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The Role of Attention in Second Language Development

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The Role of Attention in Second Language Development:

implications for language classrooms

A pilot study by Amanda McGinnis

The University of Montana Linguistics Department, 2007
THE ROLE OF ATTENTION IN SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

By

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Abstract:

This pilot study investigated the role of attention in language learning. I began by examining the most current research into how attention functions in the brain; then I discussed how attention as a cognitive mechanism is believed to fit into models of data processing and language learning. Once the nature and role of attention in language development was understood, it became possible to discover the practical implications for language teachers and learners. The most recent means to a grammar pedagogy is the Focus on Form approach: a language teaching option which takes into account the research on the role of attention in language development that suggests that L2 forms must be noticed in order to be learned. Focus on Form attempts to optimally exploit the learner’s attentional resources in order to promote noticing. The current study tested the effects of such instruction by comparing the short-term benefits of two Focus on Form techniques in enhancing noticing: Grammar Consciousness-Raising and Textual Enhancement. Finally, a review comparing the Focus on Form approach to a selection of alternative teaching methodologies demonstrated that Focus on Form is by far the most progressive approach available to today’s language teachers, because other methods do not capitalize on what is known about the role of attention in second-language grammar development.
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CHAPTER I: ATTENTION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Is attention necessary for language learning to take place? Current researchers conclude that it is, and also that a level of attention called noticing is the crucial requirement for learning L2 grammatical forms (Schmidt 1995). Noticing can be characterized as detection (a cognitive function) with awareness (consciousness), and without it, no new mental representations can be formed. Some researchers and language teachers have pointed to the natural human ability to learn first languages seemingly effortlessly as evidence that attention with awareness is not required. But adult learners of a second language often seem unable to reproduce this type of learning (through detection alone), and these difficulties are most overt in the learning of L2 grammar. The implications for language classrooms are significant, where teachers and learners alike struggle to use these complex cognitive processes that manage attention and facilitate grammar learning.

This pilot study investigated the nature of attention in the mind and current knowledge about the relationship between attention and language learning. Some of the first systematic studies in this area are those reported by Catherine Doughty and Jessica Williams, in whose book it was suggested that Focus on Form, or directing learner attention to target structures within meaning-focused contexts, allows learners to notice the forms and therefore possibly learn them due to a deliberate direction of learner attention to the grammatical forms. The least obtrusive Focus on Form methods attempt to enhance detection (without awareness), while other, more obtrusive techniques focus on promoting noticing (which includes awareness). The current pilot study tested this
claim by comparing the noticing-enhancing effects of the Focus on Form technique Textual Input Enhancement, a less obtrusive method intended to promote detection, to an instructional treatment known as Grammar Consciousness-Raising, a more obtrusive technique which promotes detection with awareness, or noticing. If the hypothesis of the study is upheld, it would support the conclusion that the attentional function called noticing is related to components of successful grammar learning, and that these considerations can be utilized by language teachers using Focus on Form to promote noticing of grammatical forms. The final topic is therefore how prominent teaching methodologies consider the role of attention in the classroom. Of the options available to language teachers, I will show that Focus on Form is the most desirable for maximizing learners’ attentional resources by promoting noticing.

Focus on Form-Introduction

Language pedagogy is a constantly evolving field, and a method called Focus on Form is a relative newcomer to grammar-teaching theories. Focus on Form has its basis in the most recent developments in neuroscience and applied research on the role of attention in second language acquisition (SLA), and it was also a reaction to the shortcomings of previous language teaching methods.

Prior to the 1990s, when Focus on Form arose, the newest ideas about how to teach language came to be known as the Natural Approach. These methods rely on the innate human language ability. A Natural Approach method attempts to mimic child language acquisition, which is conceived of as effortless and completely incidental.
Incidental language learning occurs when learners receive no rule explanations or grammar instruction. Incidental learning therefore takes place due to target language input alone. The learner’s internal mechanisms are termed the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) by legendary linguist Noam Chomsky and this processes target language stimuli so that development takes place. These processes are still a mystery, but observable behaviors in both children and adults indicated that attempting to use language to communicate meaning would, in fact, result in more fluency in the target language than the explicit methods of previous approaches.

These previous and explicit methods had been replaced by the Natural Approach because of a failure to create target language communicative ability. Explicit language teaching is giving the learners explanations of the rules and forms (grammar) of the target language. Learners experiencing explicit language learning therefore might have a metalinguistic knowledge of the target language, but lack the underlying competence such as people have in their native languages.

Thus, the problematic issue for both incidental and explicit language teaching and learning is target language grammar. With the explicit methods, students had expressible knowledge of target language rules and forms but could not seem to use this knowledge for communication. This conscious yet unusable knowledge is known in SLA as declarative knowledge because the students know what the rule is, but it hasn’t become an automatic part of their underlying target language competence. Similarly, incidental learning created procedural knowledge, which is an internalized, subconscious knowledge of grammar such as most native language knowledge. So these learners had
some communicative ability but lacked accuracy due to ignorance of certain target
language rules and structures.

An option which seemed promising but ultimately had similar shortcomings is
implicit grammar instruction. In implicit learning, students are provided with multiple
eamples of a single rule or form, and are expected to develop understanding of the rule
through this kind of structured exposure to the chosen target language item. However,
like the explicit and incidental types of learning, this one didn’t create the target language
competence that teachers, students, and researchers were still convinced was possible.

Thus, following the development of the Natural Approach methods in the 1970s,
the field of language teaching was waiting for an innovation that would save teachers
from having to choose between explicit methods and the newer, but not completely
successful, incidental methods. Focus on Form was proposed as the solution to this
dilemma. Focus on Form attempts to capitalize on the beneficial aspects of incidental,
explicit, and implicit language instruction, while avoiding the shortcomings of previous
methods. It does so by relying on a wealth of new knowledge about how language
learning occurs. Specifically, the role of attention in language learning is central to the
Focus on Form approach, because Focus on Form techniques are intended to create or
increase detecting of L2 forms or, more obtrusively, noticing them. Researcher Joanna
White states, “Although there is a general agreement that attention plays a key role... the
level of attention that is required for L2 acquisition and the role of conscious awareness...
are currently the topic of debate and empirical investigation” (White p.101).

In order to fully investigate the torrent of scientific research which provides the
basis for Focus on Form, many topics must be addressed: firstly, the ways that attention operates in the human brain. Developments in technology that allow actual observation of blood flow during various brain functions have provided a concrete basis for new SLA theory. In particular, a comprehensive model of attention as it occurs in SLA was developed from such research. I will present this model, known as the Independent Component Model of attention, its possible shortcomings, and where it fits into prominent models of SLA.

Using these foundations, I can then present the Noticing Hypothesis of Richard Schmidt, one of the foremost linguists to investigate the role of attention in SLA. Schmidt’s theories are compatible with the Independent Component Model (with one important exception), and the Noticing Hypothesis became one of the underpinnings of Focus on Form.

Based on Schmidt’s ideas, Peter Robinson investigated the role of attention under various learning conditions. I will cover Robinson’s findings and their implications for grammar teaching and learning in the language classroom, and particularly the support for Focus on Form provided by Robinson’s research.

After the evidence supporting Focus on Form theory is clear, the considerations of implementing a Focus on Form treatment in the language classroom will be discussed. Studies by various researchers will be presented, in order to examine considerations such as the forms, timing, complexity, and effectiveness of Focus on Form techniques.
Focus on Form- neuroscience basis

The theoretical basis for the Focus on Form approach starts with advances in knowledge about the mechanisms of the mind. Currently, some of the most in-depth investigation of how attention occurs in the human brain is the work of Michael Posner in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. Using brain-scanning technology, Posner’s research has discovered that different parts of the brain appear to be involved in the various components of attention.

Posner’s research discovered three different networks of attention in the brain. Subjects who engage in visual or attentional orienting display activity in separate areas of the brain depending on the task being performed. The posterior parietal lobe allows the subject to disengage from a current target; then the superior colliculus of the midbrain shifts to the new target. The pulvinar, part of the thalamus, enhances the new target for attention. See Figure 1.

Figure 1- the Orienting Network (Posner & Raichle 1994 p. 168)
The executive network (See Figure 2) is responsible for detection and conscious awareness, and comprises the working memory of the brain. The anterior cingulate gyrus and lateral frontal lobes work together to allow storage of input for processing. The anterior cingulate gyrus has an important role in detection, which if it occurs with awareness is called noticing (Schmidt). Posner states that this part of the brain “is the site of control; it operates in conjunction with other frontal areas that are involved in the representation of information” (Posner & Raichle p. 172). The cingulate gyrus therefore appears to control how attentional resources are allocated, because the so-called “Stroop Effect,” displayed when subjects divide their attention during an activity such as reading the name of a color while saying the color of the ink (which is different), shows how this part of the brain is important for such tasks because this is the part of the brain which was activated during these kinds of divided-attention tasks. The third network, the vigilance network, is located in the right frontal and right parietal lobes and is responsible for general alertness: the overall readiness for encountering the stimulus domain.

