



A Critical Examination of Input and Output Enhancement Techniques in Grammar Instruction for Saudi EFL Students

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Abstract:

Mastering the grammatical structure of the English language is an indispensable prerequisite for effective communication. To achieve optimal grammar instruction, a delicate equilibrium must be struck between facilitating advancements in both input and output modalities. These instructional interventions strive to impart language skills that prioritize communication effectiveness while integrating form-focused instruction. Within the communicative classroom framework, numerous strategies exist for proficiently teaching grammar. The participants of this study consisted of level-one students enrolled in the Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, at Sharqra University during the first semester of the academic year 1445 H. The researcher implemented a strategy centered on augmenting both input and output to facilitate the acquisition of grammar within meaningful and communicative contexts. The findings reveal that the proposed instructional strategy effectively enhanced the grammatical proficiency of the students. Moreover, the provision of carefully timed combinations of metalinguistic feedback and recasts proved highly effective in improving students' grammatical competence. It is recommended that EFL instructors incorporate appropriate blends of input and output enhancement techniques to deliver efficient grammar instruction to their students.

Keywords: input enhancement, output enhancement, metalinguistic feedback, recasts

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1. Introduction

The process of attaining proficiency in a new language, to the extent of being able to utilize it effortlessly and fluently, is an endeavor that demands significant time and effort. Instructors, recognizing the importance of aiding learners in achieving linguistic accuracy and fluency, dedicate themselves to facilitating this acquisition. One area that holds considerable significance in language instruction is the teaching of grammar, as it plays a crucial role in enabling language students to achieve fluency in their communication.

According to Ellis (2006), grammar has long been recognized as a pivotal component of language education and continues to be highly relevant in contemporary language instruction. It is widely acknowledged that the effective teaching of grammar incorporates a variety of instructional techniques that guide learners to focus on specific grammatical structures. Through this focused approach, students are encouraged to comprehend and produce the targeted structure, thus facilitating their absorption of it through metalinguistic processing. This process involves a noticeable interplay between enhancing input, or the language students receive, and output, their own language production, within the context of grammar instruction (Benati, 2017).

For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, the achievement of successful communication can be realized when they are provided with authentic and meaningful input relevant to the given context. However, it is also crucial that these students are given opportunities to generate language themselves and to adapt their language usage in response to their communicative interactions. The available evidence indicates that a versatile approach to grammar instruction, which incorporates a range of techniques that promote both input and output, proves increasingly advantageous. Therefore, it is both possible and imperative to integrate pedagogical interventions that are tailored to the specific learning conditions and requirements of the learners.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have shown learners benefit greatly from engaging in enhancement of both input and output in order to develop and understand grammatical structures. Lightbown (1993) advises employing input and output enhancement to ensure that students are always focused on grammatical structures and their use. Furthermore, it is argued that any effective model to grammar instruction must include tactics for fostering input along with output (Rassaei et al., 2012).

2.1 Enhancing Input

The significance of offering diverse and ample comprehensible input and chances for students to engage in natural and meaning-based interaction has been emphasized in the realm of efficient

EFL instruction. Input enhancement aims at drawing learners' attention to specific linguistic features in input and at the same time keeping the activity meaning focused (Rassaei, 2015). Input enhancement through reading increases learners' attention that is the mechanism of controlling access to awareness (Schmidt, 1990). According to Tomlin and Villa (1994), awareness can be described as a distinct mental state whereby a person has encountered a specific personal experience of either mental content or outside stimuli. The enhancement of input helps emphasize the importance of grammatical structures, which may aid in the acquisition process by means of mechanisms of attention (Comeaux & McDonald, 2018).

Manipulation of this input often takes the form of visual/textual input enhancement, in which the target structures become visually salient (Fahim & Vaezi, 2011). According to the "noticing hypothesis" (Schmidt 1990, 1993), learners must first consciously attend to the input (i.e. notice it) before it can be converted into intake. Noticing is necessary to comprehend, analyze, and integrate new grammatical information. According to Leow (2001), noticing is the essential and adequate requirement for transforming input into intake. By manipulating input, it is possible to bring about changes in the learner's sensitivity to input as well: something that the learner was previously not sensitive to and didn't notice, might become noticeable through input enhancement. Thus, the input is made more salient to meet the learner's (lower) level of input sensitivity.

