technical School, Adyen Kotoku Senior High School, and Akramaman Senior High Technical School, all in the Ga West Municipal Assembly in the Greater Accra Region. The

participants included 15 teachers teaching English Language and 862 Form 3 students.

3.4 Sample and sampling technique

A researcher usually cannot include all individuals with whom he is concerned in a study (Mohajan, 2020). Rather, he selects a small proportion of the population through a process of sampling. And the small representative group from the population is called a sample (Mohajan, 2020). According to Mohajan (2020), a sample is representative of an entire population. It refers to a group of subjects selected from a population of interest and which must be representative of the whole population. Any given sample can be part of more than one population. In this study, only English language teachers teaching third year classes were engaged as they were the only group available at the time. On the part of the students, all the third-year students were sampled from the three schools.

The researcher settled on using teachers of English language of Form 3 classes since they were the only language teachers available at the time of the study. Hence, the sample of the study is the same as the population of the study which is referred as the census technique. The census technique refers to studying the entire population of interest, rather than taking a sample. This is often used when the population size is relatively small and it is feasible to include the whole population in the study. The justification for using a census is that it provides complete data on the population of interest, eliminating sampling error and providing maximum representation (Fowler, 2013). By surveying the whole target population, the researcher can get a full picture without any gaps in the data.

A census is appropriate when the population size is limited and concentrated in a certain area, as was the case with the Form 3 English teachers (Lavrakas, 2008). It is also suitable for small, well-defined populations where aggregate data is not needed. By using a census technique, the researcher was able to maximize the sample representation of their target population. Since the teachers studied represented the entire population, the sample and population were identical. This allowed for a complete and thorough analysis of this particular group of English language teachers.

While all the teachers at the selected schools were included in the study, the students were selected using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are the easiest for the researcher to access. According to Creswell (2012), convenience sampling is a sampling in which the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied. For the focus group discussion, a total of 54 students were selected through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was chosen as the method for selecting participants due to its ease and efficiency in gathering a diverse group of students.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The researcher utilized three main data collection instruments in this study: audio recordings, interviews, and focus group discussions. Each instrument served a unique purpose in gathering comprehensive data to address the research objectives.

3.5.1 Audio recordings

Audio recordings involve capturing verbal interactions and conversations using an audio recording device. In this study, the researcher recorded English lessons taught by the teacher participants. These recordings allowed the researcher to obtain

first-hand observational data on how teachers implement form-focused instruction (FFI) in their actual classroom settings. A key advantage of audio recordings is that they provide an accurate, unfiltered record of real-life verbal exchanges and teaching processes (Dörnyei, 2007). They capture nuances that may be missed by observation or recall alone. Recordings also allow for repeated analysis to extract deeper insights. Furthermore, audio recordings can be easily shared and accessed by multiple individuals, allowing for collaborative analysis and discussion. Additionally, they provide a valuable resource for researchers and educators to study language patterns, communication strategies, and pedagogical techniques in a more comprehensive manner.

Nevertheless, its disadvantage is that the presence of a recording device can cause reactive effects, altering normal behavior. This phenomenon, known as the observer effect, can lead to participants modifying their natural speech patterns or behaviors when they are aware of being recorded. Moreover, the use of recording devices may raise privacy concerns, especially in sensitive or confidential settings where individuals may not feel comfortable being recorded. However, with careful positioning, participants often habituate to the recorder and demonstrate natural behaviour (Patton, 2002). Overall, audio recordings were selected as they enable detailed examination of real-world instructional processes regarding FFI implementation. The recordings supplement and validate data from other instruments.

3.5.2 Interview

Interviews involve conducting personalized, in-depth discussions with participants using open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher interviewed the English teachers using a semi-structured format covering their use of

FFI techniques, challenges faced, and perceived impacts on students. A major strength of interviews is that they yield very rich, descriptive insights into subjects' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences in their own words (Creswell, 2014). This level of detail and nuance is hard to capture through surveys or observation. Interviews allow tapping into subjective viewpoints. However, interviews have limitations as well. Their data relies on self-report which can be biased, inaccurate, or shaped by the desire to please the interviewer (Adams, 2015). To mitigate this, the researcher aimed to establish good rapport with interviewees and assured them their responses were confidential. Interview data was also triangulated with observational data from class recordings. Interviews provided crucial qualitative data on teacher's own accounts of their FFI approaches, which complemented the concrete behavioral data from class observations. The interviews gave insights into teachers' reasoning, decision-making, perceived challenges and impacts that could not be discerned from recordings alone. In summary, in-depth semi-structured interviews enabled eliciting rich perspectives from teachers to address the research questions. They provided an important piece of the puzzle in combination with class recordings and student focus groups.

3.5.3   Focus group discussion

Focus groups involve facilitated discussions among a small group of participants to gain in-depth qualitative data (Wilkinson, 2004). The researcher conducted focus groups with students to explore their views on FFI techniques used by teachers and their impacts on their English proficiency. The advantages of focus groups include gaining insights into group norms and dynamics beyond individual opinions. The interaction can spark rich discussions. These discussions can provide a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives, allowing the researcher to uncover patterns and themes that may not have been apparent through

individual interviews. Additionally, focus groups allow for the exploration of differing viewpoints and the opportunity for participants to build upon and challenge each other's ideas, leading to a more comprehensive analysis of the topic at hand.

However, focus group discussions require skilled moderation, and groupthink can downplay dissenting views (Smithson, 2008). Another limitation is that focus groups may not be representative of the entire population, as participants are typically selected based on specific criteria. Additionally, the dynamics within a focus group can sometimes lead to dominant voices overpowering quieter participants, potentially skewing the results. Despite their limitations, focus groups provide an efficient means to gather students' attitudes, experiences, and beliefs regarding any concept in their English classes. The group setting encourages the open sharing of perspectives. This allows for a rich and diverse range of opinions to be expressed, which may not have been possible through individual interviews or surveys alone. Moreover, the interactive nature of focus groups facilitates the exploration of complex topics and the emergence of new insights that may have otherwise been overlooked.

3.6 Data collection

The researcher collected data over the course of one full academic term in order to gather sufficient and comprehensive information to address the study's research questions and objectives. Three main instruments were utilized to collect complementary forms of qualitative data - audio recordings of English lessons taught by the teacher participants, semi-structured interviews with the teachers, and focus group discussions with students. Using multiple data sources allowed for method triangulation, enhancing the credibility and depth of findings by obtaining varied perspectives on form-focused instruction implementation and impacts. The

combination of concrete observational data from class recordings with the descriptive insights from interviews and discussions provided a detailed understanding grounded in real-world practice. The following subsections outline how each instrument was specifically utilized to systematically collect data.

3.6.1 Audio recording

I recorded the English language lessons taught by each of the 15 teachers over the course of one full academic term. I scheduled recordings approximately 2-3 times per week with each teacher, gathering 15-20 hours of recordings in total. The recordings were captured using a digital audio recorder positioned at the back of the classroom. To help participants habituate to the recorder and display natural behaviour, I left the devices in place for a few introductory lessons before collecting data. Recordings were initiated before the teacher and students entered, and concluded after they left the room. I obtained the required permission from the school heads and teachers in advance. The teachers wore wireless microphones to isolate their voices and instructions. I reminded students periodically about the recording to maintain awareness. However, the equipment was discreet enough to avoid overly distracting the class. The audio recordings were transferred to my computer after each session. I spot-checked the recordings for audibility and technical issues. The audio files were catalogued systematically for easy retrieval by date, school, teacher, and lesson. Copies were stored securely in password-protected folders and backed up externally.

3.6.2 Interview

I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each of the 15 teachers at the end of the academic term, in a private room at their respective schools. The interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and followed an interview protocol with open-ended

questions. However, I also asked follow-up questions for clarification or elaboration as needed. With permission, I audio-recorded the interviews using a digital audio recorder for later transcription and analysis. I also took written notes during the discussion. I began interviews by explaining the purpose, confirming informed consent, and assuring confidentiality. During the interview, I focused on building rapport, listening actively, and using probes to get in-depth responses from the teachers.

3.6.3 Focus group discussion

To gather student perspectives on form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques, I conducted focus group discussions with volunteers at three schools. At each school, 6 students from the same classes participated in 60-90 minute sessions held after school in empty classrooms. The sessions followed a protocol of open-ended questions about the students' experiences with and attitudes towards the FFI techniques used in their particular English classes. When necessary, I asked follow-up questions to clarify or expand on comments. With permission, I audio recorded each discussion, which lasted an average of 75 minutes, to maintain an accurate qualitative record. Another researcher assisted with note-taking for peer examination. In total, the 9 focus groups involving 54 students amounted to approximately 11 hours of recorded discussion on FFI techniques. The small-group discussions provided an in-depth qualitative window into students' perspectives to complement the broader teacher census.

3.7 Validity

Elias (2023) refers to validity as how researchers talk about the extent to which results represent reality. Research methods, quantitative or qualitative, are methods of studying real phenomenon and validity refers to how much of that

phenomenon they measure verses how much *noise* or unrelated information, is captured by the results (Elias, 2023). According to Ahmed & Ishtiaq (2021), the accuracy with which a methodology measures a variable that it seeks to measure is characterised as validity. To ensure the study's validity and dependability, the study adhered to a number of suggested procedures or data collection techniques. The validity of this research was determined by the supervisor. In order to establish whether the instruments are measuring what they are intended to measure, the supervisor looked at the research questions alongside each component of the instruments. Before the instruments were issued to students and teachers, supervisory instructions were employed to make the necessary corrections.

3.8 Data analysis

The data analysis stage is crucial for making sense of all the raw qualitative data gathered during the extensive process of classroom audio recordings, teacher interviews, and student focus group discussions. Rigorous analysis techniques were required to systematically transform this subjective experiential data into meaningful findings and insights aligned to the research aims. The researcher utilized two main qualitative analysis approaches - textual analysis for the audio transcripts, and thematic analysis for the interview/discussion transcripts. These complementary techniques enabled examining both concrete behavioural details of how teachers implement form-focused instruction strategies, as well as broader perceptual themes regarding participants' beliefs, attitudes and experiences with the impacts, values, challenges and recommendations pertaining to FFI implementation. The analysis also elucidated points of convergence and divergence between teacher and student perspectives on the research issues. By triangulating findings from across these diverse data sources, the rigorous analysis procedures produced trustworthy, multi-

dimensional insights to address the research questions on FFI usage, targets, and perceived acquisition effects in the studied English teaching context.

3.8.1 Textual analysis

Textual analysis was one of the main analysis techniques used in this study. It involved closely examining and interpreting the textual data from the audio recordings of English lessons and their transcriptions. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service. The researcher then reviewed the transcripts while listening to the original recordings to verify accuracy and fill any gaps. Names and identifying details were anonymized. The textual analysis process began with repeated close reading of the transcripts to gain immersion and an overall sense of the data. The researcher then began coding the data by labeling relevant features related to the research questions regarding how teachers implemented form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques and integrated them into broader English lessons.

The coding process was inductive, allowing codes and categories to emerge directly from the data. Examples of codes *included explicit grammar explanation*, *corrective feedback*, *vocabulary repetition drills*, and *integrated grammar activity*. All data segments related to FFI implementation were coded. The codes were iteratively refined and organized into broader categories and themes. The themes captured patterns related to how teachers utilized and sequenced different FFI strategies, the extent of integration with other lesson content, their approach to error correction, and other techniques. In addition to coding, the researcher also annotated transcripts to note contextual factors, paralinguistic cues, classroom interactions and reactions. This supplementary contextualization helped enrich understanding beyond just the spoken

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words. The final output of the rigorous textual analysis process was a comprehensive descriptive mapping of how FFI was implemented in real English lessons based on the teacher's and students' actual language and interactions during class.

3.8.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the qualitative data from the teacher interview and student focus group discussions. This involved identifying and interpreting overarching themes and patterns in the subjective perspectives and experiences described by participants. For this analysis, the researcher first had all interviews and focus groups professionally transcribed. The transcripts were checked against the original audio recordings for accuracy. Once the transcripts were verified, the researcher conducted a thorough reading of the data to familiarize themselves with the content. She then began coding the data, assigning labels or codes to segments that represented similar ideas or concepts. This process allowed for the identification of recurring themes and patterns within the data, which were further analyzed and interpreted to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

The transcripts were read closely while also reviewing any accompanying notes. An initial round of open coding was performed to label and categorize all data related to the research questions on perceptions of FFI. These initial codes were then consolidated into broader conceptual themes that captured key patterns in the participants' perceptions, such as perceived benefits of FFI, implementation challenges, and suggested improvements. Thematic maps were created to organize the themes and relationships between them. The thematic maps helped to visually represent the interconnectedness of the different themes and provided a clear

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overview of the overall findings. This process allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the data, ensuring that no important insights were overlooked. Additionally, quotes from the transcripts were selected to support and illustrate each theme, adding depth and richness to the analysis.

The researcher interpreted the themes in light of the observational data from class recordings and existing literature to derive deeper explanatory and theoretical insights. Attention was paid to the divergence or convergence of perspectives between teachers and students. Overall, the rigorous thematic analysis elucidated participants' subjective experiences and perspectives to provide a rich understanding of the perceived effectiveness, values, challenges, and recommendations related to FFI implementation. The analysis also revealed the complex interplay between the different themes, highlighting the interconnectedness of participants' experiences and perspectives. This holistic approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the perceived effectiveness of FFI implementation. Additionally, by considering both teachers' and students' perspectives, the analysis provided a balanced view of the challenges and recommendations for improving FFI implementation in educational settings.

3.9 Reliability

Reliability refers to how consistent a measuring device is. A measurement is said to be reliable or consistent if the measurement can produce similar results if used again in similar circumstances. According to Rasib et al. (2023), reliability tells you how consistently a method measures something. When you apply the same method to the same sample under the same conditions, you should get the same results. If not, the method of measurement may be unreliable or bias may have crept into your

research. Rasib et al. (2023) argued reliability comes in four main types. Each can be estimated by comparing different sets of results produced by the same method.