Figure 2- the Executive Network (Posner & Raichle 1994 p. 173)
The Independent Component Model of Attention in SLA

Parallel to Posner’s discoveries of how attention occurs in the brain, researchers Tomlin and Villa developed their Independent Component Model of attention in SLA (Tomlin & Villa 1994). These researchers propose that there is an organization of separate components of attention within the human mind. This organization is accomplished by Tomlin and Villa by the separation of attention into three categories: alertness, orientation, and detection. Of these, detection, equivalent to Posner’s “targeting,” is defined as the “cognitive registration of sensory stimuli” (Tomlin & Villa p.192), or the process that selects or engages a particular bit of information. This occurs when the thalamus, or “gatekeeper,” allows stimuli to pass through (to the perceptual store). This function is supposed to be the most crucial for SLA because this is the point at which target language input may be selected to become intake (the subset of input which is processed and integrated into an L2 system of knowledge). This assumption has influenced some of the leading SLA research and techniques, including Focus on Form.

Alertness, the second component in Tomlin and Villa’s model, was developed from Posner’s “disengaging” function, and is the overall general readiness to deal with incoming stimuli or preparedness to turn attention toward an anticipated stimuli. This aspect of Tomlin and Villa’s model operates independently of the others. The third component, orientation (and “reorienting” for Posner) is a process responsible for shifting attentional resources (but not focusing them) to some type of sensory input while excluding others. This third component is probably the most familiar to learners in
academic fields, where studying grammar mandates that certain information is chosen for processing while outside distractions are excluded as points of fixation in need of disengagement. In Tomlin and Villa’s independent component model, attention is also differentiated from awareness, which is the subjective experience of any cognitive or external stimulus.

Tomlin and Villa’s conceptualization of attention as separate functions, hence independent components, is supported by Posner’s discoveries in the field of neuroscience, since various parts of the brain are involved, depending on the aspect of attention being activated. Posner’s studies, because blood flow and other activity increased in particular areas during these different components of attention, seemed to find disassociation (such as between the executive functions of attention and the visual orienting network), and this led Tomlin and Villa to stipulate that these components are independent.

However, the Independent Component model of attention has its critics as well as its supporters. One of the leading investigators of attention and its role in language learning is Richard Schmidt of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Schmidt points out that the Independent Component Model is based on cognitive research which uses language simulations (called “sequence learning”) but not actual language learning. An example of this kind of study that is cited by Tomlin and Villa is Curran and Keele (1993). In this study, “subjects who experienced less awareness... showed less learning” (Curran & Keele p. 192). This result was used by Tomlin and Villa as evidence that awareness is separate from attention because “subjects can learn a repeating sequence but
not be aware of that sequence” (Tomlin & Villa p. 193), but Schmidt insists that “many subjects probably were partially aware” (Schmidt p. 22). This controversy is made possible because the researchers evaluated awareness on the basis of the subjects’ ability to report the sequence. The researchers themselves admit that the terms “attentional” and “nonattentional” were meant to be comparative, and claim that “whether attention is completely blocked is not crucial” (Curran & Keele p.190).

These claims have a direct relation to Focus on Form teaching methods. Although these considerations will be discussed in detail in later sections, Focus on Form techniques rely on the distinctions between attention and awareness. For learners in the pre-emergence stage for a particular form, detection alone (without awareness) can cause the learners to create an interlanguage rule which allows them to begin using the form, albeit inaccurately. For learners who already possess such an interlanguage rule, noticing (detection with awareness) is necessary to allow them to reformulate their interlanguage rule into a target language-like rule.

In another study cited by Tomlin and Villa which claimed to find learning with absolutely no awareness, Hartman, Knopman, and Nissen (1989), supposedly unaware subjects learned patterns underlying 10-word sequences. Schmidt discovered that some of this study’s subjects who were reported in the results as unaware were in fact partly aware. Schmidt’s concept of awareness requires only a conscious noticing of the gap between the learner’s interlanguage rule and the target language rule, not the ability to express the rule itself. Schmidt therefore concludes that this study also fails to show the disassociation of awareness from attention in learning.
Of course, researchers are still trying to develop experiments which can demonstrate exactly how the components of attention operate in language learning. For now, Tomlin and Villa’s model of attention is one of the most prominent models and is often used as a basis by SLA researchers. Even applied linguists like Schmidt, who disagree with certain parts of the model, use it as a starting point for their discussions because of its solid basis in recent neuro-scientific research.

**Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis**

Following this examination of the Tomlin and Villa model, Schmidt outlines his own conceptualization of attention in the introductory chapter to his book, *Attention and Awareness in Foreign Language Learning* (1995). Schmidt divides his concept of language learning into components such as intention, attention, noticing, and understanding, and he also distinguishes between attention and awareness just as Tomlin and Villa’s model does. However, Schmidt’s conceptualization of attention differs from the Independent Component model in that Schmidt, based on his interpretation of the same studies, claims that awareness is necessary in learning, attention and awareness being interdependent and necessary for all learning, whereas Tomlin and Villa had stipulated that awareness is a separate function and that the components of their model operate independently.

When it comes to the role of attention in second language acquisition, many researchers, authors, and teachers have examined the subject, and Schmidt, as one
of the leading experts, has put together his own conceptualization of attention. Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis states that learners need to consciously detect either the form and function of a linguistic item or the gap between their interlanguage form and the target language form in order to internalize it, and some language teaching and learning techniques have focused on providing or increasing this detection with awareness. In particular, Focus on Form relies on maximizing the learner’s noticing ability. Schmidt makes an important distinction between “noticing” and “understanding.” As Schmidt defines it, noticing is “conscious registration of the occurrence of some event,” and understanding is “recognition of a general principle, rule, or pattern”(Schmidt p.29), also termed elaboration: association with a memory, structure, or concept. Schmidt associates noticing with a low level of awareness in which an initial mental representation is formed, and understanding occurs at “a deeper level of abstraction” (Schmidt p. 29), which for Schmidt is an underlying mental representation rather than the ability to report the pattern such as in Curran and Keele’s “aware” subjects.

Schmidt’s evidence comes from studies involving actual language acquisition, such as Van Patten’s. In Van Patten’s research, English-speaking learners of Spanish were found to have internalized a rule for use of the subjunctive based on noticing the form in the input, but they had no actual “understanding” of the rule because they could not reproduce or report it. Schmidt concludes from this kind of language learning evidence that “attention (but not understanding) is required for learning” (Schmidt p. 39).

In Schmidt’s conceptualization of attention in language learning as multiple, interrelated components, noticing is what is necessary for target-language input to
become intake. In addition, according to Schmidt’s model, “understanding can be either internally generated or externally provided” (Schmidt p. 29). This distinction is between a rule-based mental representation and the pedagogical rule as presented by the language teacher, such as in a traditional explanation. This concept of Schmidt’s is actually equivalent to one of the main tenets of SLA, a question of whether or not explicit target language knowledge (knowledge about the target language grammar achieved due to instruction) can become implicit knowledge (subconscious, usable language skills). According to Schmidt’s noticing/understanding concepts, understanding (roughly equivalent to the concept of implicit knowledge) can be achieved, as he stated above, internally or externally. Schmidt points out that this issue is right at “the heart of the acquisition versus learning distinction” (Schmidt p. 31). And this topic is one of the most central for researchers, educators and learners, as well as for the Focus on Form approach to grammar learning. If there are different kinds of knowledge and these are created by different kinds of learning, how does grammar development occur? In particular, if knowledge attained through instruction can only become declarative, also called explicit, knowledge, then can procedural (implicit) knowledge be taught?

These questions are decided largely according to the model of SLA which a teacher or researcher adopts. According to the Focus on Form approach, detection or noticing are the keys to learning. In Focus on Form techniques with low obtrusiveness, learners can merely detect a target language form in the input and this allows them to create an initial mental representation for the item. In more obtrusive FonF methods, noticing is promoted. Noticing, because it involves detection with awareness, can allow
learners with such preliminary mental representations (interlanguage rules or structures) to notice the correct grammar in the target language input, or to notice the gap between their initial mental representation of the target grammar and the target-like rule or structure.

Although the processes of detecting/noticing are central to the Focus on Form approach, many prominent models of language learning have relied on other ideas about how mental representations are formed. These models range from simplistic, observation-based models of second language learning to complex models which include cognitive processes such as attention.

**Models of SLA**

It is a fact that not all learning is intentional. Most of us have experienced the acquisition or retention of information that seemed to sneak in somehow. In the field of language learning, cognitive scientist Nick Ellis and others have collected data on implicit learning, in which learners are able to internalize grammatical knowledge through instruction in which the target forms are presented by means of exposure to target-language input rather than an explicit presentation of the forms. However, other researchers, including Schmidt, conclude that attention is definitely necessary for language learning to occur.

Indeed, much of the recent research in language learning suggests that attention is, in fact, necessary, and that increased attention can result in increased learning. But the role of attention in language learning could depend on the model of learning or even
cognitive processing which one adopts. Language may be unique among knowledge types in that incidental learning is, rather than an intriguing possibility, an observed and prevalent process. Child language acquisition shows that the human brain has an apparently biological ability to learn language without conscious effort, and teaching methods have become prevalent which emphasize naturalistic language learning.

However, the possibilities raised by incidental and implicit learning (such as in first language grammar development) are dismissed by some and carefully qualified by others. Many applied linguists make a clear distinction between acquisition and learning, and the resulting kind of language knowledge. It has been stated that knowledge acquired incidentally leads to only implicit knowledge that is available for automatic use, while deliberate learning results in explicit knowledge. The Critical Period Hypothesis seeks to limit effortless, incidental acquisition of language to the childhood years due to reduced or eliminated access to the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in the adult brain. Although the terms are subject to various definitions, generally, “acquisition” is meant as the unconscious, incidental, or implicit development of language skills, while “learning” is its conscious, intentional, sometimes explicit counterpart. It seems possible that both learning and acquisition are interrelated components of second language development, a position which is known as the strong interface model. The existence of an interface between the types of learning and knowledge is crucial to the success of a Focus on Form approach to L2 grammar teaching because if knowledge provided by instruction cannot become underlying competence, then instruction can have only the effect of the explicit methods: creating declarative, metalinguistic knowledge about the target language rules.
and structures.