As a means of enhancing learners' likelihood of noticing, teaching techniques have been devised to render the input more conspicuous through enhancement and frequency (Leeman et al., 1995; White, 1998). In spoken input, enhancement can mean change in volume, stress, emphasis, intonation or pitch or a combination of these. In written input, enhancement can be in either of the following two forms: input flood and typographical enhancement. Input flood helps learners notice important features in the input in which learners are bombarded by an increased number of the target structure, while maintaining a communicative focus. Input flood enhancement serves to increase learners' awareness of the target structures, thereby promoting acquisition of those structures. On the other hand, typographical enhancement is considered the "visual equivalent of stress and emphasis" in spoken input. It refers to modifying the target grammar form(s) by highlighting, underlining, bolding, italicizing; using larger, different type or different color font, or through combinations of these methods.

Research has examined the impact of input enhancement on students' grammatical proficiency. For example, Rassaei (2015) investigated the impact of textual and input enrichment on second language (L2) development. To this goal, 95 EFL learners in experimental groups received textually

enhanced material and were compared to a control group. The findings showed that increasing the saliency of input was more beneficial than adding more instances of target forms. In addition, textual enhancement of input is more successful than enhancing input with more instances of target form. Fazlali and Shahini (2019) examined how that EFL learners' grammatical and lexical collocation knowledge was improved by input enhancement and consciousness-raising. A number of 60 pre-intermediate English speakers were chosen to achieve this goal. The participants involved in the study were randomly assigned to three groups: one control group and two experimental groups (a consciousness raising group and an input enhancement group). It was found that input enhancement improved these EFL learners' lexical collocation knowledge but not their grammatical collocation knowledge. The learners' lexical and grammatical collocation knowledge also improved with consciousness-raising instruction. The consciousness raising group also outperformed the input enhancement and control groups.

As such, input enhancement can supplement natural and meaningful input by drawing the learner's attention to formal properties of a language. While enhancement in isolation may not facilitate learning, it does not appear to impede it in any manner. In fact, when combined with direct instruction, it can yield a favorable impact on language learning, as noted by Han (2002).

2.2 Enhancing Output

Studies conducted on EFL grammar instruction have demonstrated that while input is a crucial component, it is not adequate in isolation, particularly for mature students, to attain a superior level of competence in learning. EFL learning involves not only the getting exposed to input and the necessary conditions for input to transform into intake, but also the significant impact of output. According to Schmidt (1992), it is crucial for learners to actively use language in their production that constitutes part of their learning of a language. This enables learners to gradually internalize their linguistic knowledge and make it autonomous by utilizing a diverse range of language structures. In accordance with the initial stages of language acquisition, the initial attempts of learners to produce novel linguistic structures are expected to necessitate deliberate cognitive effort. This is due to the fact that the ability of proficient language users to effortlessly generate language output is a skill that is developed gradually over time (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000).

The study conducted by Fakher Ajabshir (2022) investigated the effects of input-based and output-based training on the acquisition of L2 request modifiers. The four intact classes were randomly assigned to receive interventions such as textual enhancement, input flooding, output-based instruction, and control groups. The group focused on enhancing text through the analysis of

captioned videos, which were selected based on specific requests. Additionally, they reviewed video transcripts that highlighted key features through the use of typography. The group that engaged in input flooding exhibited a twofold increase in their consumption of captioned videos and perused the corresponding transcripts without any form of textual manipulation. The group that received output-based instruction was exposed to videos without subtitles prior to participating in conversation reconstruction exercises. The production test results indicate that the output-based instruction group performed the most effectively, while the textual enhancement, input flooding, and control groups followed in descending order. The findings suggest that a combination of input-based and output-based approaches may be effective in improving learners' pragmatic competence.

Thus, research shows evidence that input enhancement plus explicit instruction increases students' awareness and understanding of the target grammar forms, thereby promotes acquisition of those forms. In this process, output-oriented tasks and activities enable learners to develop language based on the target forms they learned in the input improvement stage. This underscores the significance of incorporating input and output interventions in the process of grammar acquisition (Patra et al., 2022).