1. Test-retest: The same test over time.

2. Inter-rater: The same test is conducted by different people.

3. Parallel forms: Different versions of a test which are designed to be equivalent.

4. Internal consistency: The individual items of a test.

A common way of assessing the reliability of observations is to use inter-rater reliability. This involves comparing the ratings of two or more observers and checking for agreement in their measurements. Inter-rater reliability (also called inter-observer reliability) measures the degree of agreement between different people observing or assessing the same thing. You use it when data is collected by researchers assigning ratings, scores or categories to one or more variables, and it can help mitigate observer bias (Rasib et al., 2023). To improve the reliability of an observational study the researcher must ensure that the categories are clear. People are subjective, so different observers' perceptions of situations and phenomena naturally differ. Reliable research aims to minimize subjectivity as much as possible so that a different researcher could replicate the same results. When designing the scale and criteria for data collection, it is important to make sure that different people will rate the same variable consistently with minimal bias. This is especially important when there are multiple researchers involved in data collection or analysis.

In this study, the researcher settled on inter-rater reliability to ensure that the work covers the widespread standard practices in the field of research around the world. In order to arrive at this, the researcher employed the percentage agreement for

two raters for the work. In total, the researcher arrived at 50 transcripts from 45 observations of all the classroom observations. Of the 50 transcripts, the researcher selected 10% constituting 5 transcripts for rating. From these 5 transcripts, the researcher coded all observations of the forms and techniques of FFI that she had identified. Having educated the second rater on the FFI forms and techniques, the researcher presented the second rater with the protocols, sound files and transcripts for rating. The results from the rating of the second rater were then compared with that of the researcher for consistency. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 3.1. Results of inter-rater reliability test

Transcript	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
1	5	5	1
2	3	2	0
3	6	6	1
4	5	5	1
5	4	4	1
			4/5

Ratings (RRI) that agree score 1 (or 100%); those (RRI) that disagree is 0 (0%). The table above indicates the ratings from the two judges; the researcher and another judge.

1. The number of ratings in the agreement is 4.

2. The total number of ratings is 5.

3. Divided the total by the number in agreement to get a fraction: 4/5.

4. Converted to a percentage: 4/5 = 80%.

5. The judges agreed on 4 out of 5 scores in this competition. Percentage agreement is 4/5 = 80% (0.8), indicating high inter-rater reliability.

To evaluate the consistency of the analysis of the interview data, inter-rater reliability was examined for the coding process. A second rater was trained on the codebook developed by the researcher for labeling student statements from interview transcripts. The codebook contained detailed descriptions and inclusion/exclusion criteria for the 12 main codes used to categorize student responses on key aspects of their foreign language learning experiences and perceptions of the FFI approaches used.
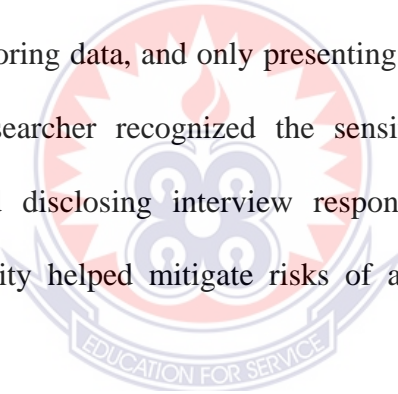
A random subset of 10 student transcripts (20% of the total 50 transcripts) was selected to assess inter-rater agreement. Both the researcher and second rater independently applied the qualitative coding scheme to code all relevant excerpts in this transcript subset. Coding consistency was evaluated using Krippendorff's alpha (α), an inter-rater reliability statistic suitable for coding tasks where multiple raters apply labels from a predefined set of codes. A value of 0 indicates no agreement, while 1 indicates perfect agreement. An alpha of .70 or higher is typically seen as acceptable reliability for qualitative research.

For the focus group discussion, coding performed by the two raters, Krippendorff's alpha was calculated as .76 based on agreement rates across the transcript subset. This indicates an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability for the interview analysis, suggesting the qualitative coding process was conducted consistently and key themes were identified from the data in a reproducible manner across multiple coders. Overall, assessing both inter-rater consistency of classroom observations and qualitative interview analysis coding enhances confidence that key aspects of the study methodology were conducted reliably. This helps mitigate

potential biases and establishes greater credibility in the research findings and conclusions drawn.

3.10 Ethical considerations

A key ethical priority was protecting the rights and welfare of the teacher and student participants. To achieve this, the researcher first obtained informed consent from all participants by clearly explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, and benefits through both written and verbal means at a level understandable to students (Diener & Crandall, 1978). Participants were informed that their involvement was completely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality of participants was maintained by using pseudonyms on transcripts and reports, securely storing data, and only presenting results in aggregate form (Orb et al., 2001). The researcher recognized the sensitive nature of recording real classroom lessons and disclosing interview responses about teaching practices. Upholding confidentiality helped mitigate risks of any negative repercussions for honest participation.

Another ethical consideration was minimizing disruption to normal class activities. The researcher coordinated recording schedules in advance at times convenient for teachers, ensured equipment setup/takedown was quick and unobtrusive, and kept observer interaction to a minimum to avoid artificially impacting behaviors (Spaulding, 2008). Students may have experienced some initial distractions having an observer present, so the researcher remained in an unobtrusive location to lessen this effect. The researcher also aimed for transparency by fully informing school administration and parents about the study's purpose and methods and offering to share results with both participants and relevant stakeholders

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(Creswell, 2013). This open communication and reporting helps build trust and understanding around the research. For the focus group interviews, the researcher carefully constructed questions and facilitation techniques to avoid leading participant responses in any direction, encourage open and honest sharing from different viewpoints, and minimize any unintended distress when discussing sensitive teaching practices (Krueger, 2002).

Any potential risks from participation were mitigated by allowing participants to skip questions they were uncomfortable answering. The researcher also watched for any signs of distress during interviews and offered breaks as needed (Liamputtong, 2007). By prioritizing participant comfort over pressing for data collection, the researcher aimed for a thoughtful ethical balance. Data security was another key ethical consideration. Recordings and transcripts were immediately de-identified and stored securely on encrypted devices, with any physical data kept in locked facilities (Sieber, 1998). No real names were linked to the data at any time. Careful data handling procedures protect participants from any potential data breaches.

All collected data were kept strictly confidential and de-identified in adherence to data protection laws. The recordings and transcripts will only be accessed by the researcher and not shared or used for any other purposes without explicit consent of the participants (Christians, 2005). The researcher made deliberate efforts to build just, honest and caring relationships with the participants by showing respect for their time and perspectives, following through on promises, and expressing appreciation for their contributions (Ellis, 2007). An ethics of care perspective helps ensure the dignity of participants is upheld. Adhering to clear ethical standards helps

this study produce meaningful results that benefit the English education community without causing any harm to the participants who made it possible.

3.11   Conclusion

This study utilized a qualitative approach and research design focused closely examining the use of form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques in real-world classroom settings. The data sources included audio recordings of English lessons taught by 15 teachers over one academic term at three Ghanaian high schools. The teacher population was sampled via a census method given its limited size. In addition, six student focus group discussions were conducted with volunteers to get their perspectives on FFI approaches used in their classes. Textual analysis was systematically applied to transcribed lesson recordings to uncover patterns in how teachers implemented different FFI strategies and integrated them into their pedagogy. Meanwhile, thematic analysis elucidated perceptual themes regarding the values, challenges, and recommendations related to FFI implementation from semi-structured interviews held with the 15 teachers as well as the student focus groups.

Multiple qualitative methods were leveraged to allow for triangulation and stronger credibility of findings. Inter-rater reliability assessment showed strong consistency between two independent coders analyzing subsets of the interview transcripts, further enhancing the dependability of analysis procedures. The study also prioritized ethical protections for the teacher and student participants, including through informed consent, confidential data handling, transparent communication with stakeholders, and respect for participant availability, perspectives and welfare throughout their voluntary involvement. In summary, the qualitative research design using lessons recordings, teacher interviews and student focus groups provided

multidimensional descriptive data to address the aims of examining FFI types used by teachers, language targets focused on, and perceived impacts on student proficiency – while upholding ethical research principles.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of data on the application of form-focused instruction among teachers to enhance the acquisition of English in their ESL classrooms in the Ga West Municipality. Data were collected by means of recordings and interview from the three senior high schools in the municipality. The objectives of the study are to identify the types of form-focused instruction applied by Form 3 English language teachers in the Ga West Municipality, to examine the language features the Form 3 English language teachers pay attention to using FFI, and to investigate the effect of FFI on students' language acquisition in ESL classroom.

The chapter is divided into three (3) sections: the first section examined the techniques of FFI used by the ESL teachers in the Ga West Municipality. The results revealed that although the teachers apply the techniques in one way or the other, it was done unconsciously as only three out of the 15 teachers claimed they are aware of the techniques. It was also revealed that the techniques are obtrusive and can stick out depending on the teachers' discretion and the forms that emerge before or during teaching. The second section focuses on the language features that teachers focus on. It was observed that the teachers focus on phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features. The evidence of use of these features as implemented by the teachers was found to be similar to the type described by Lyster (2015) who found that these features are utilized to enable students to notice and use target language features that are otherwise difficult to learn through exposure to classroom. The third and final section explores the effect of the use of FFI techniques on the student's

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English language acquisition. The results showed that even though the FFI strategy provides a holistic approach to dealing with the language challenges of the students in the ESL classroom, it also has few negative effects.

4.1 FFI techniques used by ESL teachers

The analysis indicates the various techniques that were used by the respondents during their lessons in their ESL classrooms (see Appendix C). Fifteen (15) teachers were observed in all, on various aspects of English during the lessons that were delivered 70 hours. The frequency of usage of each technique is further considered in percentages as follows: Consciousness-raising tasks (CRT) 9.8%, Input enhancement (IE) 7.3%, Output based FonF (Ob FonF), 7.3%, Task-essential language (TEL) 7.3%, Input flood (IF) 12.2%, Negotiation (N) 12.2%, Recast (R) 7.3%, Output enhancement (OE), 7.3%, Interaction enhancement (Int. E), 7.3%, Dictogloss (D) 7.3%, Input processing (IP) 7.3%, and Garden path (GP) 7.3%. The findings indicate that at least each teacher used two or more techniques of FFI during the lesson delivery, resulting in a total of 41 occurrences. Table 4.1 illustrates this distribution:

Table 4.1. FFI Techniques in relation to language aspect and FFI Forms

Forms of FFI	Language Aspect	Distribution FFI Techniques
FonFS FonF FonM	Grammar	a) consciousness-raising tasks b) negotiation c) Output-based FonF d) input flooding e) input enhancement f) recast g) output enhancement h) input processing i) dictogloss j) interaction enhancement
FonFS FonF FonM	Writing	a) consciousness-raising tasks b) recast c) input enhancement d) input flooding e) task-essential language f) negotiation g) output enhancement h) dictogloss i) interaction enhancement j) input processing
FonFS FonF FonM	Reading Comprehension	a) consciousness-raising tasks b) negotiation c) input enhancement d) input flooding e) task-essential language f) dictogloss g) garden path
FonFS FonF FonM	Core Literature	a) consciousness-raising tasks b) input flooding c) output-based FonF d) negotiation e) interaction enhancement f) garden path g) input processing h) task-essential language
FonFS FonF FonM	Oral English	a) output-based FonF b) negotiation c) recast d) output enhancement e) garden path f) input flooding

From Table 4.1, it is observed that all the teachers used all the forms of FFI; FonF, FoM, and FonFs in their ESL classrooms. With regard to aspects of the English Language, fifteen (15) teachers were observed in each of the five (5) aspects: Grammar, Writing, Reading comprehension and Summary, Oral English and Core Literature.

4.1.1 Focus-on forms

Focus-on-forms (FonFS) instruction is informed by a strong interface view and occurs when parts of a grammar are taught as discrete units in order of their linguistic complexity. This is the traditional approach to grammar teaching and is based on an artificially reproduced, as opposed to an organic, syllabus. According to Esfandiari (2021), FonFS is a traditional language teaching consisting of the presentation and practice of items drawn from a structural syllabus or an approach equated with the 'traditional' method, which entails teaching discrete linguistic structures in separate lessons in a sequence determined by syllabus writers. In this approach, language is treated as an object to be studied and language teaching is viewed to be an activity to be practiced systematically. Furthermore, learners are seen as students rather than users of the language (Sadeghi, 2022). Esfandiari (2021) again notes that FonFS is now considered the traditional approach to grammatical instruction whereby teachers and course designers create lessons, materials, and textbooks centred on structural components of the language (phonemes, sentences patterns, grammatical structures, etc.).

Classroom instruction and practice emphasize student understanding of the forms themselves and their related rules. Focus-on-forms instruction, where learning a preselected target form is the primary focus, has options of explicit and implicit

instruction. Explicit FonFS can be done deductively and inductively; the rule is presented by a teacher deductively, or learners inductively analyse the input and discover the rule by themselves (Sadeghi, 2022). Aydin (2023) observes that implicit learning allows students to infer and acquire rules without awareness. FonFS can include a structured input approach with which learners are exposed to sufficient examples of the target structure and asked to be engaged in the tasks to notice and use the target structure (Sadeghi, 2022). The FonFS techniques applied by the teachers are discussed in the section that follows.