The opposite position of a strong interface model, known as the non-interface or no interface model, is Krashen’s prominent Monitor Model of learning, in which implicit and explicit learning (acquisition and learning) are separate parts of a dual system in which conscious and unconsciously acquired knowledge are stored in different types of memory, with the conscious knowledge acting only as a monitor on output. Krashen’s dual system concept has an important impact for teachers adopting this model. In communicative classrooms, meaningful input alone is provided in order to produce naturalistic development of target language grammar. Focus on Form researchers and proponents Catherine Doughty and Jessica Williams state that “perhaps the greatest impediments to the introduction of Focus on Form in L2 classrooms have been the influential claims of the ‘noninterface position’ proposed by Krashen” (Doughty & Williams p.202).

The Monitor Model (see Figure 3) is extremely well-known in the field, and seems to account for many known phenomena of SLA. For example, the idea that knowledge is either procedural or declarative can be observable in learner behavior: often, a student can either use a language rule in speech and writing or explain it metalinguistically but not do both. Krashen argues that learners must therefore store the different types of knowledge in different types of memory. This idea is partially supported by studies such as Nissen, Knopman, & Schachter (1987), in which the researchers found that procedural knowledge (implicit memory) is more immune to amnesia than declarative knowledge (Robinson p. 309). This kind of data, in which
procedural knowledge seems to be physically separated in the brain from declarative knowledge, lends support to Krashen’s theory of a two-part model for knowledge.

Figure 3- Krashen’s Monitor Model (Cook 1993 p. 54)

![Diagram of Krashen's Monitor Model]

*The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production* (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)

The Monitor Model has many implications for the role of attention in language learning. In Krashen’s model, meaningful input is the motivator of language development. However, only the input which becomes intake is able to be processed by the LAD in order to become “acquired” or procedural knowledge. Thus, even in Krashen’s no-interface model, there is an assumed cognitive mechanism which converts input into knowledge. Although Krashen credits LAD access with this process, many researchers argue that adult language learners have limited or no access to the LAD, and are therefore relying on more general cognitive mechanisms. Schmidt claims that attention is the key, because it is the mechanism “needed for long-term memory storage to occur” (Schmidt p.9).
A prominent cognitive model which makes this distinction between short-term and long-term memory is John Anderson’s ACT* (Mitchell & Myles p. 102-107). This processing paradigm, importantly, allows for declarative knowledge to become procedural, unlike Krashen’s Monitor Model. However, ACT* considers procedural and declarative knowledge to be different kinds of memory, as does Krashen. In Anderson’s model, declarative and procedural knowledge are both kinds of long-term memory, and there is also a working memory, such as hypothesized by Posner’s research. Working memory is a short-term mechanism and limited in its capacity. A model of working memory could be modeled as in Figure 4.

Figure 4- Working Memory (Thibeau 2007)

This construct of working memory is essential to the intentions of Focus on Form. In working memory (which according to Posner occurs in the anterior cingulate gyrus and lateral frontal lobes) stimuli are detected and therefore can enter the perceptual store. These percepts can remain there for only a limited amount of time. If percepts are left in the perceptual store without being selected for rehearsal in short-term memory, they will
naturally decay and disappear in about two seconds.

Rehearsal occurs when a percept is selected for the rehearsal loop in short-term memory. Richard Schmidt calls this process “access to selection” and it requires noticing, or conscious entry into the loop via attracted attention. This same crucial point in the processes of working memory has been called different terms by different researchers. Schmidt uses “access to selection” and noticing. In neuroscientific terms, for percepts to be sent to the cortex where rehearsal and processing occurs, the percepts must be selected in order to pass through the thalamus. For this reason, the thalamus is sometimes referred to as the “gatekeeper” of the mind. This “targeting” function discovered by research such as Posner’s was called “detecting,” in Tomlin and Villa’s SLA model and is an example of attention without awareness, the goal of less obtrusive Focus on Form methods.

Focus on Form attempts to allow percepts related to the form of the target language input to pass through this filter at the same time as the input’s meaning, which is usually primary in natural language processing. These processes are also called decoding (processing for meaning) and code-breaking (processing for form.) How the mapping between form and meaning is accomplished varies depending on the Focus on Form treatment being used, but all Focus on Form methods have as their goal the increased likelihood of detecting or noticing form as well as meaning.

In addition to this construct of a working memory which is central to the Focus on Form approach, ACT* supports assertions, such as Schmidt’s, that declarative knowledge such as results from grammar instruction can become part of an underlying, procedural knowledge of the target language grammar. The process by which knowledge becomes
procedural, as occurs in successful language learning, involves three stages. The first stage is the cognitive stage, in which declarative knowledge is acquired, or “a description of the procedure is learnt” (Mitchell & Myles p. 103). This declarative knowledge is a bulky mental representation requiring lots of processing capacity from the learner. The second stage is called the associative stage, in which the actual application of the knowledge is achieved. In this stage, therefore, external conditions for the action are no longer represented mentally, streamlining the skill. The third stage is the autonomous stage, when the skill is rapid and automatic.

These stages seem to reflect how learners progress in language development, where a form is noticed, then learned, and eventually becomes procedural and therefore requires less conscious attention on the part of the learner to understand or produce. The ACT* cognitive mechanisms have been incorporated into SLA models such as Towell and Hawkins’s (1994), which combines cognitive models with language-specific components such as UG.

(See Figure 5)
Encouragingly for the Focus on Form approach, this prominent model shows an interaction between Krashenian, meaning-driven knowledge and processing and the externally-generated knowledge created by instruction. Also, this kind of model, built
from current research into the processes of cognition and learning, suggests that the role of attention might be very different depending on the type of learning taking place or even the type of memory being formed. Declarative and procedural knowledge, if separate, imply that explicit and implicit processes are both at work in language development. Implicit learning, by definition, should require less attention than explicit learning. Should teachers therefore attempt instruction only for explicit learning, which requires conscious attention?

**Conditions of Learning**

Peter Robinson investigated these considerations by comparing dual-system models such as Krashen’s (and ACT*) with Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis. In his 1996 study, Robinson examined the role of attention in L2 grammar development under four learning conditions. The conditions were: incidental, implicit, rule-search, and instructed. The incidental condition involved exposure to meaningful input, and subjects were instructed to read for meaning. The implicit condition asked subjects to memorize examples of the L2 grammar. The rule-search subjects were told that a rule existed, and given examples in order to allow them to hypothesize the rules. The instructed condition involved an explicit explanation of the rules and some examples.

Robinson found that the learning condition determined how the subjects performed on various target language rules in grammaticality judgment post-tests. For example, the incidental group, which was instructed to consider only the meaning of the instructional materials, rejected only the post-test items which displayed incorrectness
with regard to meaning. Similarly, the rule-search group was unable to reject any items (beyond chance).

Robinson concluded that learners will orient differently depending on the learning condition. This would indicate that an instructional treatment such as Focus on Form could successfully manipulate the attentional processes of language learners in order to provide grammatical development.

Robinson also concluded from this study that his subjects learned what their attention was directed (oriented) toward. This is another supporting conclusion for the Focus on Form approach, which relies on the deliberate effort of instruction to bring otherwise neglected information (such as grammatical forms) into the learner’s rehearsal loop and eventually to the processors, where a new mental representation can be formed.

However, Robinson rejects the procedural/declarative format of these representations such as Krashen or the ACT* model use. Robinson’s concept of learning takes place when an item in the rehearsal loop undergoes what he calls elaboration. Elaboration is the part of the learning process in which an item starts to become a new mental representation, or knowledge. But for Robinson, there is only one long-term memory, rather than the dual-system of other models. Therefore, in Robinson’s model, learning is only one procedure although it occurs on a continuum between implicit and explicit learning conditions, depending on how attention is directed. Elaboration does, however, have two forms. It can occur as data-driven processing, in which a memory-based representation (example taken from input) is formed, for example, based on the co-occurrence of forms with other forms. For example, Robinson’s implicit learning condition group performed better on a difficult item than other groups because these subjects had a memory-based knowledge of the correct word sequence, rather than an
understanding of the rule. Elaboration can also be conceptually-driven, which is the more
deductive, rule-governed form of elaboration in which a general concept or principle of
organization is used to process the targeted input for meaning. Robinson’s instructed
group used this kind of processing and the results showed that this process was more
successful and efficient for the easier stimuli than the data-driven procedure. And for a
complex stimulus domain, conceptually-driven processing is debilitated, and data-driven
processing becomes all-important, making attention even more of a determinant in what
is learned.

In addition to these indications that learners respond to the learning condition
they are provided, Robinson also hypothesized how much of each function the learners
seemed to have capacity for. According to Robinson, conceptually-driven processing
requires attentional resources which, if overtaxed, leave only data-driven processes
available to the learner. In addition, Robinson observed that orientation can be taxed
when the stimulus domain is difficult for the learners for any reason, and this debilitates
the detection function (of Tomlin & Villa) or what Schmidt calls noticing. And, if the
attentional resources are taxed, the rehearsal loop of short-term memory can be affected
so that the item is not rehearsed enough, or decays, and elaboration does not occur.