2.3 Corrective Feedback

The provision of corrective feedback serves to direct the student's attention towards linguistic structures that present difficulties, either through explicit or implicit means. This, in turn, affords students the chance to identify their errors and make the necessary modifications, with the ultimate goal of enhancing their proficiency in the L2 (Laufer, 2005; White, 1991, 1998). According to Sheen's (2007) definition, corrective feedback refers to a teacher's responsive action that prompts a learner to focus on the grammatical precision of their spoken or written expression. As per Ellis et al.'s (2006) findings, the act of providing corrective feedback to a student can take shape in one or a group of the following responses from a teacher, when an error is made: (1) signaling that an error has been made, (2) offering the right structure of the error, and (3) providing some metalinguistic information pertaining to the error.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) presented the most extensive classification of corrective feedback, which encompasses six distinct groups that include explicit correction, recasts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetitions, as well as clarification requests. Their study utilized recasts and metalinguistic feedback to help students correct their errors in grammar lessons. As noted by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Sheen (2004), recasts are among the most commonly employed forms of feedback.

Lyster (1998) conducted a study in four immersion classrooms in Canada. The findings revealed that teachers predominantly utilized recasts as a corrective feedback intervention. In a study conducted by Sheen (2004), the distribution of recasts was analyzed across four communicative settings. The findings indicated that approximately 60% of all feedback types comprised of recasts. Recasts are regarded as a suitable and optimal corrective technique as they afford learners the chance to concentrate on form without impeding the continuity of communication. According to Trofimovich et al. (2007), recasts are a type of corrective feedback that is both implicit and explicit. This means that they draw attention to the error without interrupting natural communication. Additionally, recasts are learner-centered, and they are tailored to the specific needs and goals of individual students.

Metalinguistic feedback, on the other hand, is an explicit form of corrective feedback, in comparison with recasts. Metalinguistic talk is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as remarks, facts, or questions relating to the correctness of the student's utterance (Ellis et al., 2009). Metalinguistic talk is explicitly corrective, and as a result, it helps learners to perceive the corrective intent of feedback (Rassaei et al., 2012). This is a significant benefit of metalinguistic talk over recasts. In addition, metalinguistic talk benefits learners in locating the source of mistake in their output, and this assists students in carrying out cognitive comparisons and/or recognizing the disparity between the forms they have made errors in and the forms they are trying to convey. A conceptual comparison of this kind is thought to be essential for the acquisition of an L2 (Ellis, 1994; Schmidt, 1990).

The impact of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on L2 knowledge has been examined in a number of studies. For instance, Carroll and Swain (1993) evaluated the impact of four distinct forms of error correction on the learning of English dative alternation by one hundred ESL students. The nature of the feedback that the participants would get was explained in detail to them before the training began. When individuals from Group A produced an error, they were provided with metalinguistic feedback on alternation. In situations where the participants in Group B made an error, they were provided with a recast version of the right answer. When members of Group C made an error, they were questioned as to whether or not they were certain that their answer was appropriate. There were two different control groups: a control group was notified that their answer was incorrect, while another control group received no input at all. The findings demonstrated that even during the first rounds of feedback, groups A (who received metalinguistic feedback) and C (which received explicit correction) fared much higher than the control groups. When it came to short-term memory, Group A scored noticeably superior to every group with the exception of Group B (recasts).

Sheen (2007) conducted a study to investigate the impact of recasts and metalinguistic talk on learning articles among three groups of EFL students. The findings revealed that the metalinguistic feedback group exhibited superior performance compared to both the recast and control groups. However, the recast group failed to exhibit a statistically significant improvement in performance compared to the control group. The findings also revealed a noteworthy correlation between the utilization of metalinguistic talk and students' linguistic proficiency, as well as their dispositions towards corrective feedback. No significant correlations were detected within the recast group. According to Sheen's (2007) findings, recasts did not seem as prominent as metalinguistic explanations. Additionally, the recast group appeared unaware of the fact that they were getting corrective feedback.

Rassaei et al. (2012) examined the ways in which recasts and metalinguistic explanations influence the implicit and explicit knowledge of English that Persian EFL students acquire over time. There were three EFL classes that were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. The experimental group students were given recasts every time they made errors amid task-based exchanges with their peers. Students in the other experimental group, on the other hand, were given metalinguistic explanation whenever they made an error while doing the same tasks. According to the findings, metalinguistic explanations promoted implicit and explicit L2 learning better than recasts.