4.1.1.1 Consciousness-raising task (CRT)

Consciousness-raising task comprises providing students with explicit instruction of the form and function under study to help them notice language features they may not notice otherwise and, thus, build conscious knowledge of how language works (Khezrlou, 2022). To raise something to consciousness means to make someone aware of something. Consciousness-raising tasks are thus designed to raise the learners' Language Awareness (LA) (Svalberg, 2009, 2012). The immediate aim of CR tasks is to help learners notice something about the language that they might not notice on their own. They are typically asked to reflect on it, their conscious knowledge and understanding (their LA) of how they usually talk to peers. Consciousness-raising tasks can help build language works, grammatically, socially, culturally. These tasks can, however, be much less controlled and more open ended. From the observation, the researcher noted CRT as one of the most frequently used techniques among the lot as it appeared four (4) times, constituting 9.8 % of the total occurrence of 100%. During a Grammar lesson in which a teacher taught Adjectives, specifically comparative and superlative Adjectives, CRT was employed to introduce the students to the rules deductively as shown in Extract 1:

Extract 1

Stud: She is more beautiful than Akosua. (Comparative)

Stud: She is the most beautiful among them. (Superlative)

Tr: She is beautiful than Akosua. (Incorrect)

Tr: She is more beautiful than Akosua. (Correct)

Now write two sentences of your own in your jotters, using this rule_____

_____. (Here the Focus was not on listening and speaking)

In this extract, the respondent delivered a Grammar Lesson on Adjectives focusing on Direct Task for the Comparative and Superlative and further employed CRT as he taught the Grammar rules of Adjectives. First of all, the respondent introduced the grammar rules to the class, including the follow:

- RULE: If an adjective word has 3 syllables, let the word more and most precede the Adjective for comparative and superlative forms respectively. In the process of producing some examples, a student committed an error as he used the wrong form of the Adjective. The respondent deployed CRT to draw the students' attention to the correct form. This is consistent with the findings of Khezrlou (2022) who discovered that with CRT, learners do not produce language but rather engage in tasks to become aware of specific linguistic features and ultimately, the way language works.

In a study, Gümüş (2021) maintains that both naturalistic learners and instructed learners more or less followed a similar order of acquisition but instructed learners mostly performed better than naturalistic learners in terms of grammatical competence also the instructed learners were superior in terms of proficiency levels

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and progression rates. According to Hosseinpur and Bagheri Nevisi (2020), as cited in Xavier and Gesser (2022), teachers use consciousness-raising tasks (CRT) as an intentional endeavour to draw learners' attention to specific grammatical features of a language which worked as a potential facilitator in improving learners' language competence.

4.1.1.2 Input flooding (IF)

According to Xavier and Gesser (2022), Input Flooding is a focus-on-form intervention in which the input that is provided to learners is seeded with multiple examples of a target structure. The expectation is that ample exposure to the same target form in the input will make it more salient, and in doing so, will draw learners' attention to the linguistic form. Input flooding remains one of the FFI techniques that can contribute to L2 vocabulary acquisition. Lloyd (2022) explains that input flood increases the salience of a target language feature through artificially engineered frequency. Input Flooding is one of the most recurring techniques of all, according to the researcher's observation. The technique was employed by most of the Language teachers in addition to other techniques to help the students reap the benefit of using a target form. This is illustrated in Extract 2:

> **Extract 2**
>
> Teacher: 1. / p/ as in pin, peak, pen, pace, prickle, plain, pipe, plain, plank.
>
> (Now, could you provide me with more examples?)
>
> Student: pineapple, prime, plump
>
> Teacher: So, what is the meaning of Plump?
>
> One is described as plump if he possesses a full rounded shape.
>
> Can you give me two synonyms of the word plump?
>
> Student: Huge, big.

From the extract, the teacher provided the students with multiple examples of the target form, which promoted their understanding of the form, thereby inspiring them to produce examples of their own. This strategy was explored by Lloyd (2022). In the experiment, the author used a battery of seven tests tapping into different aspects of lexical knowledge and found that repetition had a positive effect on learners' results at both productive and receptive level. This design is a well-founded example of the measurement of L2 learners' lexical development. As Lloyd (2022) explains, vocabulary learning is an incremental process in which different types of lexical knowledge are gradually acquired and only multiple measures of the construct allow us to comprehensively describe learners' progress. The results observed in this extract reflects that of Maryam (2019), who discovered in a research in which Input Flooding, and Input Enhancement were combined to test the effectiveness of the techniques on the Iranian EFL context. The results of the study revealed that both input enhancement and input flooding positively affected learners, writing skills.

Again the extract supports the discoveries made by various researchers who have studied the effectiveness of Input Flooding on L2 acquisition. According to them, the effectiveness of input flooding is based on a large body of work showing that repetition is an important factor in the process of attaining proficiency in an L2 class (Ellis et al., 2019). Research on individual words demonstrates that L2 learners need to encounter unknown items several times before any learning occurs (Ellis et al., 2019). For example, Erazo (2022) designed a study in which Chinese-speaking learners of English read 13 passages (250-300 words each) where 10 unknown target words were presented one, three or seven times to enhance L2 acquisition.

4.1.1.3 Task-Essential language (TEL)

TEL also known as Task-Based Approach comprises using the forms under study for the completion of tasks (Akbana & Yavuz, 2021). According to Afshar (2021, p. 21) "task-essential language" is where learners are required to perform a task which entails the use of a particular language feature. The task provides learners with frequent opportunities to use the target form and internalize knowledge of the rule. From the observation, the TEL was used three times constituting 7.3 % of the total number of occurrences of the technique. An example is found in Extract 3:

Extract 3

Tr: A phrasal Verb is a special type of phrase that consist of two and sometimes three words and act as a finite verb. The first word in a phrasal Verb is always a verb item and the second word is either a preposition or adverb.

1. She **accounts for** the money weekly. (Verb + Preposition)

2. He **puts by** his tithe every month. (Verb + Adverb Particle)

3. I can't **put up with** this attitude of the students. (Verb + Adverb +Preposition)

Tr: Consider the internal structure of the phrasal verbs and form your own examples:

Stud 1: (Verb + Preposition) The meeting has been **called off**.

Stud 2: (Verb + Adverb) We must **carry them through** the task.

Stud 3: (Verb + Adverb + Preposition) **Cut down on** your sugar intake.

Extract 6 is a Grammar lesson on Phrasal Verbs. In this lesson, the teacher provided learners with the meaning of Phrasal Verbs with examples, after which she analysed the internal structure of the phrasal Verbs with students and asked them to

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form their own examples. From the extract, it can be concluded that with the rules and examples given by the teacher, the students could easily apply them to the given task effectively. This underscores the scholarly notion of some linguists who asserts that synthetic syllabi (lexical, structural, and notional-function) for example, are accompanied by synthetic *methods* (Grammar Translation, ALM, Audio-Visual Method, Silent Way) and by the synthetic classroom devices and practices commonly associated with them (e.g. explicit grammar rules, repetition of models, memorization of short dialogs, linguistically simplified texts, transformation exercises, explicit negative feedback, and display questions). Together, they result in lessons with what Afshar (2021) calls a focus on forms. These lessons tend to be rather dry, consisting principally of work on the linguistic items, which students are expected to master one at a time, often to native speaker levels, with anything less treated as error and little, if any, communicative L2 use. Eventually, it is the learner's job to synthesize parts for use in communication, which is why Afshar (2021) called this the synthetic approach to syllabus design.

4.1.1.4 Input Enhancement (IE)

Input enhancement is defined by Namaziandost et al. (2020) as "pedagogical techniques designed to draw L2 learners' attention to formal features in the L2 input". Input enhancement is based on Sharwood Goetz's (2023) suggestion that changing the quality of input can stimulate learners' processing of linguistic material. According to Oga-Baldwin (2019), Noticing Hypothesis provides a theoretical rationale for the use of input enhancement, the aim of which is to draw learners' attention to linguistic forms via formatting techniques such as bolding, italicizing or underlining. Namaziandost et al. (2020) also add that input enhancement involves some attempt to highlight a certain target feature, thus drawing learners' attention to it. According to

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Lee and Révész (2020), input enhancement has a decisive role in the input the learners receive and causes L2 proficiency to develop. Techniques such as typographical enhancement (i.e. color coding, boldfacing, underlining, capitalizing, or highlighting selected input forms, use of gestures, special stress, and intonation and non-linguistic signals) are among the actions that can accentuate language input so that learners are induced to pay attention to them (Révész, 2020). An example of input enhancement is seen in Extract 4 as follows:

Extract 4

Tr: Find another word or phrase that can replace the given words.

1.   Bleating   2. Blinked   3. Fluttered   4. Auspicious

Stud: 1. Blatting   2. Winked   3. Flitter   4. Hopeful

Extract 7 is drawn from a comprehension lesson where the teacher asked students to do silent reading and consider the enhanced words which had been highlighted and find synonyms to them. The teacher further explained to the students that doing so implies that they are analysing the vocabulary items in context. Since the new words were enhanced, the students easily identified the words and their synonyms. The students eagerly produced new words with ease and within the shortest possible time. This clearly indicates that Input Enhancement strategy stimulates students to identify linguistic items with ease, which in turn, allows them to process the meaning of words swiftly. This idea is underpinned by Sánchez Gutiérrez et al.'s (2019) Noticing Hypothesis which emphasizes the need to draw learners' attention to linguistic forms via formatting techniques.

4.1.1.5 Dictogloss (D)

Dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity where learners listen to a passage, note down keywords and then work together to create a reconstructed version of the text. It was originally introduced by Lauro et al. (2020) as an alternative method of teaching grammar. Dictogloss can be considered as a way for integrating form and meaning in the learning context. Dictogloss was observed in three lessons; Summary Writing, Core Literature, and Reading Comprehension. An example is found in Extract 5:

Extract 5

Tr: Think-Pair-Share with a friend and provide the synonyms of the following words:

a. Reproachful   b. burly   c. chipped in   d. unison   e. sanctioned

WORD	MEANING	SENTENCE
Studs: Reproachful-	Shameful	He lived a reproachful life.
Burly	Well-built	The burly man is hard working.
Chipped in	Comment	They chipped in their views.
Unison	Harmony	The choir moved in unison.
Sanctioned	Approved	The Headmaster has sanctioned it.

During a Comprehension lesson, the teacher allowed the students to read the passage silently as they looked out for the synonyms of the words in bold. The teacher discussed the new words with them and took them through a drill. The teacher then read the text aloud while the students listened. A good reader was made to read the passage after which students were put into groups to answer the comprehension and summary questions. Students were finally called to present their answers in groups

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during which the teacher analyzed and corrected errors. These findings align with the work of Alsamadani (2020) who argues that Dictogloss is an effective methodology for teaching linguistic forms, since it enhances the students' writing skills. In their work they used quantitative approach to examine the effectiveness of Dictogloss on Iranian EFL learners' general writing skill. The treatment positively affected the participants' general writing ability, however, discretely the effects on the organization and mechanics were positive, while content, usage and vocabulary dimensions of their writing were not much affected.

4.1.1.6 Interaction Enhancement (IE)

Winkler et al. (2021) states that interaction enhancement is a treatment that guides learners to focus on form by providing interactional modifications and leads learners to produce modified output within a problem-solving task (strategic interaction). Interaction enhancement constituted 7.3% in Grammar, Literature, and writing lessons. An example is illustrated in Extract 6:

Extract 6

(Presentation from Group 2)

1. Upon a second thought, the driver decided to give the devil his due.

2. Akoto's stock in trade is to build Castles in the air.

3. I'm in two minds concerning what course to read at the university.

4. They have been advised to keep to the right side of the executives.

5. She needed to find her feet in that new environment before she hits the ground running.

In a Grammar lesson that focused on idiomatic expressions, the teacher asked students to orally produce some examples. The teacher explicitly corrected the examples that were constructed wrongly and took the students through a drill in order

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to assist them to modify their utterances. At the evaluation stage, the teacher put students into groups and asked them to construct five sentences with some specific examples of idiomatic expressions for presentation. With the opportunity created by the teacher to allow the learners practice the content through drills, they learnt to modify their wrong usage of idiomatic expressions. This result is consistent with a research by Alsamadani (2020) in which he examined whether guiding learners to focus on form through interaction enhancement could help first-year Japanese college students in learning how to use articles in English. He found that interaction enhancement plus formal debriefing had a greater impact on learners' acquisition of English articles than interaction enhancement plus meaning-focused debriefing. In this sense, feedback on the form was more beneficial for learners' language development than just feedback on content.

4.1.1.7 Input Processing

Input processing, according to Niswa et al. (2022), refers to how learners initially perceive formal features of language input, and the strategies that might guide them in processing them. Learners seem to process input for meaning (words) before they process for form (grammatical features). They seem to parse sentences by assigning subject status to the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence. Angelovska (2022) adds that input processing refers to the initial process by which learners connect grammatical forms with their meanings as well as how they interpret the roles of nouns in relationship to verbs. According to this concept, instruction is effective and beneficial if it manipulates input, so that learners process grammar more efficiently and accurately. The Input Processing technique was observed during a Grammar lesson in which the teacher focused on Nouns. Extract 7 illustrates this:

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Extract 7

Teacher: Always remember to produce these words correctly: Aviation, ago, around, about, sailor. How do we pronounce this word – ago? The vowel sound at the initial positions is called the schwa sound. /ə/

Student: / əgou/

Teacher: Good! Give me examples of words with the sound /ə/.

Student: aboutness, abuse, allot, assign, assume

Teacher: Good! Now, in the same vein, those with the Ga background should be intentional and produce the word House, and, How correctly. House- /Hawz/ it is wrong to say /Awz/, How- /Haw/ and not /Aw/. (Teacher took students through a drill as below)Students: /Hawz/, /Haw/

Again, as a result of the influence of their L1, some Akans say /Brade/, /blight/, /Blothə/ instead of Blade/Blad/, Bright / Bright/.

The teacher focused on form by asking students to say what Nouns are. Some students gave examples of words they cannot articulate correctly, mainly because of the influence of their mother tongues. The teacher drilled them in order to help them articulate the words correctly and further called for more examples to facilitate their understanding. To ensure a better understanding and noticing of the linguistic form under discussion, the respondent drew the students' attention to the wrong way they perceived the words and settled on the correct pronunciations.

4.1.2 Focus on form (FonF)

According to Sun and Zhang (2022,), FonF refers to "overtly draw(ing) the students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focuses is on meaning or communication" (p. 148) They argue that FonF

often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production. Thus, this approach focuses primarily on meaning, but with attention being paid to form, as necessary, in the context of meaning-focused activity. A number of FonF techniques were identified in the data, some of which are discussed as follows:

4.1.2.1 Output-based FonF (Ob FonF)

This refers to instruction directed at enabling or inducing learners to produce utterances containing the target structure. In this approach, the learner's otherwise elusive attention is directed towards selected aspects in the input through production processes. According to Alsamadani (2020), most production practice is aimed at enabling learners to produce the correct target language (TL) forms by avoiding errors. The researcher observed that a number of respondents adopted the Ob FonF technique three times constituting 7.3%. A typical example was observed in a Core Literature lesson, specifically a reading and discussion class of the Prose book entitled The Kaya Girl. The student who was assigned to read the text could hardly read the Past Tense form of the word "read" correctly anytime he came across it. The teacher thus carefully explained the Irregular Verbs to the students and took students through a drill of the word as shown in Extract 8:

Extract 8

Tr: "Read" is an irregular verb and falls under the category of the form that has the same spelling for both the base form and past tense form. However, the pronunciation of the base form is different from past tense and past participle forms.