This kind of interruption occurs if the attentional resources are taxed by difficulty
in the target language input. In Focus on Form, the less obtrusive methods attempt to
allow learners to detect L2 grammar without using attentional resources on awareness.
This is sufficient for learners attempting to create an initial mental representation, or
interlanguage rule. However, for learners who have already formed an interlanguage rule,
detection with awareness (noticing) is the necessary and sufficient condition to allow
development from the interlanguage rule to a target-like one. Focus on Form thus
provides for both kinds of learning/processing, for constraints such as difficulty and
obtrusiveness, and for stages of second language development.

Given the strong support of studies such as Robinson’s, as well as the research of
experts in the field of attention such as Schmidt, Tomlin and Villa, and Posner, Focus on
Form seems to have a thorough scientific basis. However, those who have undertaken
Focus on Form in research or in practice have discovered many important considerations
that must be addressed when implementing a Focus on Form approach. It’s been
established that noticing (or detection or targeting) is crucial to learning and that this
function can be facilitated by directing learner attention through instruction. But when it
comes to actual implementation of the Focus on Form approach into the language
classroom, considerations such as timing, complexity, and treatment options must be
decided.

Implementing Focus on Form- overview

Researchers Catherine Doughty and Jessica Williams are proponents of Focus on
Form as a middle ground in the debate between implicit and explicit models of language
development. The language teaching approach called Focus on Form seems to these
experts to tie together many of the most beneficial aspects of both naturalistic and
instructional techniques (Doughty & Williams 1998). In a Focus on Form lesson, learner
attention is directed in some unobtrusive way to the form of the content while still
maintaining an emphasis on meaning, which enhances the possibility of a general-
concept establishment rather than a memorized example. This is accomplished by making
the form more noticeable through emphasis such as tone of voice in spoken input, or
varied font in written input. This enhancement of target language forms is intended to
cause the item to be selected for rehearsal in short-term memory and eventual form-
meaning mapping as a permanent (and more permanent with practice, per ACT*) mental
representation (elaboration, in Robinson’s terms).

Doughty and Williams (1998) found that the acceptance of a distinction between
procedural and declarative knowledge and the stipulation that learned knowledge can
never become acquired knowledge meant that the role of attention is reduced in the
classroom, where teachers and learners would be expected to rely solely on input to
incidentally create language competence. Therefore, a Focus on Form approach adopts a
version of the weak interface position, in which different kinds of processes are
somewhat related, and rejects the dual-system or no-interface model. As in ACT*,
declarative knowledge can become procedural, and implicit (memory-based) and explicit
(conceptual) processes work together with natural orders to create language development,
just as Robinson and Schmidt had concluded.

In their article, “Pedagogical Choices in Focus on Form,” Doughty and Williams
extensively investigate the considerations involved in classroom implementation of their
Focus on Form approach. They agree with FonF pioneer Michael Long (Long &
Robinson 1998), that Focus on Form, in which “the learner’s attention is drawn precisely
to a linguistic feature as necessitated by a communicative demand” (Doughty & Williams
1998), which relies on conceptual or information-processing, is very different from what
is called “focus on formS” (Cook 2001 p. 40), a more conventional, structure-focused
lesson style. Doughty and Williams claim that their studies have found that incidental
input alone is less successful, particularly in grammar development, than a deliberate yet
unobtrusive effort to direct learner attention to target structures. These results suggest
that Focus on Form could be a solution to issues such as which aspects of language are
acquirable at different developmental stages, the amount and kind of focus which should be provided, and how the complexity of different forms recommend or counter-indicate a Focus on Form approach.

Implementing Focus on Form- timing

The first consideration when implementing a Focus on Form treatment is the developmental stage of the learners. One of Schmidt’s conclusions is that instruction works indirectly, assisting the Natural Order provided by natural language-learning processes. Documented acquisition orders, which are the same for adult learners with different native languages, support Schmidt’s claim, and the research of Dulay and Burt was among the first to show that such orders occur. In their 1974 study, they discovered that child learners of a second language acquired English grammatical morphemes in a certain order. An example of their findings is displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Order of Acquisition for grammatical morphemes (non-adult L2 learners)

1 articles
2 -ing
3 plural -s
4 reg past
5 irreg past
6 poss -s
7 3rd person -s
(Cook 2001 p. 28)

These orders are not affected by the learner’s first language, and other studies have shown that child L1 acquisition and adult second language acquisition are very similar to the orders shown by these child L2 learners. Acquisition orders are not altered
by instruction or the language environment. The implications for language classrooms are extremely important, since these studies seem to show that attempts by teachers or even by learners to acquire certain structures will fail if the student is not at that stage of development. In addition, Focus on Form treatments could have different effects at different stages. For example, learners in the pre-emergence stage for a particular form, in which they do not produce the form at all in their second language use, need only to detect the form in the L2 input in order to form a preliminary mental representation. However, in the emergence stage in which the form is produced according to an inaccurate, interlanguage rule, the important function to create a more target-like rule is noticing, or detection with awareness of the gap between the learner’s representation and the target language rule. The issue of timing when implementing a Focus on Form approach is therefore directly related to the distinction between detecting and noticing, the distinction made by different Focus on Form treatments. But natural orders have yet to be determined for many rules and structures. How can a language teacher use the consideration of timing when implementing Focus on Form?

Researcher Patsy Lightbown considers the relationship of Focus on Form and developmental frameworks in her article, “The Importance of Timing in Focus on Form” (1998), in which she addresses some of the important consequences of discoveries in the field of natural orders. The main questions for teachers, according to Lightbown, are whether to match the students’ developmental stage or to target advanced stages, and whether focus on the developmental stage of the learners should be integrated or separate. Lightbown admits that, due to the resistance of natural acquisition orders to instruction, “in the early 1980's... I was closer to Krashen’s view that formal instruction was neither necessary nor desirable” (Lightbown p. 180). This is a common teacher
reaction to the discovery of developmental sequences in language learning. However, her own and others’ studies (including Lightbown 1985, Long & Robinson 2001, White 1991) eventually convinced Lightbown that “focused attention to language features is often beneficial and sometimes necessary” (Lightbown p.180). But how can a teacher provide this kind of grammatical focus when the learner’s internal syllabus is seemingly unalterable?

Lightbown examines the options available to language teachers in light of these developmental orders. In order to match the instruction to the learners’ stage, there are two points of view: Krashen advocates providing input which is focusing on what he terms i + 1, representing input that is at, and also some that is just beyond, the learner’s current stage. The other viewpoint (Pienemann’s) involves identifying the current stage in order to target the next stage (Lightbown 1998). Ultimately, Lightbown determines that focusing language input in the classroom too specifically can actually change the target system. Since input comprises the target system for the learner (just as in child language acquisition), then providing only a subset of input means that the learner is now acquiring a different language. Also, the stages of development and orders of acquisition have not all been determined to the last detail, and individual variation within a class also limits the usefulness of an approach to language teaching that is based entirely on this internal syllabus.

However, the implications of natural orders for language instruction are significant, and suggest a complex interaction among the types of learning, kinds of knowledge, and internal mechanisms. Adding to the intricacy, some researchers claim that different forms, structures, or tasks are better suited to different types of learning, and those who are researching the role of attention have found yet more complex
connections between the role of attention in learning and various linguistic tasks.

Implementing Focus on Form- forms/tasks

According to Schmidt’s conclusions, more attention usually results in more learning, and noticing is central to progressing from the interlanguage stage to a target-like one. But research such as Robinson’s has shown that the nature of the linguistic task in question can partially determine the role of attention in development. For example, one hypothesis is that more complex structures or rules (internal, not pedagogical) will require more attention from the learner, suggesting that these forms or tasks might be best suited to the more obtrusive FonF techniques which promote noticing: detection with awareness. Also, researchers have investigated topics such as how different linguistic properties can change the way in which learners will have the most success. In his (1995) article, “Not All Grammar Rules are Equal: giving grammar instruction its proper place in foreign language teaching,” Jan Hulstijn of the Free University of Amsterdam examines the many and complex differences among grammatical forms and how they seem to affect the learning process.

Hulstijn attempts to define the connection between difficulty of task and amount or type of instruction required. He first defines difficulty in relation to aspects such as the learner’s prior metalinguistic knowledge, contrasts between the L1 and the L2, duration of acquisition, and reliability of rules. These are just some of the criteria that other linguists and researchers have applied when searching to describe “difficulty” or “complexity” with regard to linguistic forms or tasks. Hulstijn adds additional factors such as course objectives and the educational background of the learners, which can be important determiners in deciding which grammar points may respond best to explicit
Hulstijn proposed that attention to form at the time of input encoding, or mapping of form to meaning and not simply information-processing which may use non-formal, extralinguistic properties, is necessary and sufficient for L2 grammar learning to take place. This argument is shared by many of Hulstijn’s fellow researchers, and is a main tenet of language teaching methods like Focus on Form. However, the relationship between attention to form and language development is dependent in part on the models of language processing and acquisition which a teacher or researcher adopts, such as the weak interface assumption, in which explicit instruction facilitates acquisition, verses the non-interface position, in which there is no connection (as with Krashen’s dual system). Different teaching methods have adopted these positions; for example, the prominent Direct Method and Audiolingualism methods both downplay the role of explicit instruction due to the assumption that knowledge provided by instruction cannot become part of an L2 communicative competence.