Thus, empirical studies have demonstrated that various types of corrective feedback hold a significant role in L2 acquisition. Increasing the number of forms in various permutations leads to an enhanced outcome. When it comes to implementing corrective feedback, it is imperative for instructors to adhere to certain essential practices. These include evaluating the students' learners, scrutinizing the type of errors made, and utilizing a variety of techniques that indicate the provision of correction and draw attention to any discrepancies between the students' output and the intended structure (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

3. Questions of the Study

The study addresses two fundamental research questions that focus on enhancing grammar instruction at the university level. The following two questions explore the effective utilization of input and output enhancement techniques for teaching grammar and measure the impact of the suggested instructional strategy on the grammar performance of these students:

1. How can input and output enhancement be used to teach grammar to level-one university students?
2. To what extent does the suggested instructional strategy develop the grammar performance of level-one university students?

4. Methodology

The participants and design used in the study are all explained in this section. It also outlines the steps the researcher took to teach grammar to the students in the experimental group using the suggested teaching strategy. A description of the grammar activities and materials used in the study as well as the testing process is also given.

4.1 Participants

The study involved the random selection of four classes comprising a total of 68 students. These participants were level-one students enrolled in the Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Sharqra University. Two of these classes were designated as the experimental group and were instructed by their instructor using a teaching strategy that emphasized enhancement of input and output. Two additional classes were assigned to the control group and received conventional grammar instruction from their regular instructor. Prior to and subsequent to the intervention, both groups were administered a pre-posttest aimed at evaluating their grammatical proficiency.

4.2 Teaching Strategy

The strategy involved the utilization an array techniques and activities to facilitate the improvement of grammar proficiency among the experimental group students. The researcher incorporated certain techniques for input and output enhancement: input flood as well as typographical enhancement to serve in the input phase, in addition to meaning-based and communicative activities, recasts, and metalinguistic explanations spanning the output phase.

In the input enhancement phase, the researcher started with manipulating and enhancing input through input enhancement techniques, with the aim of increasing input accessibility and usefulness to the students. In other words, the students first consciously attended to the input before it was converted into intake. In written input, enhancement was either of the following two forms: input flood and typographical enhancement. Input flood enhancement served to increase the students' awareness of the target structures, thereby promoting learning of those structures. On the other hand, typographical enhancement was used to modify the target grammar form(s) by highlighting, underlining, bolding, italicizing; using larger, different type or different color font, or through combinations of these methods. In spoken input, enhancement was done through change in volume, stress, emphasis, intonation, pitch, or a combination of these.

During the phase of output enhancement, the students were provided with grammar activities that were both meaning-based and communicative in nature. These activities were aimed at facilitating the students' ability to manipulate the structures of grammar within the context of their

communication. An additional objective of employing meaning-based activities was to firmly establish the targeted structure within the students' awareness thereby facilitating its retention during communicative drills. Concurrently, these meaning-based activities were designed to enhance the retrieval of declarative knowledge and initiate the proceduralization process. Subsequent to that, communicative activities facilitated the refinement of procedural knowledge and consolidation of the students' ' proficiency in the intended grammar forms.

Regarding the students' errors in the phases of manipulating and processing grammar forms, achieving communication was facilitated through the application of the two error correction techniques of recasts and metalinguistic explanations. The study employed metalinguistic explanations as a means of eliciting modification or self-repair from the students, with recasts being utilized in instances where the students did not engage in such repair. This procedure was implemented in order to attain a heightened level of intake subsequent to the provision of metalinguistic explanations and recasts.

4.3 Content of the Course

Following the outlined grammar lessons of the first semester in the academic year 2021, level-one students were enrolled in a course titled *Basic Language Skills*. Their instruction centered around the units contained within the designated textbook for this level, namely *Essential Grammar in Use, 4th Edition* by Murphy (2012). These units encompassed the following topics: the simple past tense, present continuous tense, present perfect tense, passive voice, and future tenses.