Tr: Now, repeat after me:

Base form: read /ri:d/

Students: read /ri:d/

Teacher: Past participle/ Past tense: read /red/

Students: read /red/

Teacher: Let's have more examples of such irregular verbs.

Students: Split, Cast, burst, put.

Here, the fact that the students were able to produce their own examples indicates that they have noticed the correct form and can therefore apply the right forms of the irregular verbs in speech and in writing. Another example is seen in Extract 9:

Extract 9

Tr: Why did the driver wait for instructions from Mr. Asamoah? (Here, the question was put in past tense)

Stud: Mr. Asamoah was the leader and teacher of the students. (Student responded in the past tense).

Teacher: Why did the driver hesitate before proceeding cautiously? (Here, the question was put in past tense)

Student: He **hesitate** because of the flames and thick smock that blew across the road from the bushfire. (Teacher provided students with the correct form **hesitated**).

In this extract, a teacher taught a Grammar class which focused on Tenses. With the aid of role play, the teacher allowed the students to practice the target form. In the bid to evaluate the students, they were provided with questions that required answers framed in the Past Tense, thereby permitting the students to use the target

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form. Having noticed the correct form to use in answering the comprehension question, the students answered the rest of the questions correctly, indicating that they grasped correct way of answering comprehension questions. Ajmal et al. (2020) conducted a study in which they explored the effect of two output-based FFI tasks on noticing and acquiring a target linguistic structure as well as on comprehending a text. The findings indicated a trade-off between form and meaning: the closed reconstruction task induced learners to focus on one aspect (i.e., grammar) at the expense of the other (i.e. reading comprehension). Ajmal et al. (2020) concludes that in the absence of focus on form, some structures are not used by learners at all and some errors are fossilized in their inter-languages.

4.1.2.2 Consciousness-raising-task (CRT)

This technique comprises providing students with explicit instruction of the form and function under study to help them notice language features they may not notice otherwise and, thus, build conscious knowledge of how language works (Goetz, 2023). In CRT, learners do not produce language but rather engage in tasks to become aware of specific linguistic features and, ultimately, the way language works (Khezrlou, 2022). This is seen in Extract 10:

Extract 10

Tr: How are tenses and verbs related?

Stud: The form of the verb used to indicate time dimension is called tense. There are only two tense types; Present and Past Tense. In terms of functions, we have a habitual action, progressive action, preceding action and time expression.

Tr: Give me one example under each type.

Stud 1: Present Tense: He drinks six cups of water daily.

Past Tense: They visited her a week ago.

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During a Grammar lesson delivery on Tenses, the teacher drew students' attention to verbs and their types before discussing tenses, forms, and functions, to help them notice the language features under discussion. Here, the teacher allowed the learners to apply the form they have learnt in answering questions posed at them in order to stir their consciousness of the form. Again, the approach encouraged the students to search within themselves for answers instead of waiting to be spoon-fed by their teacher. Kemaloglu-Er (2021) studied and evaluated a form-focused instructional programme offered to the intensive English classes of an English-medium university in Turkey. According to the findings, the study has significant implications regarding programme design for form-focused instruction in L2 teaching contexts and suggests that programme designers and teachers use their own initiative to avoid overdependence on course books and utilize different types of instruction, materials, and tasks focusing on both form and meaning. He again concluded that students should not be spoon-fed with all the rules but should also be allowed to think of the rules and derive them from the context with the help of the teacher whenever necessary.

4.1.2.3 Interaction Enhancement

According to Kemaloglu-Er (2021) Interaction enhancement is a treatment that guides learners to focus on form by providing interactional modifications which leads learners to produce modified output within a problem-solving task (strategic interaction). From the observation, IE was employed by teachers of English only three times, constituting 7.3 % of the total occurrences. The IE technique was utilized strategically by a teacher during a writing lesson in which he taught students How to direct a stranger to the Post Office. This lesson was a follow-up to a grammar lesson which focused primarily on Modal Auxiliary Verbs.

Extract 11

Stud 1: Mrs. Osei <u>had been</u> a minister for five years when I met her for the first time.

Stud 2: I learnt she <u>had served</u> in the army for 20 years before becoming a minister.

Stud 3: If she <u>had stayed</u> in the military for a little longer, she would have been on top of affairs.

Extract 11 is a Grammar lesson on Tenses and Aspect. The lesson presentation stage was made lively as the students were allowed to construct their own examples under each form and function discussed. At the evaluation stage, the students were put into groups and asked to use the Past Perfect Tense to create dialogues for performance before the class. Each group was made to present their dialogues in turns. The students applied the form to construct the dialogues correctly after the teacher's explanations. In line with the above findings, Kemaloglu-Er (2021) reviewed 11 studies which examined the effects of form-focused instruction on learners' free language production and concluded that focus on the form could contribute to the acquisition of implicit knowledge, defined as learners' intuitive awareness of linguistic norms and their ability to process language automatically.

4.1.2.3 Output Enhancement (OE)

Zalbidea (2021) defines output as a reconstruction task involving learners in the production of input passage as accurately as possible after reading it. Output, as Renandya and Nguyen (2022) puts it, has been viewed not only as an end product of learning, but also, as an important factor that can promote L2 learning. It is argued that producing output provides learners with great opportunities for a level of

processing (i.e. syntactic processing) which may be necessary for the development of target-like proficiency or accuracy (Nguyen & Le, 2023). It is argued that while producing output, learners are forced to process language more deeply than during input processing. Extract 12 illustrates the use of output enhancement:

Extract 12

Teacher: The boy played the drum hard= adverb

Teacher: I have a hard drum = adjective

Teacher: Can you give me more examples of words that can be used both as Adjectives and Adverbs?

Student: Yes, Sir! Hard, fast, loud, likely, much, long, early, near, high, only, enough, late.

Teacher: Shall we use them to construct sentences to differentiate these words as Adverbs and Adjectives?

Student: a. He hit him hard. (Adverb)   It is a hard job. (Adjective)

Student: b. Wolves run fast. (Adverb)   He is a fast reader. (Adjective)

Student: c. He came only twice. (Adverb)   He is my only son. (Adjective)

While teaching Adverbs, the teacher discussed Adverbs and Adjectives that have the same forms. After providing examples, the teacher put students in groups and tasked them to brainstorm for more examples to be read to the class. The teacher allowed students to practise a new linguistic form they have been taught. The aim was to encourage students to produce more examples in order to enhance their knowledge and promote mastery over the linguistic form under discussion. Zalbidea (2021) observes that by being *pushed* to produce output, learners are required to pay attention to the features of their language in order to formulate precise, meaningful and

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appropriate language. Furthermore, during the production of output, they formulate and test hypotheses about the accuracy of their language.

4.1.2.4 Garden Path (GP)

The garden path technique is a means of providing language learners with focused, immediate feedback on certain oral production errors. Learners are taught a linguistic rule with regular forms, and exceptions are provided during practice drills. Learners are then induced to overgeneralize the rule with the exceptions and then immediately provided with the target form as recast. Some empirical evidence suggests that this technique is more effective than explaining the exceptions to learners (Ellis, et al., 2019). This technique was adopted by the teachers in three lessons: Reading Comprehension, Core Literature, and Oral English, covering 7.3 % of occurrences. An example is seen in Extract 13:

Extract 13

Teacher: Some Nouns and Verbs are spelt the same way; however, while nouns carry the stress on the first syllable, Verbs carry stress on the second syllable.

Stress is the effort we make to say some words aloud than others. Examples include words such as contact and contest. Other examples are as follows:

Noun	Verb
[1]Convict	Con[1]vict
[1]Discount	Dis[1]count
[1]Contract	Con[1]tract

Teacher: Give me more examples of words that may be used as a noun or a verb.

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Student: im¹port, re¹fuse, ac¹cess, re¹cord, di¹gest, es¹cort, in¹sult.

Teacher: Super! Notice that all the examples here are verb that is why the stress is on the second syllable.

This happened during a Core Literature lesson; the student produced the word *contest* with the wrong stress. In an attempt to correct the error, the teacher first explained what stress means to the students and cited many examples to chart the path for them to understand and correct their errors. With the kind of examples given, there is a clear indication that students understood the teacher's explanations.

While teaching a comprehension lesson, the teacher treated vocabulary items with the students after silent reading and asked the students to read the passage aloud one after the other. After a good reader had read through the passage, students read the questions and answered them. When the teacher was marking the exercises, she realised that most students had a problem with syllabification and thus decided to briefly explain it to students. An example is shown in Extract 14:

Extract 14

Tr: A word which has more than two syllables is called a polysyllabic word. The syllable that carries the stress varies from word to word. In the examples below the stressed syllables have been separated by dots: 1. Com.pre.hend
2. Pro.tect.ed
3. Pho.to.gra.phy   4. Dra.ma.tic
Most Verbs and Adjectives have the stress on the second syllable as shown below:

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1. De¹cide   2. Ex¹plain   3. A¹rrive   4. Re¹peat

There are, however, exceptions to the rule; for instance, in words such as *finish* and *happen*, even though they are verbs, the stress is on the first syllable.

Here, the teacher first explained the rules to the students and helped them to understand before coming out with the exception to the rule. This technique helped the teacher to follow a guideline through which the typical errors were induced and immediately corrected. The garden path technique appears to support learners to make a distinction between their own erroneous utterances and the correct target-language utterances. Esmailizadeh et al. (2019) opines that in order to encourage students to process the target structure somewhat more deeply than they might otherwise do, the task form must be presented in a way to get students to overgeneralize. This may however, lead them to commit errors. This technique is based on inductive learning,

The extract supports the discoveries made by various researchers who have studied the effectiveness of Input Flooding on L2 acquisition. According to them, this is based on a large body of work showing that repetition is an important factor in the process of attaining proficiency in an L2 class (Ellis et al., 2019). Research on individual words demonstrates that L2 learners need to encounter unknown items several times before any learning occurs (Ellis et al., 2019). For example, Erazo (2022) designed a study in which Chinese-speaking learners of English read 13 passages (250-300 words each) where 10 unknown target words were presented once, thrice or seven times to enhance L2 acquisition. The result of this study showed that a good number of students acquired the target form at the end most favourably.

4.1.3 Focus on meaning

Sun and Zhang (2022) note focus on meaning in the classroom has helped in enabling a transition toward more communicative-based approaches to language instruction. However, research has suggested that L2 learners progress more quickly in their language development when emphasis is placed on specific language forms (Kiss & Rimbar, 2021). According to Norris and Ortega (2011), focus on meaning provides rich input and meaningful use of L2 in context, which is intended to lead to incidental acquisition of L2. The researcher observed a number of techniques on display by the teachers in the Ga West Municipality. These are discussed as follows:

4.1.3.1 Task-essential language (TEL)

Task-essential language (TEL), also known as Task-Based Approach, comprises using the forms under study for the completion of tasks (Djouiba & Betka, 2020). During a Writing lesson, the teacher taught Paragraph Unity and Paragraph Coherence. A lesson on pronoun is illustrated in Extract 15:

Extract 15

1. The rock is higher than **me.** (Incorrect)

   The rock is higher than **I.** (Correct) (A Pronoun that comes after "than" is subjective)

2. Amponsah is as tall as **me.** (Incorrect)

   Amponsah is as tall as **I.** (Correct) (A pronoun that appears after "as" is subjective)

3. I don't believe it was **him.** (Incorrect)

   I don't believe it was **he.** (Correct) (A pronoun that appears after the verb "to be" is subjective.

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Having explained each in detail with examples, the teacher engaged the learners in a task that precisely involved them in explicit conscious learning and made them reflect on the workings of the language and form. The teacher put students in groups and presented each group with a short passage them to read and identify the sentence that destroys unity. Each group presented their findings by first reading the passage and the answer to the class. **S**tudents were asked to produce their own examples the teacher explicitly corrected the errors. After the lesson was over, the teacher gave the students more exercises to ponder over and find correct answers to them. This finding is in line with the work of Djouiba and Betka, (2020) in which an experiment was conducted. The findings revealed that the students' paragraph writing skill can be improved by using the task-based approach.

4.1.3.2 Dictogloss (D)

An example of Dictogloss can be seen in Extract 16. During a Writing lesson, the Dictogloss technique was utilized at the final stage after the teacher had discussed the features of the Narrative Essay. Students were made to read through a sample essay to have a fair idea of how to produce a good one. Having read aloud, students were put in groups and assigned to reconstruct the sentences in their own words. Finally, each group was made to present the work before the class as the teacher induced students to identify wrong expressions and grammatical errors for correction.

Extract 16

Teacher: Shall we have the first group's presentation?

Group1: Soon, Friday, 14th January was here; the day of the excursion to the Kakum Forest had arrived. Mr. Asamoah had drafted an itinerary for the trip.

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Teacher: (As the teacher realized some few grammatical errors, she took the pain to address it as follows). The verbs 'are' and 'command' in Sentences 4 and 5 must be in the past tense. Remember this is a narration of a past event.