SLA researchers Jessica Williams and Jacqueline Evans attempt to pin down the forms best suited to an attention-enhancing teaching method such as Focus on Form and which considerations should be made when choosing forms for this approach (Williams & Evans 1998). The English forms in their study were the participial adjectives of emotive verbs and the passive construction. The participial adjectives were chosen for their frequency of use and also frequency of error, and the researchers supposed that this form would be accessible through explicit instruction due to its relative transparency (obviousness of form-function relation): the -ed form is the experiencer and the -ing form the causer. The passive was chosen as a contrasting form because it had not yet appeared in the learners’ language use and is fairly complex in form and function (complexity will
be the next Focus on Form consideration to be examined). The study had a Control group (C), an Input Flood group (F), and an Instruction (I) group which received both explicit instruction and negative feedback on both forms. They hypothesized for the participial adjectives that the Flood group would improve more than the Control group, and the Instruction group would improve the most. For the passive, they expected the Instruction and Flood groups to improve similarly and more than the Control.

Williams and Evans supposed that the Instruction and Flood groups would improve similarly on the passive because both would be entering the noticing stage (which Schmidt proposed is prior to acquisition). Overall, they found that “subjects responded less favorably to explicit instruction and negative feedback with the passive than on participial adjectives” (Williams & Evans p. 152). The expectations for the passive were “partially supported,” because “only the instructed and control groups’ posttest scores showed a small significant difference... when the same statistical tests were applied to the gains themselves, even this difference disappeared” (Williams & Evans p. 148). On the participial adjectives, the Instruction group improved more than the Flood or Control groups, as hypothesized, but the Flood group did not outperform the Control as expected.

Many factors are likely involved in the outcome of Williams and Evans’s study, which demonstrated that Focus on Form utilizes learner attention by directing it to form and, importantly, in an unobtrusive way. Firstly, the researchers suggest that “greater task-essentialness” (learners must accurately use the form with the meaning that the form bears in order to complete the task) for the participial adjectives made it necessary for learners to attend to the form in addition to the meaning. Another factor could be individual readiness for instruction, as in the natural order. Subjects in pre-emergence
stages for the passives benefitted from merely detecting the forms, as provided by the less obtrusive method: Input Flood. The opportunities for detecting the new form allow the learners to formulate a preliminary interlanguage rule for the form. However, for learners already in emergence stages, detection is insufficient to cause the interlanguage rule to become more target-like. To do this, noticing (detection plus consciousness) is necessary, and this is provided by the more obtrusive Focus on Form treatments. Williams and Evans also conclude that “formal and functional complexity” (Williams & Evans p. 155) is likely a major factor in determining which forms are suited to attention-directing teaching methods: “It may be that explicit treatment is more suited to more transparent forms such as the participial adjectives” (Williams & Evans p. 152). This conclusion suggests that each form will have a different place on the continuum from explicit to implicit learning and teaching options, depending on the “complexity” of the form itself.

**Implementing Focus on Form- complexity**

This concept of complexity in linguistic forms is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a complex one, and one of the most important considerations in implementing a Focus on Form approach. Since complexity in the stimulus domain taxes the attentional resources of the learner (Robinson), the less obtrusive Focus on Form treatments will be appropriate because they will lessen the demands on the learner’s resources. But how can a language teacher determine which rules or structures are complex, and therefore likely to tax attentional resources and require a less obtrusive treatment? Hulstijn (1995) provides five criteria for determining the relative complexity of a form: scope, reliability, frequency, mode of command, and comprehensibility. Scope refers to the number of items a rule covers. Reliability is the form’s probabilistic tendencies. Mode of command
means whether the forms is used in a receptive or a productive manner. Frequency and comprehensibility seem fairly straightforward. Hulstijn’s own (1994) study found that instruction is most useful for rules with high reliability and wide scope, but this is not the only criteria which researchers have proposed for determining the complexity, and therefore the best treatment, of L2 forms.

Another possible guideline for deciding which forms could be problematic for the learner is the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which assumes that the learner’s native language is a major influence on the difficulty of target-language forms. This hypothesis has been largely discarded due to research which demonstrated that differences between L1 and L2 did not automatically lead to difficulty in learning the target forms, that L1-L2 similarity does not always result in positive transfer, and that the errors actually due to contrasts were relatively few (Towell & Hawkins). However, Joanna White considered this idea in a Focus on Form study, and concluded that the native language is an important factor when choosing a teaching approach or technique. Her conclusion is that “Focus on Form instruction may not be adequate in cases involving L1-L2 contrasts” (White p. 106). This conclusion helps researchers and language teachers move on to other considerations of complexity when implementing a Focus on Form approach.

Williams and Evans (1998) provide another list of considerations when deciding which forms are best suited to an attention-focusing approach. The forms: differ from L1, are not salient, are not important, and are likely to be misanalyzed by learners. The researchers found that these considerations are important and are likely factors for success in Focus on Form lessons. However, their study discovered a difference between a “transparent” (easy to process for information) form such as the participial adjectives, and a “complex” (not transparent) one such as the passive. Williams and Evans conclude
that complexity is a major factor for choosing a linguistic form on which to focus learner attention, and they suggest that “a more fine-grained analysis of what is meant by formal and functional complexity is needed to differentiate among forms. In what way are passives more complex than participial adjectives?” (Williams & Evans p. 155).

Krashen’s well-known answer is that there are two kinds of linguistic rules: those that are easy to acquire but hard to learn, and those that are easy to learn but hard to acquire (Dekeyser). This distinction is a result of his non-interface model of language development, in which learned and acquired knowledge are separate in the learner’s brain. Krashen suggests that rules which are easy to learn but hard to acquire are the primary candidates for Focus on Form treatment.

Krashen’s example of a formally and functionally simple form is the English third person singular verb ending -s. This form can be considered formally simple because it appears without formal variation, and because “a rule can be regarded as formally simple if it involves nothing but presence versus absence of a single morpheme” (Dekeyser p. 44). However, researcher Nick Ellis (1994) classifies this same form as complex, since it is an example of inflectional morphology in which the same morpheme encodes several pieces of information: number, person, and tense. Also, the modals and other exceptions to the rule make third person singular -s a difficult form for learners of English to master. Thus, even a single morpheme can be considered “simple” or “complex,” based on the various aspects of the form.

Researcher Robert Dekeyser’s investigations have discovered that probabilistic patterns in which a form occurs at a certain percentage of the time in certain environments as with allomorphic variation, are learned best inductively/implicitly, while categorical patterns, which occur 100% of the time, are more suited to an explicit
approach. This criteria comes from research in the field of cognitive psychology, studying the learning of artificial grammars and other forms of sequence learning. Learners appear to learn better implicitly under such simulated language circumstances, and are able to make grammaticality or sequence judgments through this kind of implicit learning. However, the subjects do not have an explicit knowledge of the patterns they’ve learned, leading to concerns that the subjects have merely memorized certain exemplar patterns, resulting in an incipient mental representation, rather than internalizing some sort of rule. DeKeyser therefore claims that Focus on Form is most appropriate for forms which are the result of an abstract rule, rather than a “similarity pattern.” Abstract rules are sometimes too complex for an explicit teaching treatment, and therefore must be induced by the learner, according to DeKeyser, and this is therefore the determining factor in which forms are best suited to the Focus on Form attention-focusing approach.

DeKeyser’s own 1995 study delivered similar conclusions. The simple (categorical) rules in a “miniature linguistic system” were best learned through a deductive, explicit approach. However, the probabilistic patterns of allomorphic variation such as noun and verb endings were learned better under implicit-inductive conditions, in which learners were exposed to input from the target system but not explicitly instructed in the abstract rules being used.

Although these studies were mostly in simulated language-learning environments, they provide some excellent data concerning which forms are best suited to the Focus on Form approach, a consideration which is paramount when attempting to apply scientifically garnered knowledge to the language classroom.

However, respecting the role of attention in language development might not be the primary goal for a successful teaching option. Focus on Form is an enlightened
approach to language pedagogy and is informed by research into such important topics as: kinds of memory and models of language processing and learning, natural orders, and linguistic tasks, analysis (as in allomorphy) and forms with regard to complexity. But studies into divided attention, such as might result from a Focus on Form technique in which attention is being directed at a form while the learner is still attempting to direct some attention to meaning, have suggested that more needs to be learned about how this kind of division of attentional resources could affect learning, possibly in a negative way. This could occur because the learner’s short-term memory, part of the executive attention network, has a limited capacity as well as a natural preference to process meaning primarily and form only secondarily. The Focus on Form approach attempts to divide these attentional resources so that form receives attention as well as meaning during language learning. But this seems possible to strain the resources of the working memory, as Robinson’s research indicated. With today’s focus on communication and interaction (meaning) in language classrooms, how can attentional resources also be diverted for successful grammar development?

Implementing Focus on Form- Focus on Form in CLT

One study which seemed to find the perfect blend of Focus on Form instruction and a communicative learning condition was Doughty and Varela (1998). In this experiment, Focus on Form researcher Catherine Doughty convinced language teacher Elizabeth Varela to try a Focus on Form treatment known as focused recasting in her content-based ESL course. Varela, being a dedicated proponent of Communicative Language Teaching, was reluctant to implement any kind of grammar instruction in her
science class for middle-school ESL students. However, Doughty convinced her that Focus on Form could result in grammatical development otherwise not achieved by the learners.