4.4 The Grammar Pre-posttest

Prior to commencing the study, both the experimental and control groups underwent a pre-test to ensure that they possessed equivalent levels of grammar performance. This step was taken to ensure that any advancements made by the experimental group students could be credited to the grammar instruction they had via enhancing input and output. Afterwards, it was utilized as a post-test to examine the efficacy of the suggested strategy in enhancing the learning of grammatical structure among students in the experimental group. In scoring the test, one point was awarded for each right response, while no points were awarded for double, incorrect, or left replies. The test included six questions for each of the five grammatical structures. As a result, all questions in the test were thirty, and the test as a whole was scored out of thirty. The students lexical and spelling mistakes were ignored.

5. Results and Discussion

The study findings are expounded by establishing their connection to the research questions. Initially, a t-test for independent samples was performed to compare the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether any significant differences existed between the two groups prior to the implementation of the study. The tabulated data indicate that there existed no significant differences between the two groups in terms of their pre-test grammar performance.

Table 1

Pre-test results for the experimental and control groups' learning of grammatical forms

Group	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t- value	Significance at 0.05
Experimental	33	13.77	5.34	66	.470	Not significant
Control	35	14.48	4.93			

The t-test for independent samples was employed to compare the means of experimental and control groups. This test is suitable when there are two independent groups (e.g., experimental and control) and there is a need to determine if their means differ significantly. It calculates a t-statistic, which represents the observed difference in mean scores between the groups divided by the estimated standard error of the difference. This value helps assess whether the observed difference is statistically significant and unlikely to be attributed to chance. The statistical significance is typically evaluated based on the p-value associated with the t-statistic.

The reported t-value of 0.470 at a significance level of 0.05 indicates that the observed difference between the group means is not statistically significant. The results suggest that the two groups performed similarly in terms of their overall grammar performance at the beginning of the study (baseline), implying they were roughly equivalent. Table 2 delves further by presenting additional t-tests for each grammar form, likely to assess potential differences in specific areas after the intervention (post-test). This allows for a more nuanced understanding of whether the intervention had a differential impact on different aspects of grammatical knowledge.

Table 2

Pre-test results for the experimental and control groups' learning of each grammar form

Item	Pre-test	No.	Mean	SD	t- value	Significance level
<i>Simple past tense</i>	Exp.	33	3.24	1.20	.560	.297 Not sig.
	Cont.	35	3.40	1.19		

Item	Pre-test	No.	Mean	SD	t- value	Significance level
<i>Present continuous tense</i>	Exp.	33	3.11	1.67	.873	.348 Not sig.
	Cont.	35	3.25	1.83		
<i>Present perfect tense</i>	Exp.	33	2.01	.91	.654	.198 Not sig.
	Cont.	35	2.06	.74		
<i>Passive voice</i>	Exp.	33	3.42	.93	1.05	.059 Not sig.
	Cont.	35	3.74	.89		
<i>Future tenses</i>	Exp.	33	1.99	.95	1.08	.451 Not sig.
	Cont.	35	2.03	1.17		

After examining each grammar form individually, the results show that: $t = .560$ for the first (simple past tense), $t = .873$ for the second (present continuous), $t = .654$ for the third (present perfect), $t = 1.05$ for the fourth (passive voice), and $t = 1.08$ for the fifth. No grammar form pretest t-values are statistically significant at the 0.05 level of confidence, indicating no significant differences between the two groups. This indicates that the two groups started at around the same point. Table 2 also shows that the average results for both groups were rather low.

In order to provide an answer to the first research question, a t-test for independent samples was conducted. The purpose of this test was to determine whether there were differences between the two groups in terms of their total performance in grammar forms on the post-test. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Post-test results for the experimental and control groups' total grammar learning

Group	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t- value	Significance level
Experimental	33	21.36	6.15	66	9.19	.000 significant at 0.05 level
Control	35	16.08	8.45			

As indicated in Table 3, the t-test value is 9.19. The results suggest that there exist statistically significant variations at the 0.05 level between the total grammar performance of the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group exhibiting superior performance.