After the corrections and explanations done, the teacher realised that the students performed better in the assignment given them. This is consistent with the results of Djouiba and Betka (2020) which states that active learners' involvement enables students to confront their own strengths and weaknesses in English language use. In so doing, they find out what they do not know and what they need to know. They also argue that this integration of testing and teaching stimulates the learners' motivation. Again, Pineda and Canals (2020) conducted a study that explored the possible improvement of learners' writing achievement through Dictogloss in an Iranian University. Dictogloss sessions were dedicated to the experimental group. The result was that the experimental group, after, outperformed the control group in the post-test.
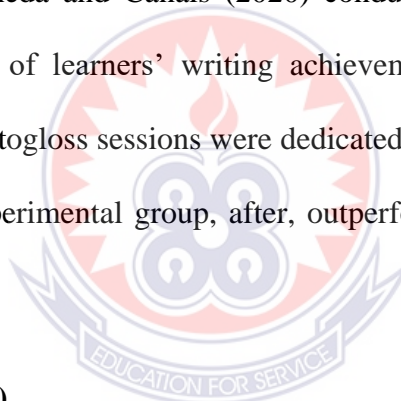
4.1.3.3 Negotiation (N)

Negotiation of meaning is a process that speakers go through to reach a clear understanding of each other. Pineda and Canals (2020) note that non-native speakers (NNSs) could obtain comprehensible input by conversing with native speakers (NSs), and this would help them acquire the target language. This account, widely known as the Input Interaction Hypothesis, was founded on Krashen's Monitor Theory, which posits that being exposed to a large amount of comprehensible input was the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA. As argued by Djouiba and Betka (2020), comprehensible input was provided to learners when they and their NS interlocutors were faced with some kind of communication problem and the NSs modified the

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structure of interaction. This could occur, for example, when a learner did not understand the NS interlocutor's utterance and asked the NS to confirm or clarify, and the NS reacted by rephrasing the utterance in a way the learner could understand.

The negotiation technique was often used by most of the teachers and 12.2% of occurrences was recorded. The negotiation technique was observed during a Comprehension lesson in which the teacher effortlessly applied all three types of FFI explicitly to promote students' understanding of the lesson. This is illustrated in Extract 17:

Extract 17

Stud: She slapped the young woman from her back.

Tr: Come again! The word slapped is produced as /slæpt/, since the sound /p/ is a voiceless sound. When the past tense marker -ed comes after a voiceless sound it becomes /t/.

Other words that end with voiceless sounds that fall under the same rule include:

a) tapped	/tæpt/	a) blessed	/blest/
b) clapped	/klæpt/	b) kissed	/kɪst/
c) slapped	/slæpt/	c) crossed	/krɔst/
d) stopped	/stɒpt/		

Again, one cannot slap another person from the back but from…?

Student: "… behind…"

Teacher: Awesome!

In the extract, the teacher called for clarification from the student in order to induce him to focus on a linguistic form. The teacher corrected grammatical errors as they occurred incidentally in the lesson. At the reading- aloud stage, the reader, for lack of knowledge of words that are produced in a unique manner, based on their phonetic characteristics repeatedly pronounced the words wrongly. In an effort to correct this anomaly, the teacher drew the students' attention to the correct forms of the words Not only did the teacher negotiate with the students for correct pronunciation; she also took the pain to assist them to use appropriate words, thereby enhancing their efficiency in the second language. Here through negotiation, the teacher drew the students' attention to the correct usage of the expression and in order to promote the acquisition of language.

4.1.3.5 Recast (R)

A recast occurs when a teacher repeats something a student says with more detailed language or more correct language. Recast, according to Wilson (2021), can also be considered as an utterance that rephrases another utterance by changing one or more of its sentence components (subject, verb, or object) while still referring to its central meaning. Research has also shown that recasts are by far the most frequent type of feedback in a range of classroom settings: elementary immersion classrooms, university-level foreign language classrooms, and high school English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms (Stecklein, 2020). Recast constituted 7.3 % of the number of occurrences. The technique was utilized in Grammar, Writing and Oral English. Extract 18 shows how it was employed in a writing class:

Extract 18

Tr. Write a story that illustrates the saying, "Once bitten, twice shy".

Stud: It was a beautiful Monday morning at Macedonia. The morning assembly of the students is over and students have settled in their classrooms noisily ready for the day lesson. This hot November, Maame Ama's class, Form One A, has Geography.

Tr: Since this extract borders on the Narrative Essay, the verbs must be kept in the Past Tense, unless it was to bring the essay alive, then the Present Tense would not have been out of place.

Tr: (helping students to recast their answers) I beg your pardon? Have you noticed that this introduction has issues concerning Tenses? Ok! Listen to me with rapt attention as I finetune it and do effect corrections on your work.

Tr: It was a beautiful Monday morning in Macedonia. The morning assembly of students was over and students had settled in their classrooms noisily ready for the day's lesson. This hot November, Maame Ama's class, Form One A, has Geography.

In this lesson, the teacher's main focus was on Narrative Essays. The students were given the format for writing the essay and also introduced to a series of sample essays. The students were asked to read their introduction to the hearing of the class as the teacher corrected the errors in their sentences spontaneously. Overall, the findings suggest that recasts and explicit techniques serve as a form of scaffold earlier in the process of language acquisition, helping lower-level learners to produce the target feature more accurately.

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Relatedly, Stecklein (2020) conducted a study that investigated teachers' choice and learners' preference for corrective feedback types. The study revealed that even though most learners preferred to have an opportunity to think about their errors and to attempt to correct them before receiving correct forms by recast, the teachers choose recast because of time limitations in their classes and their awareness of learners' cognitive styles. The teachers commented that they would choose elicitation or metalinguistic feedback when they felt learners were able to work out correct forms on their own.

4.1.3.6 Input Processing (IP)

Input processing theory (Oveidi et al., 2022) refers to how learners initially perceive formal features of language input and the strategies or mechanisms that might guide learners in processing them. Learners seem to process input for meaning (words) before they process it for form (grammatical features). Oveidi et al. (2022) add that Input Processing refers to the initial process by which learners connect grammatical forms with their meanings as well as how they interpret the roles of nouns in relationship to verbs. According to this theory, instruction is effective and beneficial if it manipulates input so that learners process grammar more efficiently and accurately. The pedagogical intervention derived from this theory is called processing instruction. The IPT technique was recorded in Core Literature, Grammar, and Comprehension lessons and constituted 7.3 % of occurrences. Extract 19 is from a Comprehension lesson whose over-riding focus was on meaning:

Extract 19

Teacher: "Gaol" has the same pronunciation and meaning as "jail". Gaol means an institution for the confinement of persons held in lawful custody or

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detention. These two words are homophones of the English language. Homophones are words pronounced alike but different in meaning or derivation or spelling as in *two*, *too* and *to*, *Hymn* and *him*.

Teacher: Let's produce more examples of homophones that come to mind.

Student: Baring vrs. bearing, cite vrs. sight, hole vrs. whole, incite vrs. insight

In this lesson, Input Processing occurred at the evaluation stage. Having walked the students through the processes to assist them to treat the vocabulary items and read for comprehension, the teacher elicited answers from the students. As the reader could not produce the word "gaol" correctly, the teacher explained what homophones are to students. We can see that the teacher led the class to understand the meaning of the word before setting off to consider the form, thereby promoting their understanding. This finding confirms the results of the work of Oveidi et al. (2022).

4.1.4 Summary

Regarding research question one examined the FFI techniques used by the teachers in their ESL classroom. It was revealed that they utilized FFI techniques to promote the acquisition of English language. Although they apply the techniques in one way or the other, it was observed that the application was done unconsciously as only three out of the 15 teachers claimed they are aware of the technique. The analysis showed that virtually all the 15 teachers applied at least one technique or the other. The discussion again revealed that the techniques are obtrusive and can stick out depending on the teachers' discretion, and the forms that emerge before or during the lesson delivery.

4.2 Language features teachers pay attention to in using FFI in ESL classroom

The number of language features that are addressed during FFI is distinct. The features have been categorized as phonological, lexical, syntactic FFI and others. The analysis revealed that teachers focus mainly on lexical features as this had the highest number of occurrences of 41 which constitutes 29%, followed by phonological features with 39 number of occurrences constituting 28%, syntactic features being attended to with 30, making up to 21%, semantic features occurring 21 times representing 15%, and pragmatic features occurring 10 times representing 7%. The following sections discuss these language features in detail.

4.2.1   Lexical FFI

The lexical FFI is also termed as morphological FFI (Anderson et al., 2022). They consider the lexical category under derivative verses inflections. According to Silitonga (2020) a lexical FFI is understood as an explanation or the provision of the meaning of a lexical element. Anderson et al. (2022) further observe that morphology is often divided into two types; derivative and inflectional, both of which refer to the category of the base to which the morphology applies. Whereas derivative morphology changes the meaning or category of its base, inflectional morphology expresses grammatical information appropriate to the word's category. The category of a word is often referred to in traditional grammar as part of speech. The lexical categories include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (Anderson et al., 2022). Determining the category of a word is an important part of morphological and syntactical analysis. In linguistics, making generalizations about where different categories of words or morphemes can occur and how they can combine with each other is very essential. An example is seen in Extract 20:

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Extract 20

Tr: Which part of speech does the word *Vulgarity* belong to?

Stud: It is an adjective.

Tr: Vulgarity is a noun. A word that ends in –ity is likely to be a noun.

Tr: Other suffixes which always create nouns include "ness", "ment" and "tion"

In this extract, the teacher handled a lesson in Core Literature, specifically a reading of Bill Marshalls' *The Son of Umbele*, in which students were grouped and assigned areas in the book to summarise for group presentations. At the presentation state, when the teacher asked the students to state the part of speech of the word *vulgarity*, a student answered that it is an adjective. The teacher, thus, explained to the students that *vulgarity* is a noun because it ends with the suffix *ity*. Based on this, she went on to show the students that some words can be formed with suffixes. Another example is seen in Extract 21 as follows:
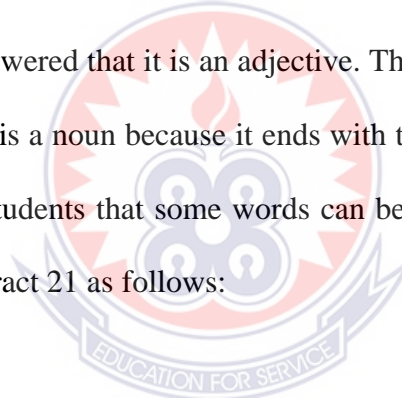
Extract 21

Tr: What is the synonym to the word "unsanitary"

Stud: "insanitary"

Tr: You are right. Both words are adjectives. "in" and "un" in these instances are both prefixes.

Extract 21 a reflection of a comprehension lesson from in which a lexical item emerged. The teacher assisted the students juxtapose the heading against the illustration and asked them to read the passage silently and find synonyms for the unfamiliar words. While making contribution to the discussion at this point, a student mentioned *insanitary* as a synonym to *unsanitary*. Here, the teacher gave an

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affirmative response to show that the answer is right. The result is in line with that of Silitonga (2020), who after analysing the lesson plans of practicum teachers, found that vocabulary was the most common focus. Silitonga (2020) endorses this view as they observe that content vocabulary was explained in English by the teachers. One more example can be seen in Extract 22:

Extract 22

Tr: Words that end in suffixes such as sailor, tailor, increment, agreement, idealism are all nouns. Can you give me more examples?

Stud: Doctor, conductor, argument, naturalist.

This extract is from a Grammar lesson that focused on Nouns. As the teacher discussed how nouns can be identified with students, he touched on the fact that Nouns may end in some peculiar suffixes such as *or*, *er*, *ity*, *ism*, among others. When the teacher elicited examples under each suffix, a student mentioned the word *Patriotism*. The teacher then asked the students to produce more examples of nouns that end in the given suffixes as indicated. This result contrasts with the work of De La Cruz et al. (2019). In their study, they observed that the ESL teachers are not maximizing the opportunities that these types of lessons offer for students to be exposed and consequently to acquire less salient language structures and to move beyond their current level. They further added that even more, these lessons are fertile periods for teachers to implement counter-balanced activities that make students aware of language structures they might have learned or acquired incorrectly.

4.2.2 Phonological FFI

This section presents examples of phonological FFI, in which the teacher drew students' attention to a phonological element while focusing on meaning. Even

though pronunciation is pivotal in learning a new language, it has not been given much attention (Gooch, 2015). The goal of FFI is to build on the effectiveness of naturalistic communicative teaching in enabling learners to attain high levels of communicative proficiency in the target language while addressing its weaknesses (Day & Shapson, 2001). Form-focused instruction accomplishes this by enriching input, increasing student output, increasing saliency of difficult L2 features, and providing learners with unambiguous communicative forms (Ranta & Lyster, 2007). In all of the instances of the occurrences found in the data, the teachers focused on the language only as a reaction to students' mispronunciation of a word or phrase. An example is illustrated in Extract 23:

Extract 23

Student: I /tænk / my mother for that act of bravery.

Teacher: That sound is realized as /θ/ as in thought- /θɒt/, thank /θæŋk/, think /θɪŋk/

So, say, I thank my mother for that act of bravery.

Student: I /tænk / my mother for that act of bravery.

(*The teacher asked the learners to provide more words that has the sound* /θ/)

Stud: Errmmm … thorough, author, bath, teeth.

Extract 23 comes from mispronunciation of words that occurred during the reading of a Drama book. The student had difficulty as she could not read words such as *thought*, *thank* and *think*" correctly. The teacher corrected the student instantly by providing her with the right pronunciation, focusing on the production of the consonant sounds, after which he drilled them. This helped them to grasp the pronunciation. The teacher flooded learners with examples and assisted them to gain

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awareness of the correct way of producing the sounds as against its alternative ones that has always been a challenge. It is evident that the L1 of learners can have a major influence on the acquisition of a second language. Another example is found in Extract 24 as follows:

Extract 24

Stud: "Good morning, Mother," Penny greeted as she planted a kiss on her mother's cheek.

Tr: For such words that end in the sound /t/, when the past tense marker -ed accompanies it, it is articulated as /ɪd/. So, greeted becomes /griːtɪd/, planted becomes /plæntɪd/ and demanded, /dimændɪd/. Again, since /k/, /p/, /f/ all voiceless sounds, when the past tense marker -ed accompanies it, /t/ is realized as in provoked, jumped, and laughed.

Extract 24 is from a comprehension lesson in which the teacher focused on pronunciation. At the reading aloud stage, the student had difficulty with the pronunciation of the past tense marker *-ed* that appeared after the consonant /t/. The teacher explicitly corrected the student's pronunciation errors. More specifically, the teacher focused on phonological conditioning; an area that often appears to be a difficult hurdle for students to cross.