This progress would be accomplished by taking into account all the considerations of implementing a Focus on Form approach. Specifically, the study targeted development of past tense and past tense conditional forms because these were essential to the meaning the students needed to convey in their science lab reports. The treatment was completely reactive. Focused corrective recasting was offered immediately after the error occurred, and the teacher did not recast for any other grammar forms. Recasting involved repeating the error with a rising intonation, then stating the message using the correct form and a falling intonation. Recasting was used at all times during the course of the science class, except in high-stress situations such as when the students were presenting in front of the class. In these cases, the teacher made a video and later went through the material with the students, pausing to offer recasting when needed.

The results of Doughty and Varela’s study were extremely encouraging. The learners went from a stage of error or omission of the target forms to increased use of interlanguage and target language forms. In addition, these results were maintained on a delayed post-test, although not as effectively in their writing, probably because the treatment had been oral. The dramatic results occur when the treatment group is compared to the control group: another science class in which the teacher offered no recasting or other grammar instruction. The control group began with nearly as many errors and omissions as the experimental group had begun with, and these only increased by the time of the delayed post test.

This study demonstrates that Focus on Form can, in fact, have positive results for
language learners, even in an otherwise completely communicative language environment. It’s important to notice the precision with which the treatment was implemented: the form was a problematic one for the learners but also necessary to the meaning they needed to convey in the class. The treatment focused on this form only and was completely reactive. The learners were in an interlanguage (inaccurate) stage for the forms prior to the treatment, which attempted to promote noticing of the gap between the interlanguage rules and the target rules. And finally, the treatment itself was unobtrusive (did not overly distract the learners from the meaning) and therefore was effective.

Studies such as this one, involving Focus on Form techniques in practice, have mostly claimed to find a clear benefit for learners when Focus on Form is provided in the language classroom. The next chapter will present my own experiments with Focus on Form in action. Specifically, I compared the effects of the Focus on Form treatment known as Input Enhancement with the effects of another treatment called Grammar Consciousness-Raising. These two treatments have been studied independently in some important precedents.

Implementing Focus on Form- specific Focus on Form treatments

When implementing a Focus on Form approach, there are many treatments for teachers to choose from. Focus on Form techniques can be chosen from a continuum that ranges from explicit, obtrusive techniques to unobtrusive ones. Explicit, traditional rule explanation is at one end of the continuum and represents full intrusion into the learner’s attentional resources because they are directed entirely at processing for form (code-breaking). At the other end, with no intrusion, is the Natural Approach, which devotes all the learner’s resources to processing for meaning (decoding). Focus on Form techniques
can occur at any point along the continuum, which would look like Figure 7.

Figure 7- Intrusiveness Continuum (Thibeau 2007)

Focus on Form techniques at the less intrusive end, such as Input Flood and Input Enhancement, attempt to increase the learner’s ability to detect the forms in the input, a sufficient condition for creating a preliminary interlanguage rule.

Proposed by Sharwood Smith (1981, 1991), typographical (or textual) Input Enhancement involves drawing learner attention to a particular form through bolding, italics, underlining, or enlarging of the target forms in the input. Textual Input Enhancement is dubbed the “visual equivalent of stress and emphasis” (White p. 91) in spoken input.

In a 1996 study, researcher Joanna White investigated the usefulness of the Focus on Form technique textual Input Enhancement. In White’s study, three groups of francophone learners of English received different instruction: Group E+ received Input Enhancement and extensive reading and listening exposure, Group E was instructed with Input Enhancement, and Group U received un-enhanced input. There was also a comparison group which did not receive a treatment. White’s hypothesis was that Input Enhancement would be more successful than un-enhanced input in acquiring the rules for
English possessives, and that Input Enhancement in addition to extensive exposure (Group E+) would be the most successful treatment.

The possessive determiner was chosen because French-speaking learners of English had demonstrated difficulty in acquiring this form. White conjectures that differences in French and English gender rules are to blame for the learners’ problems with the determiners, and that Input Enhancement could be the solution for troublesome forms such as these. The enhancement would make these forms more salient to the learners, and thereby allow them to notice that the rules for English gender agreement in possessives (agreement with possessor) differ from those of French, in which agreement occurs with the possessed.

White claimed that the results supported her main hypotheses overall, although there was enough individual variation within the groups to qualify the success of the Input Enhancement. However, most subjects showed progress along the stages determined by the linguistic structure in the experimental groups, and especially when compared to the control.

White discusses many variables that seemed to affect the outcome of her study, such as the interaction of instruction and natural orders of acquisition such as Zobl’s (1984, 1985) proposed order of noun and determiner acquisition for French-speaking learners of English: case, number, person, gender (inanimate, then animate). White’s 1996 study found support for Zobl’s order in that all of her subjects who showed progress moved from an earlier stage of Zobl’s order to a later one. In addition to this developmental framework, White suggests that density alone may have been responsible for the results. All three groups received Input Flood and although the comparison group (fourth group) definitely did not reach the final stage of development with the success
that the other groups did, for the three experimental groups it seems to White that “these differences on their own leave unresolved the question of whether it was the input flood, typographical enhancement, or multiple test administrations that was responsible for the developmental advantage of the experimental learners...”(White p. 104). Another factor White considers is salience. She notes that testing activities may have led all three groups to notice the forms equally, since the testing was identical for all three groups and encouraged the form-meaning mapping which the enhanced input was supposed to emphasize. White also says that “the forms may not have been novel enough to attract the learners’ attention” White p. 102), because the subjects had already encountered the forms in their classes. Therefore, the stage of development which the learners are at for the particular form can be a factor in the success of the Focus on Form treatment, as well as the complexity or salience of the form, individual characteristics, and the density of the treatment itself.

Of course, another factor possibly influencing the outcome of White’s Input Enhancement study is the taxing of attentional resources. Specifically, the taxing of the orientation (attention-shifting) function of learners in the earliest developmental stages may cause a deficiency in resources left for detection, as Robinson noted in his study for complex linguistic structures (Robinson 1996). The natural processing mechanism was therefore interrupted by the explicitness of the treatment, but only for the lowest-stage learners for whom too much of their attentional resources were being directed to the orientation functions of attention due to difficulty in the stimulus domain.

Another attention-directing option for language teachers is known as Grammar Consciousness-Raising (GCR) or sometimes consciousness-raising. This technique is from the other end of the explicitness continuum, one of the most obtrusive Focus on
Form techniques, and intends to provide conscious noticing of the target language grammar or the gap between the interlanguage rule and the target rule. Like Input Enhancement, GCR was first proposed by Sharwood-Smith (1981), and is based on ideas about the relationship between attention and language learning. Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis is central to the idea of GCR, as the learner is provided with input and activities which are designed to create awareness of the target forms. GCR is unlike a traditional syllabus because learners are not expected to produce the forms accurately or at all before their internal syllabi have brought them to the developmental point at which their Interlanguage systems can accommodate the new structures.

A major innovator in GCR is Rutherford, who mandates that consciousness-raising is an implicit process. Due to the complexity of the system being learned, Rutherford would argue that rules and structures cannot be acquired by learners through teacher or textbook explanations of the grammar (Rutherford p. 171-182). Instead, students in the language classroom are encouraged to create and test their own hypotheses about the target language through meaningful tasks and input. The students are assisted to “notice the gap between their own production and that of native speakers.” (Schmidt and Frota 1986) This is, of course, Schmidt’s version of noticing, which involves not just detection but detection with awareness. GCR facilitates this awareness and is therefore on the explicit side of the Focus on Form explicit/implicit continuum.

Sharwood-Smith allows for more explicit processes within GCR. Since Sharwood-Smith includes both explicit and implicit knowledge as parts of language development, GCR can be applied in both cases (Sharwood-Smith p. 55). Therefore, GCR lessons might invite learners to actively conjecture about the form of certain input, or provide many opportunities within a communicative task or activity for the learner to
try their own hypotheses in comparison with similar target language input. If noticing is a prerequisite to acquisition, then GCR provides the learners with opportunities to notice target forms, assuming that the learner can eventually acquire the form, when the internal syllabus reaches that point.

Fotos and Ellis studied GCR with intact groups of Japanese students learning English. Their GCR group had similar improvement as the explicitly instructed group in a post-test on adverb placement and relative clauses involving grammaticality judgments. However, at a two-week followup, half of the students that received the GCR treatment were able to recognize the target forms by underlining them in a text. None of the explicitly instructed students underlined these forms in the followup. Fotos and Ellis’s study therefore demonstrates the effectiveness of GCR in getting students to notice target forms.

Given this kind of evidence of the usefulness of Focus on Form treatments combined with the support of scientific research on the role of attention in language learning, Focus on Form appears to be a promising and thoroughly grounded grammar teaching method. The next chapter will present my experiment designed to compare the effects of Input Enhancement and GCR on L2 grammar development in a short-term classroom study.

CHAPTER II- RESEARCH DESIGN, LIMITATIONS, AND FINDINGS
Design & Limitations

Subjects

In order to compare the effectiveness in promoting noticing of textual Input Enhancement and Grammar Consciousness-Raising, a pilot study was conducted with some advanced learners of English as an Academic Second Language. Rather than examining treatment effect for these two Focus on Form methods, this study investigated the increase in noticing provided by the two treatments. Input Enhancement, as the less obtrusive technique, should promote detection but not noticing. GCR, on the other hand, is a more obtrusive method and is meant to promote noticing. Although attentional processes are internal, this study attempted to determine how the Focus on Form treatments in question provide or promote noticing by observing classroom behavior in which subjects were given opportunities for noticing target forms, following the treatments.