Table 4

t-test results of the post-test for the performance of the experimental and control groups in each grammar form

Item	Post-test	No.	Mean	SD	t- value	Significance at 0.05 level
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Item	Post-test	No.	Mean	SD	t- value	Significance at 0.05 level
Simple past tense	Exp.	33	5.02	1.14	9.46	Significant
	Cont.	35	3.73	1.06		
Present continuous tense	Exp.	33	4.98	1.56	7.34	Significant
	Cont.	35	3.67	1.23		
Present perfect tense	Exp.	33	2.97	1.13	5.73	Significant
	Cont.	35	2.21	.96		
Passive voice	Exp.	33	5.28	1.32	9.05	Significant
	Cont.	35	3.90	1.10		
Future tenses	Exp.	33	3.11	1.95	6.40	Significant
	Cont.	35	2.57	1.32		

Table 4 shows that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test for all grammar forms at a significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, a t-test for paired samples was utilized to assess the degree of improvement in the experimental group students' performance between the pre-test and the post-test, following the implementation of the teaching strategy that relied on input and output enhancement. The t-test for paired samples is specifically designed to compare paired data, meaning measurements from the same participants taken at two different points in time. In this case, the paired data consists of the experimental group students' scores on the pre-test and post-test of their total grammar performance. The t-test for paired samples works by calculating a t-statistic. This statistic represents the average change in scores between the pre-test and post-test, divided by the estimated standard error of the difference. Essentially, it tells us how much the average score changed while taking into account the variability in individual score changes. The statistical significance of this change is then assessed using a p-value.

Similarly to the t-test for independent samples, a p-value less than 0.05 signifies statistical significance. In this context, it means that the observed average improvement in the experimental group is unlikely to be due to chance and can be attributed to the implemented teaching strategy. Conversely, a p-value greater than 0.05 suggests that the observed change could be due to random fluctuations and the teaching strategy might not have a significant impact on overall grammar performance. By interpreting the t-statistic and its associated p-value, we gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of the teaching strategy in improving the experimental group's grammar knowledge and skills over time. As such, the purpose of this test was to assess the difference in mean scores between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test results in terms of their total performance in grammar, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5

t-test results of the pre-test versus the post-test for the experimental group's total grammar performance

Test	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t- value	Significance level
Post-test	33	21.36	4.18	65	14.51	.000
Pre-test	33	13.77	6.90			significant at 0.05 level

As per the data presented in Table 5, the t- value is 14.51. The results suggest that there exist statistically significant variations at a significance level of 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group before and following the intervention, with the post-test scores exhibiting better performance.

As shown in Table 6, a series of t-tests were used to assess the performance of experimental group students in relation to each grammar form in order to assess differences prior to and after the intervention.

Table 6

t-test results comparing pre-test to post-test the experimental group's performance in each grammar form

Item	Exp. Group	No	Mean	SD	t- value	Significance level
Simple past tense	Post	33	5.02	1.14	13.46	significant at 0.05 level
	Pre	33	3.24	1.2		
Present continuous tense	Post	33	4.98	1.56	11.79	significant at 0.05 level
	Pre	33	3.11	1.67		
Present perfect tense	Post	33	2.97	1.13	10.58	significant at 0.05 level
	Pre	33	2.01	0.91		
Passive voice	Post	33	5.28	1.32	16.04	significant at 0.05 level
	Pre	33	3.42	0.93		
Future tenses	Post	33	3.11	1.95	12.01	significant at 0.05 level
	Pre	33	1.99	0.95		

Table 6 displays notable distinctions at a 0.05 level of significance between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test. The post-test scores are superior to the pre-test scores in all five grammar forms, as evidenced by the t-values.

The study's findings support the two research questions. It is evident that students in the experimental group, who received instruction incorporating input and output enhancement, outperformed the control group students who received conventional instruction on the post-test. Moreover, the experimental group students showed significant improvement in their grammar proficiency following the intervention compared to their pre-intervention performance.

Several factors contributed to the observed improvement in grammar performance among the experimental group students. The implementation of appropriate input and output enhancement interventions played a crucial role in facilitating effective grammar instruction. Initially, the teaching of each grammar form involved providing comprehensible input and utilizing implicit teaching techniques to raise students' awareness of grammar forms. This was followed by more explicit grammar teaching techniques. Additionally, ample time was dedicated to practice grammatical forms in communicative contexts. Another significant factor was that the instructional strategy simultaneously addressed various components of language proficiency, such as vocabulary, use, and spelling. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Koprowski (2000), Loewen (2004), and Poole (2005).