Another example of phonological FFI is found in Extract 25:

Extract 25

Student: "… To expose dangling breasts

As jagged blinding flashes…."

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(The student said something like /brɪndiŋ/ /fræʃs/- brinding frashes)

Teacher: No, it's rather "/…æz dʒægɪd blindiŋ flæʃs/" [Teacher provided students with the correct pronunciation]

Extract 25 comes from a Core Literature lesson, specifically on David Rubadiri's *African Thunderstorm*. During the reading stage, one of the students made an erroneous pronunciation of some words of a line in the poem. The teacher reacted immediately and provided the correct pronunciations by recasting the line as illustrated in the extract. Here, the teacher's focus was to draw the students' attention to the correct pronunciation of the consonant sound /l/, which the student was unable to articulate correctly. This is in line with Saito and Lyster (2023), as they assert that communicative focus on phonological form can benefit L2 pronunciation development. This is the case even with English /ɹ/, supposedly the most difficult sound for adult Japanese learners of English (Saito & Lyster, 2023). According to Saito and Lyster (2023), the impact of FFI on learners' inter-language development was apparent not only at a controlled-speech level, but also at a spontaneous-speech level, suggesting that FFI can promote not only development of a new metalinguistic representation of English / ɹ / but also its internalization in a learner's L2 developing system.

4.2.3 Semantic FFI

Semantic FFI involves the incidental errors that emerge during lesson delivery which is related to meaning. Plebe and De La Cruz (2016) asserts the semantics seek to understand the meaning of words and sentences, explaining the relations between expressions in a natural language. According to some scholars, although semantics can be conceived as concerned with meaning in general, it is often confined to those

aspects which are relatively stable and context-free, in contrast to pragmatics, which is concerned with meaning variation with context. Semantic FFI is therefore any pedagogical effort which is used to draw learners' attention to the meaning of words, either explicitly or implicitly. Here, the focus of the teacher is to lead the students identify the meaning of words in isolation or meaning in context as used in sentences either on the surface or in a deeper sense. An example is seen in Extract 26:

> **Extract 26**
>
> Tr: What is the meaning of the word vulgarity?
>
> Stud: "**Vulgarity**" also means "**Radicality**"
>
> Tr: Mmm... no…**crudeness**, **uncouthness**, **profanity** is the most appropriate.
>
> Stud: Alright!

While teaching Drama, the teacher asked the students to read Act One of *The Son of Umbele*. The teacher then asked the students to identify the unfamiliar words and find the synonyms which can best fit the passage. They were later put into groups to summarize Act One in their words. During the group presentation, a learner replaced the meaning of the word *Vulgarity* with *Radicality*. The teacher corrected the error spontaneously by providing them with the correct synonyms and provided them with more words. Another example is found in Extract 27:

> **Extract 27**
>
> **Tr:** What is the meaning of the expression**, to burn the mid- night candle?**
>
> Stud: **To burn the mid-night candle** means **to burn your strength at mid-night**.

Tr: **To burn the mid-night candle** means **to study for a long time into the night**. This meaning is suggestive. Don't take the individual meaning of the words for the general meaning because the expression goes beyond that.

A teacher, while handling comprehension, asked the learners to provide the meaning of some expressions as used by the writer. When one of the learners said that "to burn the midnight candle" means to "burn your strength at mid- night" the teacher explained to the appropriate meaning to the class. In the extract, the teacher guided the student to realise that some expressions have deeper meaning which are different from the individual meanings of the words. Nakatsukasa and Loewen (2015) investigated a teacher L1 use during Focus-on-Meaning Episodes (FFEs) in Spanish as a foreign language classroom at a US university. The researchers identified the linguistic areas that the teacher mainly focused on, concluding that when the teacher used the L1 and focused on form, they mainly targeted grammar (48%), vocabulary (36%), and semantics (11.5%). This clearly indicates that even teachers who teach L1 apply Focus-on-Meaning and again adopt some of features in their teaching to promote the acquisition of a target language.

4.2.4 Syntactic FFI

This section provides examples of syntactic FFI, in which the teachers dealt with syntactic elements while focusing on meaning. Under syntactic FFI, ESL teachers draw on every opportunity to focus on syntactic elements that emerge during teaching and learning. Consequently, syntactic FFI deals with the moments when teachers, during a meaning-oriented lesson, focus on form and structure of a grammatical form. This feature allows teachers to maximize the opportunities that the various lessons offer for students to be exposed and consequently to acquire more

salient language structures. Even more, these lessons are fertile periods for teachers to implement counter-balanced activities that make students aware of language structures they might have learned or acquired incorrectly (De La Cruz, 2019). From the analysis, quite a number of teachers focused on syntactic FFI. An example is seen in Extract 28, after a teacher asked students a question.

Extract 28

Tr: What is a preposition? Give me some examples in sentences.

Stud 10: A preposition is a word governing, and usually preceding a noun or pronoun and expressing a relation to another word.

Tr: For example: "Emm I took them **in a book**."

Teacher: No say, I took them "**from a book**."

Stud 30: "from a book? Ok. **From a book**"

Tr: Prepositions must always be used carefully.

In Extract 28, a student was explaining what prepositions are and producing examples of prepositions in sentences. When the teacher asked the student how she came by her examples, she explained that she *took them in a book*. The teacher took over and provided the correct preposition: *from a book*; I took them *from a book*. This observation is congruence with the finding of De La Cruz et al. (2019) as they explored the features of FFI that teachers focus on at a University during their content-based instruction. In this work, it was observed that immediate corrections have intriguing effects on students as it enables the teacher to spontaneously correct the form they answered wrongly. Another example of syntactic FFI is found in Extract 29 as follows:

Extract 29

Student: They had **splited** their class into group four.

Teacher: The word **split** is an irregular verb, so it has only one form. Mention others words that have only one form.

Student: cast, burst, hit, cut, put

Tr: Good! Now, check the arrangement of the words at the end of the sentence. Since adjectives modify nouns and pronouns, the word "four" should appear before the noun "group".

In this extract, students were taken through a comprehension lesson. At the questions and answers section, a student committed some grammatical errors which were explicitly corrected by the teacher as she assisted the student to rearrange the words ' group" and " four" as illustrated in Extract 30:

An example of syntactic FFI is illustrated again in Extract 30:

Extract 30

Tr: What are some of the means by which people travelled in the ancient time?

Stud 35: "Err… during the ancient era, people **through foot** travelled.

Tr: "… people travelled **on foot or by foot**. The increasingly common **by foot** is also acceptable but is used much less commonly."

Extract 30 comes from a student's submission during the pre-reading stage of a comprehension lesson on *The Journey*. When the teacher asked the means by which people travelled during the ancient era, a student remarked that people through foot travelled. The teacher took over and provided the correct preposition and the proper ordering of some words in the sentence. The findings of this work are contrary to the

findings of De La Cruz et al. (2019) where they found that none of the teachers they studied identified syntactic FFI.

4.2.5 Pragmatic FFI

The last feature explored by the teachers was pragmatic FFI. Here, it was observed that various lessons focused on pragmatic features as some teachers called students' attention to pragmatic use of various aspects in the English language. Larsen-Freeman (2000) explains pragmatic FFI as an approach that focuses on teaching language in context and using authentic language as the basis for learning. She emphasizes the importance of incorporating real-life language situations and cultural nuances into language instruction. The idea is to move beyond just teaching grammar and vocabulary to providing learners with the tools to effectively communicate in authentic social settings. Essentially, the teachers looked at the where, when and how of the language, thus, directing students' attention to the contextual usage of the second language which is of great importance as any other feature. An example is seen in Extract 31:

Extract 31

Tr: What kind of verbs are words like *should*, *would* and *could*?

Stud 20: They are the past tense form of shall, will and can.

Tr: Could, would, should are all modal auxiliary verbs which are used in formal situations.

Stud: What of will, must, might and dare. Aren't they also modal verbs?

Tr: They are, however, the first three I mentioned are the most appropriate ones to use during formal context.

In this extract, while teaching language usage in Formal Letters, a teacher drew the attention of the students to the use of attitudinal past tense as he explained that words such as could, would, and should are used in formal situations as polite markers to heighten the formality of the tone. With the aid of the consciousness raising-task technique, the teacher explained this feature to the students. Another example is found in Extract 32:

> **Extract 32**
>
> Tr: What are some of the features of a formal letter that show the formal nature of a formal letter?
>
> Stud 41: The use of registers and polite markers show the formality of a formal letter.
>
> Tr: Yes. In dealing with essays that are formal in nature, examiners expect to see students make good use of appropriate registers such as interrogation, divulge, sermons, abrogate, comply, conform, eligible, among others. With informal context colloquial words as question, talks, cancel, obey, submit, and qualify are acceptable.

Extract 32 illustrates an instance where a teacher led students to attend to form while teaching how to answer questions under debate writing. In course of dealing with the format for writing debates the teacher explained to the students about the need to select appropriate registers when dealing with various subjects that they are posed with. The teacher employed the input flooding technique as she provided the students with examples of words that are considered formal and appropriate for a formal context. The teachers in these two scenarios made efforts to lead the students

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to focus on the uses of English language in a way that is appropriate for different social contexts, taking into account cultural norms, social roles, and the specific communicative goal. It is all about preparing learners to use language in real-world situations, not just in the classroom. These findings are inconsistent with the work of Ryu (2018) who studied the compliment responses of non-native speakers (NNS) of Japanese in natural conversation versus classroom talk. The findings revealed that naturally occurring conversations outside the classroom occasionally provide NNSs with a dispreferred environment which orients them to steer the interactional trajectory to negotiate and create affiliate relations with the interlocutors, using so-called evading strategies, which are often used among speakers of the target community.

4.2.6   Summary

In reference to the second research question, the researcher explored the language features Form 3 English teachers of the Ga West Municipality often pay attention to during their use of FFI techniques. The analysis showed that teachers focus on lexical, phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic features. The evidence of the use of various FFI features as implemented by the teachers to draw students' attention to any language features is similar to the type described by Lyster (2015). She found that these features are utilized to enable students to notice and to use target language features that are otherwise difficult to learn through exposure to classroom input yields numerous benefits. In contrast to the works of (De La Cruz et al., 2019), it came to light that the two teachers in their studies focused on only lexical, syntactic and phonological FFI (Asadi & Gholami, 2014; Tedick & Young, 2014).   These scholars argue that whenever teachers implemented FFI, it was

exclusively as a quick reaction to students' inaccurate use of the target language, which is typical of reactive FFI.

Thus, teachers in this study, are not only implementing proactive FFI, but also assisting students to learn the less salient language features and thus, improving the target language. Instructors at different levels need to recognise that the implementation of FFI, even on a very small scale, can be effective for students to restructure their ill-formed language (Lindseth, 2016). This finding is a major contribution of this study as it provides much needed empirical data on the features of FFI implemented in the context of this study. By knowing how FFI takes place, and also that there is an urgent need of implementing proactive FFI; teachers are in a position of designing strategies and taking actions to maximise students' learning opportunities. Again, it was discovered that as teachers spontaneously dealt with various features of FFI in their teaching, they were better positioned to holistically draw learners attention to a variety of aspects at the same time, which would in turn enhance their acquisition of the language.

4.3 Effect of form-focused instruction

To answer the third research question that explored the potential effects of form-focused instruction on the students' language acquisition in an ESL context, focus group discussions were held with the students after the lessons to solicit for their views. In view of the fact that the students were the recipients of the strategy, they were considered as being in the best position to assess how beneficial the strategy was in their learning process. The results suggest that the techniques have positive as well as negative effects, although the positive effects far outweigh the negative. These are discussed in the following sections:

4.3.1 Positive effect

With regard to this, it was observed that the positive effects outnumbered the negative effects as the majority of the students attested to the fact that FFI comes with many positive impact for language learners and the teachers. In addition, the students got more actively engaged in interactions during FFI activities. The data of FFI activities included co-construction of sentences and repetition of others' utterances. Especially in FFI, participants used English when they encountered difficulties in grammar and vocabulary, which created social identity roles such as *requestor* and *requestee*. Additionally, the analysis suggests that the instruction to use a target grammar stimulated their ideas and motivated them to use English during the activities (Kanehira, 2022).

4.3.1.1 Easy identification of linguistic forms

One theme that emerged from the group discussion with students was linguistic form of identification. The study uncovered the ability to identify linguistic items with ease as a key advantage. With the FFI approach, students were able to identify new words and phrases as well as enhancing their level of understanding to the words in context. From Excerpts 1 and 2, students indicated the following:

Excerpt 1

Researcher: How did the bolding of words and underlining of the phrases and clauses promote your understanding of today's lesson?

Stud 15: The fact, that we did not struggle to identify the new words and phrases alone, allowed us to save a lot of time and aided our understanding. Again, it helped us to look at the meaning of the words in context.

Excerpt 2

Researcher: Did the emboldening of the heading of the passage help you in any way?

Stud 25: It helped us a lot. We were able to identify it at a glance and easily reconcile it with the illustrations of the passage.

Stud 16: We were able to make predictions during the pre-reading stage without difficulties.

Pawlak and Kruk (2022) made an important distinction between modified input and interaction. This interaction has special features which help the participants negotiate meaning. They assert that NNSs and NSs employ some strategies in their social discourses, including some aspects of conversations such as comprehension checks, clarification requests, topic shifts and self and other repetitions and expansions. They claim that speakers modify interactions using these strategies in order to avoid or solve conversation problems and repair discourse when misunderstanding sequences arise. When L2 learners face communicative problems and they have the opportunity to negotiate on solutions to them, they are able to learn language.

4.3.1.2 Effective interaction

During the focus group discussion, effective interaction emerged as a theme, indicating that the FFI techniques teachers used was a key factor in language acquisition as asserted by students. They commented that the techniques made lessons less boring and promoted their interest in general. Excerpt 3 illustrates the verbal interaction between the researcher and the students.

Excerpt 3

Researcher: Is there anything in particular you would like to say about today's lesson.

Stud 32: I like the fact that we were allowed to communicate with one another through role playing. I did not feel bored like I do sometimes when the teacher talks without giving us the chance to talk. The class was very lively and we all enjoyed it.

Researcher: What was the feeling like when the teacher instantly corrected you, when you committed the grammatical error?