The twenty-five subjects were two intact classes of college-aged students with a variety of native languages, although Japanese speakers were the most numerous in the group. They have achieved college-entry level scores on the TOEFL test, ranging in proficiency from intermediate-high to mid-advanced on the ACTFL scale. The subjects were living in an English-speaking environment while attending The University of Montana. The instructors for the two classes were graduate students in Linguistics at the same university, similar in age and gender. The researcher was one instructor, and provided materials and instructions for carrying out the treatments and testing to the other instructor. Although this cooperation between two classes created some limitations for the study, it was necessary to engage enough subjects, because the researcher had fewer than ten students in her class. Another limitation was participation: not all subjects were
in attendance or participated in all parts of the treatments and tests. Thus, a subject who participated in a pre-test might have no score for the noticing activity, or vice-versa. These scores will not be considered in the results.

**Method**

The grammar points chosen for the study were: question formation, passive construction, and adverb usage. The formal and functional complexity of these structures is variable. Passives are widely considered a complex form due to the non-transparency of the construction (Williams & Evans), in addition to the complexity provided by the use of English auxiliaries and irregular past tense participles, both of which require memorization of the forms on the part of the learner. Adverb usage is sometimes problematic yet relatively transparent, with the exception of the irregular forms (such as fast). Question forms are considered a more transparent structure which learners of L2 English study (and seem to learn) very early on, but also require memorization and use of modals which have no English rule to govern them and merely require memorization.

The learners are certain to have encountered all three of these target forms before, either in input or instruction or both. However, their pre-experiment language production indicated that they might have remained in the pre-emergence stage for the passives prior to the experiment, and in the emergence stage for the other two forms. In this case, an unobtrusive technique such as Input Enhancement might increase their detection of the form for which they remained in pre-emergence, allowing the formation of a new interlanguage rule for this form, while GCR should provide increased noticing of the gap between the interlanguage and target rules for the forms which have already emerged in L2 output. At least, this seems to have been the case in the Williams and Evans study, and could be a factor in this experiment as well.
Over the course of one semester, the subjects received two treatments. The first treatment was the Grammar-Consciousness Raising unit. First, the subjects were tested to determine their level of proficiency with regard to the three target forms. The pre-test provided grammaticality judgments and transformation exercises. (All materials are in the Appendices.) The pre-test indicated that the subjects were in an interlanguage stage for these forms because the subjects performed at less than target-like levels.

The GCR activity involved providing the students with lists of sentences. The incorrect sentences were marked with asterisks. Subjects were asked to compare the correct and incorrect sentences, and to explain why the sentences with the asterisks were incorrect. This treatment occurred during a single, one-hour class period.

Immediately following the GCR activity, the students were given a post-test involving grammaticality judgments and transformation exercises, initially meant to see if the treatment had an observable effect on accuracy. Then, the two-week followup activity was administered. In the followup activity, students were asked to mark the target forms if they noticed them in a text.

The second treatment was the Input Enhancement unit. Students received textually enhanced reading materials for a one-week period. Adverbs appeared in italics, passives were underlined, and questions appeared in bold. A followup activity was administered at a three-week distance from the treatment. In the followup activity for the Input Enhancement unit, students played a Bingo game in which they had to notice grammar forms in sentences being displayed on an overhead and read aloud.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the method of the study. One was the discrepancy between the pre-test technique and the noticing activities. The pre-test was
scored for accuracy and was meant to establish the developmental stage of the learners with regard to the target forms. The noticing activities were designed only to test for noticing. Since the developmental stage was an important consideration in the results of the study, changing the pre-test to a noticing activity would not have been ideal. However, the addition of a noticing activity at about the same time as the pre-test occurred could have measured for the levels of noticing the subjects were capable of prior to the treatments.

Although both Input Enhancement and GCR intend to increase learner ability to detect or notice target forms in meaningful input, the hypothesis was that GCR will prove slightly more effective with proficient learners who study and use English as an academic language because of the opportunities for them to hypothesize rules and analyze target structures provided by the conscious interpretation of the examples. Also, because the learners are already in the emergence (interlanguage) stage for two of the forms, detection (Input Enhancement) might be insufficient to change their interlanguage rules to target-like rules, or a memory-based representation to a rule-based one. GCR provides detection with awareness, which was indicated by the Williams and Evans study to move learners from interlanguage rules to target language rules. For the passive, in which the learners appeared to be generally in a pre-emergence stage, the Input Enhancement and the detection it promotes could move them into an emergence stage.

Findings

On the noticing activities provided at about a two-week distance from each treatment, the Input Enhancement unit resulted in the highest percentages of noticing. The difference was largest between the percent of successful noticing of passives in the GCR noticing activity (85%) and the Input Enhancement activity (100%). Noticing of
questions was high for both units, (97% and 100% respectively), and noticing of adverbs was 82% after the GCR unit and 93% in the Input Enhancement followup. Generally, the Input Enhancement unit therefore seemed to result in the most noticing at a two-week distance from treatment. This result supports the hypothesis that for passives, because subjects were in a pre-emergence stage, Input Enhancement would increase detection and move learners in the emergence stage. However, the hypothesis that GCR would be overall more effective by increasing noticing of the two emergence-stage forms was not upheld.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test:</th>
<th>Grammar Consciousness-Raising:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Passives: 87%</td>
<td>Passives: 85% noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs: 57%</td>
<td>Adverbs: 82% noticed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions: 89%</td>
<td>Questions: 97% noticed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Enhancement:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passives: 100% noticed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs: 93% noticed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions: 100% noticed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the presence of too many empirical variables may have overly influenced these results, the findings suggest that these Focus on Form treatments do have an effect on the detecting/noticing functions of attention in language learning. In order to fully investigate these findings, further research is required.
Data

In the following sections, results from each unit will be presented in detail.

Firstly, in the GCR unit, subjects were given two tasks for each form. In the pre-test, subjects appeared to have the most trouble with one of the adverb tasks, with only 17% of subjects answering correctly, while on the other adverb task 96% were correct. In the post-test, percentages for the adverb tasks were at 96% (same as one of the pre-test results) and 28%, a slight increase over the other pre-test adverb task. The charts on the following pages present the raw data and summary of the percentages.

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Data Interpretation

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Averages:  

- **pre-test**  
  - adverb 57%  
  - passive 87%  
  - question 89%  
- **post-test**  
  - adverb 62%  
  - passive 82%  
  - question 90%

Discussion

It appears from the results of the pre- and post-tests that the treatment had little immediate effect on accuracy. Overall correctness on adverbs increased by 5%, while decreasing by 5% for the passive construction and remaining nearly the same for questions. However, the treatment effect itself was not the primary subject of my study. The noticing abilities of the subjects were tested in the data that will be presented next.
## GCR Noticing activity results

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## Data Interpretation

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**GCR Noticing Activity Discussion**

On average, questions were noticed most while adverbs and passives were noticed most of the time by the subjects. These results are likely due to a combination of factors, which will be discussed in the Analysis section. Next, the results of the textual Input Enhancement unit will be presented.
## Input Enhancement Noticing Activity

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<th>Question</th>
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### Data Interpretation

- **Passives:** 100% noticed
- **Adverbs:** 93% noticed
- **Questions:** 100% noticed

### Input Enhancement Noticing Discussion

In the Bingo activity, nearly all the students noticed the target forms. This is an impressive result because the subjects’ attention was divided during this noticing task. There were thirteen other grammar forms on their Bingo sheets, and each sentence contained several of these. Subjects had to notice the form as well as write the example on their sheets. More factors will be discussed next, in my Analysis of the results of my study.
Analysis of Data

Just as in Joanna White’s Focus on Form study, there were many variables affecting the outcome of my comparison of GCR and Input Enhancement. However, the primary factor was the developmental framework within which the study occurred.

These subjects were too advanced to demonstrate progress on the emergence-stage target forms. Although White’s study discovered a similar factor, in my study it may have been strong enough to override other considerations. Better candidates might have been Robinson’s “hard rules,” such as location statements as grammatical subjects (Where Alice stands is on the right) or “pied-piping” (To whom did John give the book?) (Robinson).

However, subjects demonstrated some difficulty with a few of the tasks. In the GCR pre-test, only 17% of subjects correctly answered the following item:

1. Choose the form which best completes the sentence:
   “In the library, it’s better to speak as ________ as possible.”
   a. quiet       c. quieter
   b. quietly     d. quietness

And yet, in the same pre-test, 96% of subjects correctly completed the other adverb task:

4. Fill in the blank to describe the best way for a runner to win a race:
   “To win the race, the runner should run as ____________________ as possible.”

The second adverb task elicited the response “fast” from almost all of the subjects. I noted that the response to the first adverb task was mostly for option a: “quiet.” Although this was not the response I was testing for, it seems likely that these students are constantly exposed to naturalistic input that favors the “as quiet as” format as more colloquial than “as quietly as.” Also, in the second adverb task, the usual response of “fast” has similar qualities. The distinction between adjective and adverb is especially blurry when the adverb is not simply an adjective plus the “-ly” ending. Could the subjects’ responses to pre-test question #4 be as mistaken as in #1, but be counted as
correct because the item “fast” is both adjective and adverb?