Furthermore, specific variables contributed to the experimental group students' grammar development at each phase of instruction. During the input enhancement phase, strategies such as input flood and typographical enhancement made grammar forms more accessible and visible to the students. These input enhancement techniques were integrated into meaning-based activities, aligning with the findings of Alanen (1995), Han (2002), and White (1998). The interaction between input, noticing, and attention created a hierarchy of learning where noticing and attention, facilitated through input enhancement, were prerequisites for intake. Thus, input enhancement increased the students' attention to grammatical features (Ahranjani & Shadi, 2012). Benati (2016) further emphasizes the effectiveness of input enhancement in improving learners' understanding of the target language.

During the output enhancement phase, the incorporation of meaningful and communicative activities enabled the students to process grammar forms more effectively. The integration of form within these activities increased students' awareness and application of grammatical forms. By emphasizing the significance of form as a conveyer of meaning, the instructional strategy facilitated the simultaneous instruction of form and meaning. This aligns with the research of Jacobs (2005) and Nassaji (2016), suggesting that interventions focusing on output enhancement and active language production enable students to identify gaps in their knowledge and establish connections between form and meaning. Collaborative output activities also promote form-awareness and corrective feedback.

Furthermore, the implementation of corrective feedback techniques had a significant impact on grammar learning. The study utilized a combination of metalinguistic explanations and recasts to draw the students' attention to mismatches between their produced language and the intended grammatical form. Specific steps were followed for error correction, including limiting the number of corrections per utterance, focusing solely on the instructed form, and providing additional teaching and drilling in meaningful and communicative contexts. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Lyster (2002) and Muranoi (2000).

In conclusion, the study's results demonstrate that the suggested instructional strategy, which incorporates input and output enhancement and utilizes corrective feedback, effectively enhances students' grammar proficiency. The incorporation of suitable interventions at each phase of instruction, along with the focus on meaning-based and communicative activities, strengthens the students' comprehension and application of grammatical forms. These findings contribute to the existing literature on effective grammar instruction and provide valuable insights for language educators.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Effective grammar instruction establishes a communicative language learning environment. This highlights the importance of employing a versatile instructional strategy that incorporates meaning-based grammar activities to enhance both input and output. Given specific learning conditions, it is crucial to incorporate a mixture of grammar instructional interventions to optimize learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, research supports the notion that providing learners with a varied array of comprehensible input and opportunities for natural and genuine interaction is essential for effective EFL learning. Additionally, offering learners timely combinations of direct and indirect error correction, including metalinguistic explanations and recasts, can significantly assist learners in improving their grammar acquisition. Moreover, empowering learners to work independently and assess their progress throughout grammar interventions enhances their language growth and ability to use the language for communicative purposes.

Therefore, it is recommended that instructors integrate techniques and activities that enhance both input and output in their grammar teaching. Factors such as learners' age, requirements, preferences, and language proficiency should also be considered. Furthermore, the instruction of grammar should be integrated into the curriculum framework rather than limited to separate lessons or tasks. Finally, guidance on how to implement grammar teaching interventions and procedures should be provided to EFL instructors, particularly through the instructor's manual. By implementing these recommendations, instructors can create effective grammar instruction that promotes meaningful language learning and communication among learners.

المستخلص

أساليب تحسين المدخلات والمخرجات في تدريس القواعد اللغوية للطلاب السعوديين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

بتسام وهيب الوهبي

تُعد الكفاءة في القواعد اللغوية عنصراً أساسياً لتحقيق التواصل الفعال في اللغة الإنجليزية. ويسعى تدريس القواعد اللغوية الأمثل إلى تحقيق التوازن بين تعزيز المدخلات (الفهم) والمخرجات اللغوية (الإنتاج)، وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار فعالية استراتيجية تدريسية تركز على المدخلات والمخرجات في تعزيز الكفاءة في القواعد اللغوية لطالبات المستوى الأول في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة شقراء خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الدراسي 1445 هـ، وتضمنت الاستراتيجية الأنشطة التالية: شرح القواعد اللغوية في سياقات تواصلية ذات معنى ودمج أساليب التغذية الراجعة اللغوية لتقديم الدعم والتصحيح للطالبات. وأظهرت النتائج أن استراتيجية التدريس المقترحة أثبتت فعاليتها في تعزيز الكفاءة في القواعد اللغوية لدى الطالبات، كما أظهرت الدراسة أن دمج أساليب التغذية الراجعة اللغوية كان فعالاً للغاية في تسهيل تعزيز الكفاءة في القواعد اللغوية لدى الطالبات. وتقدم هذه الدراسة دليلاً على أن استراتيجية التدريس التي تركز على المدخلات والمخرجات يمكن أن تكون فعالة في تعزيز الكفاءة في القواعد اللغوية لدى طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية، كما تؤكد على أهمية دمج أساليب التغذية الراجعة اللغوية في عملية تدريس القواعد اللغوية. وتوصي الباحثة بدمج مزيج مناسب من أساليب تعزيز المدخلات والمخرجات من أجل التدريس الفعال للقواعد اللغوية لطالبات اللغة الإنجليزية، كما توصي الباحثة بإجراء المزيد من الدراسات لتقييم فعالية هذه الاستراتيجية في سياقات مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعزيز المدخلات، تعزيز المخرجات، التغذية الراجعة اللسانية، إعادة الصياغة التصحيحية.