Stud 22: I feel it is normal, because we all do make mistakes sometime. After all, I wasn't the only one he corrected.

In the work of Halvorsen and Kellem (2018), they studied the understanding and utilization of FFI in the language classroom and established that in a lesson where meaning is foregrounded, the incorporation of FFI can be most beneficial to the students if it is combined with explicitly taught rules related to the target forms. According to the study, this process helped the students to identify the forms independently, which in turn, allowed them to contextualize the forms within their own writing and drawing lessons. Again, it was realised that when the activities are primarily student-centred, it allows them to take some ownership of the learning process.

After a reading comprehension lesson, the teacher asked the students to do silent reading after which he led the students to discuss the vocabulary items. The students were then asked to read the passage aloud and answer the question that

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follow. After the lesson the researcher engaged the students in a FGD, excerpts of which are shown as follows:

Excerpt 4

Researcher: Do you believe that emboldening of the topic and the vocabulary items enabled you students to interact any better?

Stud 19: Yes. I was able to share my views with my mates with ease, because with the words clearly written, I got ideas in no time.

Stud 38: The emboldening of words actually helped me to improve my writing skills. When I look at such words, I am easily able to write almost close to what I see.

The responses from the FGD prove that the emboldening of words has a positive impact on students' writing and interactive skill as it enables them to easily identify the selected words and text. Lou and Li (2018) compared a traditional English writing approach and FFI in the flip classroom model in teaching English writing and realised that students performed better in their writing skills and interacted more effectively when their passages were enhanced.

4.3.1.3 Improvement in English language performance

Based on the responses from students, it emerged that allowing students to practice linguistic forms enhance performance in language proficiency as reflected by the student's responses in Excerpt 5 as follows:

Excerpt 5

Tr: Tell me, how was today's lesson?

Stud: It went well. We performed very well in the exercise.

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Researcher: Did you enjoy today's lesson? If yes, why and if No, why?

Student: Certainly, our teacher gave us the opportunity to practice what he taught us and I managed to get all the assignment correct.

Excerpt 5 is a lesson of Reading Comprehension and Summary in which the respondent adopted Dictogloss to achieve the objective. During delivery, the teacher treated the unfamiliar words with the students after silent reading and then read through the passage aloud. Individual students were made to read the passage paragraph-by-paragraph. The questions were then dealt with through class discussions. This saw the students through a good performance. Sanosi (2022) conducted a study which aimed to find out whether students could take advantage of a rehearsal of their final oral presentation in order to make improvements to their spoken output. He found that students managed to recall many of the correct forms and reformulations, and that final presentations showed significant improvements in pronunciation, grammar, writing and in the organization of content.

A similar sentiment is expressed in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

Researcher: Can your share your opinion on the lesson you just had?

Stud 45: It's been very interactive. We all took turns to engage in the dialogue during the role-play stay.

Researcher: That's an interesting observation.

Stud 19: Yes! As for today, we have all made contributions to the lesson.

Kemaloglu-Er (2021) studied the effects of form-focused instruction on learners' free language production and concluded that focus on the form could contribute to the

acquisition of implicit knowledge, defined as learners' intuitive awareness of linguistic norms and their ability to process language automatically.

In another literature lesson, the teacher asked the students to take turns to read through the passage aloud for a class discussion. During the evaluation stage, the teacher asked the class to give a synopsis of some paragraphs which they did. After the class, the researcher conducted a FG, which yielded the following response.

Excerpt 7

Researcher: How did you see today's lesson?

Stud 3: Our teacher often makes use of this strategy. It has increased our performance in English Language.

Stud 17: It was good. I am able to write correct sentences.

The responses from the students indicate that the FFI strategy has enabled the students to perform better than before. This is heightened by the assertion by Susuki and Valeo et al. (2014) as cited in De La Cruz et al. (2019) as they indicated that "it is widely accepted that a combination of content and FFI is a necessary component in Content Based- Interaction lessons for helping students improve their inaccuracies of the target language" (p. 2).

4.3.1.4 Improvement in output

One of the themes that emerged from the focus group discussion was output improvement. Students emphasised that FFI as a technique in teaching of language improved their output as they grasped a lot from the teaching. Excerpt 8 demonstrates this:

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Excerpt 8

Researcher: What do you think about today's lesson?

Student: I am however glad that I was given the opportunity to read the passage along the line.

Researcher: Do you think the teacher's strategy had a positive impact on you as students?

Student: Oh, yes, a lot. His process was gradual, so we have grasped a lot.

Saito and Lyster (2023) observed in their work that communicative language teaching can promote language development, thus, in the teaching of the supposedly difficult English sound /ɹ / to the adult Japanese learners of English; it was observed that a communicative focus on phonological form can benefit L2 pronunciation development (Saito & Lyster, 2023). It is thus argued that the FFI technique allows students to easily identify their errors and correct them thereby enhancing improvement in their output. Excerpt 9 illustrates this:

Excerpt 9

Researcher: Has the lesson been impactful? Has the teacher's strategy aided your understanding of the lesson?

Student: It has been very impactful. We have learnt how to correct our erroneous expressions using punctuation and conjunctions.

Researcher: How did you feel when the teacher corrected you instantly when you committed grammatical errors?

Stud 8: Initially, I felt intimidated but overtime I got used to it.

In this interview, it was revealed that FFI techniques do not only promote the students' output, but also, the students' ability to recognise their errors and further

correct them. This finding is in line with the work of Lantolf (2000) in which he studied the processes through which language mediates the formation of a new identity among L2 learners, and re-emphasized the vital role of output and error recognition in acquisition of a second language.

4.3.1.5 Sense of relief

For students who were engaged in role play as part of the evaluation process, they observed that the FFI techniques promote comfort and relief to them during lessons. This is revealed in Excerpt 10 below:

Excerpt 10

Researcher: How did you find the lesson when the teacher implicitly used rephrasing and clarification markers to draw your attention to correct forms during the lesson?

Stud 13: Well, I in particular felt very comfortable with the strategy because I'm certain it took very smart students to even realize that I had committed some errors; that alone is a relief. My friends would have laughed at me.

Stud 54: When the teacher corrected me by restating my errors correctly, I felt relieved.

The excerpt indicates that even though rephrasing and clarification are typical features of FFI strategy, L2 learners are not much bothered when they are spontaneously corrected. This is in support of the finding made by Xu and Li (2021) who investigated the effects of FFI techniques on learners' vocabulary learning in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) and concluded that FFI is a relief to students as it steers up learners to remain alert in the process of the acquisition of a target language. This research also aligns with their findings that FFI has some implications for second

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language teachers as it would heighten their awareness of the kind of instruction that would be most effective to the teaching of the various aspects of the language. Finally, they observed that the effective use of FFI techniques would help classroom teachers overcome the on-going challenges in language acquisition.

4.3.2 Negative effect

Even though FFI has enormous pedagogical benefits, few negative effects were observed and are worthy of mention. From the analysis, some students indicated that the technique makes subject teachers very slow when teaching, resulting in student's inability to recollect what has been taught. In addition, students made it clear that the FFI technique has negative impact on their lessons since they are laughed at after being corrected by the teacher on an error made. This discouraged them from active participation during lessons. These are discussed as follows:

4.3.2.1 Pace and discouragement

Pace and discouragement play a very important role in the process of L2 acquisition as indicated by the students during the FGD sessions. During a comprehension and summary lesson, a teacher adopted the dictogloss strategy to achieve his set objectives. After the lesson, the researcher engaged the students in a FGD to ascertain how the lesson delivery went. This is shown in Excerpt 11:

Excerpt 11

Researcher: Did the lesson have any negative impact on you as students?

Stud 11: I wish the teacher had been a bit slow. He kept explaining the rules one after the other.

Stud 32: The impact hasn't been that good. The teacher was too fast. That is not encouraging.

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In another lesson, where the teacher had employed input processing technique as one of the strategies in teaching a grammar lesson, some students made submissions to the fact that the pace of delivery of the lesson had been too fast for comfort as illustrated in Excerpt 12:

Excerpt 12

Researcher: What's your opinion about today's lesson?

Stud 42: The teacher finished teaching the lesson hurriedly.

Stud 27: I got a quite discouraged, as the teacher corrected my expressions.

The responses show that even though some students enjoy lessons that are interactive, they prefer to be corrected implicitly than explicitly. Park (2006) for instance argues that direct feedback does not give significant role in students' writing because it does not encourage students to the deep thinking process. In contrast, using direct feedback provides explicit guidance to the students about their inaccuracies and it is principally helpful to those students who do not adept in self-correcting (Ellis, 2009).

4.3.2.2 Students' inability to recall

It is a well-established fact that recall is an essential part in learning a new language. Responses provided by some of the students pointed to the fact that some of them find it difficult to recall the target forms under discussion when many things happen at the same time in lesson delivery. This is shown in Excerpts 13 and 14:

Excerpt 13

Researcher: Would you be able to recollect the corrections the teacher called your attention to?

Stud 60: Mmm… They were many. I can't recollect quite a number of them.

Stud: 39: I can't recollect them, so I have written them in my jotter.

Stud 56: I can only recollect a few of the clarifications the teacher made during the delivery.

Excerpt 14

Researcher: Can anyone of you say why most of you didn't perform well in the exercise your teacher gave you today?

Stud 26: I couldn't recollect some of the things she taught us today.

Stud 44: She talked about many things at the same time.

In the work that focused on the effects of students' ability to recall information based on the teacher methods, Ross (2017) indicated that there is no significance in teacher methods and the students' ability to recall information (P.15).

4.3.2.3 Mockery after being corrected by the teacher

Some students revealed in one of the FGD sessions that they felt embarrassed when their friends mocked them after the teacher corrected their errors. Most of such students maintained that they would rather their teacher correct them by recasting their errors. The excerpts of their contributions are as shown in 15 and 16.

Excerpt 15

Researcher: Did the teacher's explicit prompts and feedback make you feel embarrassed?

Stud 65: Oh, yes! I felt bad when my friends mocked me in the face after I committed an error.

Stud 42: I felt bad when I was mocked, but it didn't deter me from learning.

Excerpt 16

Researcher: Does being mocked at in class make you reluctant to contribute to class discussions?

Stud 13: Yes, it does.

Stud 35: Yes, I often sit back quietly during class discussions, because I don't want to be laughed at.

While focus-on-form instruction can enhance second language acquisition as Shahani (2012) discusses, some studies have shown it can also have unintended negative consequences. Specifically, the error correction involved in FFI may lead to peer mockery and embarrassment for students, especially in classroom settings (Brown, 2016; Norris & Ortega, 2000). As the excerpts from my focus groups illustrate, students reported feeling "bad" and reluctant to participate when mocked after being corrected. This aligns with Brown's (2016) findings that overt error correction can discourage learner contributions and risk-taking. Norris & Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis also found that explicit feedback like recasts may draw unnecessary peer attention to errors in ways that frustrate or embarrass students. So while FFI has benefits, teachers must be mindful of how error treatment can negatively impact confidence and motivation levels. Using implicit models rather than overt correction and encouraging a classroom culture of respect could help mitigate potential downsides. Monitoring peer dynamics and providing support is also important. More research is still needed on managing trade-offs regarding error correction and peer mockery in FFI.

4.3.3 Summary

With regard to the third research question, the researcher delved into the effects of FFI on the learners' acquisition of L2 in the ESL classroom. It is imperative to emphasise that even though the findings showed that the FFI strategy provides a holistic approach to dealing with the language challenges of the students in the ESL classroom, it also has few negative effects. The majority of the students observed that FFI had a positive impact on their studies, since they performed well in their exercises at the evaluation stage, while other students had a general positive outlook on the strategy as they recounted that it led to the easy identification of linguistic forms, effective interaction, error identification, and a sense of relief. This accentuates the work of Kellem & Halvorsen whose article argues that a theoretical and pedagogical awareness of FFI should be part of a teacher's repertoire of tools to enhance student learning in certain classroom contexts. Like every technique, students revealed that the FFI technique may slow the pace of delivery and discourage some teachers from allowing a free flow of interruptions in the classroom.

4.4 Conclusion

With research question one that examined the FFI techniques used by the teachers in their ESL classrooms, it was revealed that they utilized FFI techniques to promote the acquisition of English language. Although they apply the techniques in one way or the other, it was observed that the application was done unconsciously as only three teachers claimed to have knowledge of FFI, with each teacher applying at least one technique or another. The techniques are obtrusive and can stick out depending on the teachers' discretion, and the forms that emerge before or during the lesson delivery. With reference to the second research question, the analysis showed that teachers focus on lexical, phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic

features and they were used to draw students' attention to specific language features that needed attention. This is similar to the type described by Lyster (2015). She found that these features are utilized to enable students to notice and to use target language features that are otherwise difficult to learn through exposure to classroom input. Based on the results, Lyster (2015) and De La Cruz et al. (2019) conclude that whenever teachers implement FFI, they do so in reaction to students' inaccurate use of the target language.

Thus, teachers in this study, are not only implementing proactive FFI, but also assisting students to learn the less salient language features and thus, improving the target language. Instructors at different levels need to recognise that the implementation of FFI, even on a very small scale, can be effective for students to restructure their ill-formed language (Lindseth, 2016). This finding is a major contribution of this study as it provides much needed empirical data on the features of FFI implemented in the context of this study. By knowing how FFI takes place, and also that there is an urgent need of implementing proactive FFI, teachers are in a position of designing strategies and taking actions to maximise students' learning opportunities. Furthermore, it was discovered that as teachers spontaneously dealt with various features of FFI in their teaching, they were better positioned to holistically draw students' attention to a variety of aspects at the same time, which would in turn enhance their acquisition of the language. The results of the third research question that looked at the effect of FFI on students revealed that even though FFI has numerous positive effects, it also has some negative effects on students which cannot be overlooked if teachers wish to sufficiently lead their students to become proficient in the acquisition of L2.