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Appendix A

The Grammar Pre-posttest

A. Choose the correct answer to complete each sentence.

(20 Marks)

- 1- I hope he _____ pass all his exams.
(a) might (b) can't (c) will (d) must
- 2- What _____ you _____ for dinner tonight?
(a) do / cook (b) are you cooking / cooking
(c) are you thinking / cook (d) do / am cooking
- 3- John _____ work on Fridays, so he's probably at the beach right now.
(a) isn't (b) doesn't (c) hasn't (d) wasn't
- 4- This delicious coffee _____ with freshly roasted beans every morning.
(a) is prepared (b) prepares

- (c) was prepared (d) has been prepared
- 5- The meeting _____ due to unforeseen circumstances.
(a) has been postponed (b) was postponed
(c) is being postponed (d) will be postponed
- 6- It _____ (snow) heavily, making the roads dangerous.
(a) is snowing (b) snows
(c) was snowing (d) has been snowing
- 7- It _____ believed that exercise is essential for good health.
(a) is (b) are (c) was (d) were
- 8- What time _____ the movie _____ start tomorrow?
(a) will / be (b) does / start
(c) are you going to / watch (d) shall / begin
- 9- I _____ reading the book you recommended, and I absolutely loved it!
(a) have finished (b) finished
(c) was finishing (d) am finishing
- 10- While reading the news, I _____ a notification about a job opening that perfectly matched my skills.
(a) came across (b) was coming across
(c) had come across (d) would have come across
- 11- He _____ on the phone for hours last night, which is why he's exhausted today.
(a) talked (b) was talking
(c) had talked (d) would talk
- 12- They _____ seem happy these days!
(a) aren't (b) don't (c) haven't (d) can't
- 13- I _____ probably go for a run later this evening.
(a) will (b) am going to
(c) would (d) shall
- 14- She _____ lived in Japan for a year before moving back to her home country.
(a) had already (b) has already
(c) hadn't yet (d) hasn't yet
- 15- We _____ the museum at closing time, so we only saw a few exhibits.
(a) reached (b) were reaching
(c) had reached (d) would reach
- 16- We _____ already eaten breakfast, so we're not hungry anymore.
(a) have (b) had
(c) are having (d) were having
- 17- The new bridge _____ under construction for the past two years.
(a) is being (b) was being
(c) has been (d) had been
- 18- She _____ at this company for over five years now.
(a) has worked (b) works
(c) had worked (d) was working
- 19- They _____ visited their grandparents for months!
(a) haven't (b) didn't
(c) hadn't (d) aren't
- 20- By the time you get here, the meeting _____ already ended.
(a) will have (b) will be

(c) would have (d) shall be

B. Fill in the gaps with the correct grammar structure.

(10 Marks)

- 1- I _____(probably) finish my work by 5 pm if I don't have any interruptions.
- 2- Look! Sarah _____(wave) at us from across the street.
- 3- I _____(not work) this weekend.
- 4- What time _____(the train / leave) for Paris tomorrow morning?
- 5- She _____(never / be) to Italy, but she dreams of visiting it one day.
- 6- The new bridge _____(build) next year.
- 7- They _____(live) in this house for 10 years.
- 8- This delicious coffee _____(make) with organic beans.
- 9- We _____(win) the competition last year.
- 10- I _____(cook) dinner yesterday.