Students can be encouraged to concentrate on both form and meaning in a particular task when using a well-balanced pedagogical approach. Form-focused instruction can be tailored to the needs of the students and may only require a small amount of class time. Another advantage is that there is frequently a tension between a focus on meaning and a focus on form in many EFL contexts. The English language curriculum has now been nationalised and promotes communicative language acquisition and an emphasis on meaning; nevertheless, the majority of these teachers still evaluate students' language competency primarily on their understanding of form and structure. Form-focused instruction can help teachers and students develop their communicative skills while also learning specific language structures and forms.

It is truly fascinating to mention that virtually all of the teachers used FFI in their classrooms. Nonetheless, some did so unconsciously, and with such a number of teachers, the desire to learn more about the techniques cannot be overstated. However, teachers only used reactive FFI in all instances of FFI observed. As a result, they failed to capitalise on proactive FFI and its ability to assist students in resolving any language-related issues they may be experiencing and to continue acquiring language at the same time (Schleppegrell, 2016). Furthermore, the language features that the teachers paid attention to during FFI were: lexical, phonological, semantic, syntax, and pragmatic. It is crucial to note that teachers must use both proactive and reactive FFI and concentrate on more linguistic aspects than those listed in this study if they want their students to fulfil their full potential, improve their errors in the target language, and help flourish as well (De La Cruz et al., 2018).

Overall, the findings suggest that FFI, particularly in interaction, can be successfully incorporated into the language learning curriculum in the ESL classroom

model to improve students' English writing and speaking skills and abilities (Lou & Li, 2018). Moreover, the findings of this study are particularly pertinent to language learning and teaching in general, and grammar teaching in particular. The findings have a practical and theoretical significance for curriculum designers and content developers (Abdolmanafi, 2012). Teachers and students of language, especially those who have trouble with grammatical accuracy, can still benefit from the use of FFI. When used correctly, FFI can help learners gain a better understanding of the grammar of a language and improve their overall language proficiency (Ellis, 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This Chapter attempts to sum up in totality, the results of the findings, the recommendations, as well as the conclusions of the research. The overall goal of this study was to assess the extent to which teachers of English use the FFI approach in the ESL classroom. The specific objectives of this study involved identifying the types of form-focused instruction (FFI) applied by Form 3 English language teachers in Ga West Municipality in the ESL classroom, examining the language features to which Form 3 English language teachers pay attention to when using FFI in the ESL classroom, and investigating the effects of FFI on students' language acquisition in the ESL classroom. A qualitative approach and textual analysis were effectively utilized for this research because of the researcher's quest to unearth the FFI techniques applied by English Language teachers in the ESL classroom. The data were collected through the use of lesson recordings and focused group discussion. In addition to the summary of findings, the chapter sheds light on the importance of FFI in the ESL classroom and makes suggestions for future studies.

5.1 Summary of findings

The first objective of the study was to identify the various types of FFI applied by English Language teachers in the ESL classroom. Findings from the study indicated that FFI techniques are obtrusive in that students can stick out under the different types of FFI depending on the forms that incidentally emerge during the teaching and learning process. It was also reported that focus-on-form is the most interactive and communicative type among the types. The study further disclosed that even though the respondents apply the techniques in their lesson delivery, they do so

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unconsciously, as more than half (86.6%) of the teacher population indicated that they have no idea of the technique or how to apply it. From the study, some teachers stated that given the needed education, they would like to use it often to promote the acquisition of the English Language. Also, teachers maintained that consciousness-raising tasks, input flooding, and negotiation are the most preferred techniques of all, while recast and dictogloss are the most time consuming techniques of them all.

The second objective of the study examined the language features that English language Teachers in the Ga West Municipality pay attention to when using FFI in the classroom. In line with this, the study found that teachers often focus on phonological, morphology or lexical, syntactic, semantics, and pragmatic features. The third objective investigated the effects of FFI on students' language acquisition in the ESL classroom. It was found that these techniques positively affect students' language acquisition in the ESL classroom. This was evident as students indicated that the application of FFI techniques in the ESL classroom had improved their understanding, ease of identification, effective interaction among students and teachers, improvement in performance, improvement in output, identification of errors, and sense of relief during lessons.

While the study found that form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques positively affected students' language acquisition, it is important to also consider potential downsides or challenges. Overuse of explicit error correction, for example, could damage learner confidence or motivation. Teachers must be judicious in providing correction. Similarly, over-emphasizing linguistic forms may reduce time for meaningful communication and content learning. Thus, FFI should be balanced within a communicative framework. Additional challenges may arise if the forms

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targeted are too complex for the learners' level, leading to confusion and frustration. Recasts in particular could be difficult for some students to grasp. Excessive focus on error correction may also disrupt the flow of communication. Teachers need to determine which errors to prioritize and when best to provide feedback. If FFI is too teacher-centered, students can become dependent rather than developing peer learning skills. Introducing forms too quickly without sufficient practice could result in superficial rather than deep acquisition. Finally, FFI requires careful planning and delivery to keep students engaged and avoid classroom management issues. With mindful implementation, teachers can maximize the advantages of FFI while avoiding potential negative impacts. A balanced perspective accounting for both positive effects and challenges provides a complete understanding of the impacts of form-focused instruction.

5.2 The importance of formed-focused instruction in the ESL classroom

There is adequate evidence to demonstrate that learners are successful in learning how to communicate fluently and confidently as a result of Form-Focused Instruction (Ellis et al., 2015). Even in less ESL or EFL learning contexts, instructional programmes designed to expose learners to the target language through communication of one kind or another have produce very favourable results. Ellis et al. (2019), for example, reports that eight-year children in New Brunswick, who participated in an experimental programme in which they worked entirely on their own for 30 minutes each day with various reading and listening materials designed to provide them with comprehensible input, demonstrated considerable oral ability at the end of the first year, greater in fact than that achieved by students taught through a traditional, focus-on-forms approach alone. Clearly, form-focused instruction that

supplies learners with plentiful input that they can understand is effective in developing oral skills (Ellis et al., 2019).

Indeed, any form-focused instruction that allows students to interact and also supplies learners with plentiful input that they can understand is effective in developing oral skills (Ellis et al., 2019). Studies have also shown that learners who have received form-focused instruction learn more rapidly and generally advance further along the interlanguage continuum than naturalistic learners. A focus-on-form provides learners with the opportunity to take 'time-out' from focusing on message construction to pay attention to specific forms and the meanings they realize. It thus helps to alleviate the processing problems they experience. It also provides an antidote to the kind of top-down processing that L2 learners adopt to cope with communicative demands by forcing learners, from time to time, to engage in bottom-up processing. Furthermore, such an approach enables teacher and students to attend to problems that are demonstrably problematic to learners.

Form-focused instruction can also contribute to acquisition in another way - it provides the impetus for what Xu and Li (2021) has termed *pushed output*, which is output that stretches the learner's competence through the need to express an idea in language that is accurate and appropriate. When teachers respond to students' errors through 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.

5.3 Pedagogical implications

The findings from this study on the benefits of form-focused instruction (FFI) have several important implications for pedagogical practice. Teachers should be made aware of the range of FFI techniques available to them, including explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, repetition drills and more. Professional development workshops training teachers in appropriate applications of FFI in the classroom context would help spread adoption. In particular, teachers should utilize FFI in moderation as needed to address specific gaps in students' linguistic accuracy without overemphasizing forms at the expense of meaningful communication. Form-focused instruction is best integrated into a communicative teaching framework to balance both accuracy and fluency goals (Ellis, 2006). Teachers will need to be responsive in providing feedback by carefully selecting which forms to focus on and when to correct based on the objectives of the activity and the learners' ZPD. The study shows FFI improves written accuracy. Thus, teachers could apply FFI during the pre-writing and drafting phases of the writing process to develop precision in sentence construction which translates to improved coherence in longer writings (Zalbidea, 2021). Explicit focus on challenging forms prior to communicative tasks also helps students avoid fossilization of errors.

Meanwhile, students should be taught meta-language to raise awareness of form and structure. Equipped with this knowledge, they can better recognize recasts and monitor their own output for accuracy (Erlam, 2015). Learner autonomy is promoted when students have the tools to self-correct. Group and peer work should be incorporated so that feedback becomes a two-way process between students to reduce teacher dependency. Learners of varied proficiency levels can be paired to provide modeling and scaffolding of target forms (Slimani, 1989). To assist acquisition,

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teachers should provide ample input exposure through comprehensible texts and clear modeling. Form-focused instruction is most effective when learners have already gained an implicit baseline familiarity with the forms (Spada & Tomita, 2010). Creative input enhancement activities can pique their noticing and engagement. With appropriate teacher training and student preparation, FFI can powerfully complement communicative language teaching to develop well-rounded mastery. Further research is needed to continue refining best practices. By applying the implications highlighted here, teachers can leverage FFI to maximize accuracy and fluency outcomes.

5.4 Suggestion for future studies

Future studies could investigate the role of interaction in form-focused instruction, such as the impact of peer feedback and collaborative learning on learners' language acquisition. Again, future studies are encouraged to examine learners in different situations with a variety of L1 backgrounds, ages, and learning context. Additionally, future studies could investigate the effectiveness of teacher training programmes in preparing teachers to implement form-focused instruction in their classrooms. In terms of technological-based studies, future studies could explore the potential of technology-based form-focused instruction, such as computer-assisted language learning and mobile-assisted language learning. With learner-centered studies in mind, future studies could focus on individual differences among learners and investigate how different types of form-focused instruction can be tailored to meet the needs of different learners. Lastly, future studies could investigate the long-term effects of form-focused instruction on learners' language development and proficiency.

5.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the use and impacts of form-focused instruction (FFI) techniques by English teachers in Ghanaian classrooms. The results provide several noteworthy conclusions that affirm and build on the existing literature. A central finding was that teachers were extensively utilizing a diverse range of implicit and explicit FFI techniques including recasts, elicitation, repetition drills, and explicit correction. This aligns with evidence that FFI is widely applied in second language classrooms, often intuitively rather than through structured planning (Basturkmen, 2012). However, more research is needed on exactly how much focus on forms is most beneficial versus detrimental. Regarding language targets, teachers paid attention largely to morphosyntactic features, confirming many previous FFI studies prioritizing grammatical and syntactic forms (Ellis, 2002). However, they also focused significantly on phonology, lexis, semantics and pragmatics. This highlights the need for more holistic FFI encompassing multiple linguistic levels, rather than grammar alone (Spada & Tomita, 2010).

Critically, students and teachers perceived noticeable benefits from FFI on the learners' linguistic accuracy and overall proficiency. This contributes positive evidence to the debate on the acquisition outcomes from FFI, complementing studies demonstrating gains in grammatical knowledge (Sanz & Morgan-Short, 2004). It counters arguments that explicit FFI has minimal impacts without sufficient input exposure and practice (Krashen, 1982). This study's context of examining FFI in Ghanaian public high schools provides important evidence from an under-represented region. The benefits found here start to address the research gap on FFI techniques and outcomes in African classroom settings (Afitska, 2015). Local evidence can motivate more teacher training and support.

In conclusion, by highlighting teachers' intuitive use of varied FFI techniques and the resulting acquisitional gains reported by students, this study provides solid confirmation for the key premises underlying FFI approaches - that focused attention and feedback on challenging forms facilitates acquisition. It backs calls for wider integration of FFI into communicative teaching. The findings contribute much-needed empirical data from Ghanaian classrooms affirming conclusions largely based on Asian and European research contexts. However, further research is still needed on optimizing FFI implementation and which individual factors strengthen or weaken its outcomes before definitive universal prescriptions can be made. Comparative studies manipulating technique types and intensities would enrich the discussion (Norris & Ortega, 2000). Nonetheless, this study reinforces that FFI, as part of a balanced approach, can be an impactful strategy for teachers to employ in helping learners improve grammatical and lexical precision.
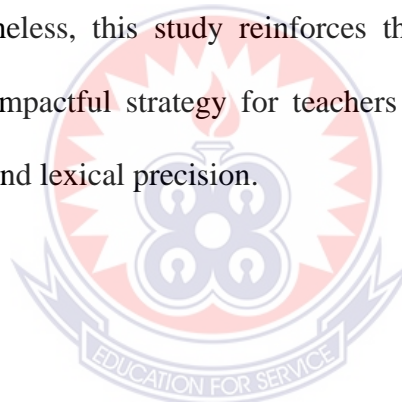
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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1. How long have you been teaching the English language?

2. How long have you been teaching the English Language at the SHS level?

3. Have you ever heard of any strategy of teaching the English Language known as Form-Focus instruction? Yes/ No?

4. If yes, then what is it?

5. Have you been applying it in your classroom?

6. Are you aware of the types of Form- Focus Instruction? Yes / No?

7.   If you are, then what are they?

8. Which of the techniques do you use in class often?

9. Which Form-Focused Instruction are you most conversant with?

10. Which technique are the students most comfortable with?

11. Which technique makes students most active in class?

12. Which of the techniques are students uncomfortable with?

13. Are you aware of the different timing of Form-Focused Instruction? Yes/No

14. If yes, what is the timing of Form-Focused Instruction?

15. Which timing strategy do you use often?

16. Which type of timing strategy of form- Focused Instruction makes students most responsive to class discussions?

17. Do you think Form- Focused Instruction is a good strategy for teaching the English Language?

18. How do you hope to enhance your teaching methodology by using Form-Focused Instruction in your ESL classroom?

19. What impact has Form-Focused Instruction had on your students?

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20. Do you intend to use it more often? Yes/ No?

21. If yes, why?

APPENDIX B

Data Collection Sheet

English Language: Aspect…………………………….Topic: ………………………

Teacher Label ……………………………… Experience: ………………………….

No. students: ………………………………………………………………………

Technique codes	Actual words used

APPENDIX C

FFI Techniques by Respondents

Technique codes	Frequency of Use	Percentage
Consciousness-raising tasks (CRT)	4	9.8
Input enhancement (IE)	3	7.3
Output-based FonF (Ob FonF)	3	7.3
Task-essential language (TEL)	3	7.3
Input flooding (IF)	5	12.2
Negotiation (N)	5	12.2
Recast (R)	3	7.3
Output enhancement (OE)	3	7.3
Interaction enhancement (Int. E)	3	7.3
Dictogloss (D)	3	7.3
Input processing (IP)	3	7.3
Garden path (GP)	3	7.3
Total	**41**	**100%**