Thus, it seems that task variation was the second-most influential factor affecting the results. One of the most surprising results in the GCR post-test was the first passive construction task. On the pre-test, 78% of subjects were able to successfully complete the following item:

2. Make the following sentence into a passive sentence:
   “Lee destroyed the room.”

However, the percent was down to 64% on post-test item #2:

2. Turn this sentence into a passive sentence:
   “Kara knocked over some tables in the cafeteria.”

It seemed that the prepositional phrase combined with the phrasal verb was to blame for problems with this item in the post-test. Several of the responses that were counted as incorrect had these aspects wrong, omitted, or changed during answer self-checks with arrows and such to indicate where they should go.

The best example of how task variation caused aberrant results is post-test question #4:

4. Describe the best way for a rock climber to reach the top of the mountain.

It’s possible to imagine the variety of answers given by the subjects. The correctness percentage of 28% on the GCR post-test was for this item. Since I was attempting to elicit an adverb in the response, statements such as “Climbing,” or “Using a helicopter,” were counted as incorrect. Overall, items on the GCR pre- and post-tests should have more closely resembled each other, and an item which invites a free response
such as post-test #4 is just inadvisable.

The main purpose of my study, however, was to compare the two treatments on a followup activity that tests for noticing. Since GCR showed promising results for noticing in the Fotos and Ellis study, it seemed possible that my GCR activity would result in noticing at a two-week distance from the treatment in this study. Contrastingly, in White’s Input Enhancement study, effects on a delayed post-test indicated that effects of the treatment were no longer observable. In my study, the followup (delayed) results of both treatments are shown here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test:</th>
<th>Grammar Consciousness-Raising:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passives: 87%</td>
<td>Passives: 85% noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs: 57%</td>
<td>Adverbs: 82% noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions: 89%</td>
<td>Questions: 97% noticed</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Enhancement:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passives: 100% noticed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs: 93% noticed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions: 100% noticed</td>
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</tbody>
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Overall, it appears from these numbers that Input Enhancement had a greater effect on noticing. However, task variation in the noticing activities could have been responsible for the apparent success of the Input Enhancement treatment. In particular, the text activity that tested for noticing after the GCR treatment provided many opportunities for noticing each form. The Bingo activity percentages were calculated using only one instance of each form. This difference in the number of chances for the subjects to notice the forms could have skewed the results in the other direction: a few subjects who failed to notice a form in the Input Enhancement followup would have caused sharp declines in the percentages.

In addition, the format of the Input Enhancement followup activity seemed to have more success with the subjects than the GCR followup. In other words, the dynamic and festive Bingo game encouraged the subjects’ efforts much better than the subdued,
individual-reading activity used for the GCR followup.

Many other factors are involved in the results of this comparison of Focus on Form techniques. Just as in White’s study, individual characteristics and salience could have been acting on any of the tasks for any of the subjects. It becomes clear that minimizing variables should be the primary consideration in designing a pedagogical experiment.

In this pilot study, the developmental framework of the subjects and task variation seem to have eclipsed other variables. It is interesting, still, that the divided attention required by the Bingo activity did not negatively affect the subjects’ abilities with regard to noticing. Also, the usual EASL instructor for the larger number of subjects reported a dramatic increase in the use of passives in daily writing assignments following these two Focus on Form treatments.

Recommendations for future research therefore include minimization of variables (such as task differences), and a wider range of “difficulty” in the target forms. Also, as indicated by the Doughty and Varela study, the forms should be inextricably linked to some essential meaning that the students need to convey or comprehend. A project involving recipes, for example, might have given that particular form greater task-essentialness.

A variable which should be addressed in a future study is mode of command. Although the treatments and tests were matched to test for understanding or recognition of the target forms, an unofficial result of the treatment was the emergence of production of one of the forms (passives) in the subjects’ L2 writing. Van Patten, studying the effects of Input Processing, found that progress can occur in production as a result of instruction at the level of comprehension (Van Patten & Cadierno 1993).

A followup study using these recommendations could therefore provide a more fine-grained analysis of the role of detection and noticing in L2 grammar development.
CHAPTER III- OPTIONS IN TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Despite the progressiveness of the Focus on Form approach and its apparent success in some applied research (Doughty & Varela 2001), there are many prominent teaching options in practice in the field of language pedagogy today. Several are holdovers from previous eras, while others are informed by recent research in language learning or neuroscience. Often, teachers are constrained in their choice of method by practicalities such as available materials or institutional policy. But, for a teacher with a choice, which language teaching option is best? By examining several of the most prominent methodologies currently in use around the world and exposing the underlying assumptions of each with regard to the role of attention in language learning, Focus on Form emerges as the most enlightened and progressive candidate with regard to the role of attention in grammar learning.

Option 1

When it comes to the role of attention in the language classroom, teachers essentially have three options (Long & Robinson). Option 1 can be characterized as the explicit option for teaching grammar. This option includes a focus on instruction and learning rather than naturalistic acquisition, as well as an emphasis on learning the forms of the grammatical features in the target language. Within a cognitive framework such as Tomlin and Villa’s, these methods rely on attention at the level of noticing, or detecting with awareness. A brief description of the most prominent Option 1 methods will demonstrate why a reliance on attention with awareness for the purpose of code-breaking is not optimal for teaching grammar in the language classroom.
Grammar-Translation

The most extreme example of an Option 1 method is the old-fashioned but prevalent Grammar-Translation method. As its name suggests, Grammar-Translation focuses on translating target-language texts and deductive (deriving through conscious reasoning) learning of grammar. The language of instruction is the native language, accuracy is emphasized, and the expected purpose of learning the L2 is to read L2 texts only, not to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

Since memorization of vocabulary and similarly deductive learning of grammar are cornerstones of this method, the role of consciously-directed learner attention is very strong in Grammar-Translation. There is no deliberate provision of context other than the text to be translated, and no regard to any natural orders of acquisition. In fact, Jack Richards and Theodore Rodgers, authors of *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, say that this method has “no theory” and “no advocates” (Richards & Rodgers p. 7).

However, Grammar-Translation is still widely used around the world and is likely familiar to learners in the U.S. from high school language classes, where learning a foreign language has been considered a cognitive exercise rather than development of a useful skill. For many learners, this method led to a frustrating and unpleasant experience with language learning.

The idea that attention is directed willfully by the learner in order to force items into memory is a traditional one in western education. It arose from similar methods of studying classical languages, in which reading and writing were of course the only goals because there were no native speakers to converse with. In fact, Richards and Rodgers explain that Grammar-Translation was applied to foreign languages purposefully to show
that studying world languages could be as rigorous and scholarly as the study of classical texts.

However, despite the clarity of its assumptions about the role of attention, Grammar-Translation does not provide the level of communicative competence that is associated with success in language learning. This failure demonstrates that consciously directed learner attention alone is insufficient to develop competence in a target language and could be interpreted as lending support to Krashen’s dual system, in which language consists of two kinds of knowledge. Explicit knowledge, such as provided by Grammar-Translation, is not part of the actual second-language competence, but acts as a monitor on procedural knowledge. The explicit knowledge, which is overt awareness of the forms or rules, can be reported by the learner but not utilized without taxing attentional resources (as proceduralized knowledge is utilized). Therefore, in a dual system, explicit knowledge is available to the learner only as a way to monitor output for errors. In a cognitive framework, the taxing of the orientation function of attention debilitates the detecting ability. And according to Robinson’s conclusions (discussed previously), when this occurs the learner can no longer utilize conceptually-driven processing and must rely entirely on data-driven (memory-based) processing. The Grammar-Translation method doesn’t provide for this secondary kind of processing, or for the idea that the conceptually-driven processes which it relies on are finite.

So, the Grammar-Translation method produced learners who could read and write a foreign language, but often could not speak or understand it. This became a problem as ease of international travel made actual communication in L2s a priority, and a Reform movement in language teaching began as a reaction to Grammar-Translation (Richard & Rodgers). No other method would ever rely so heavily on pure deduction, and therefore
no other method has as easily interpreted an understanding of the role of attention in the learning of language: deliberate, conscious attention on the part of the learner is what encodes the information into memory (causes the item to be noticed, rehearsed, and elaborated to create a new mental representation). This kind of “code-breaking” (overt understanding of how meaning is mapped onto the target forms or rules) on the part of the language learner can therefore be conceptualized as attention with awareness. In addition, attempts to direct learner orientation functions are focused exclusively on forms. As in Robinson’s study, this kind of reliance on conceptually-driven processes is insufficient for target language input involving complexity or difficulty, forcing learners back to data-driven, memory-based processing only. An enlightened approach, such as Focus on Form, creates a balance between these kinds of processes which allows learners to conserve attentional resources for dividing between form and meaning.

**Situational Language Teaching (SLT)**

A method known as Situational Language Teaching began as English programs for immigrants to Australia and is very prevalent in similar programs today. This method is characterized by a focus on certain situations in which language users might find themselves and need to communicate with target language speakers. An example is the bus or train station lesson, in which learners practice skills such as reading a schedule, asking the time, and buying a ticket.

Material is introduced and used orally before it is written, the language of instruction is the target language, vocabulary consists of a general service set, and grammar is taught beginning with “simple” forms and advancing to “complex” ones. A structuralist view of language combines with a situational syllabus to create a functional component to language development, while the underlying theory of learning is
behaviorist habit-forming (Richards & Rodgers).

Although this method combines both implicit and explicit language learning and provides plenty of naturalistic input, consideration of forms is limited to a simplified scale of complexity and the perceived frequency and usefulness of the forms. Research such as Doughty and Williams’s suggests that many other factors are important in grammar acquisition, including the internal syllabus. Also, DeKeyser’s research has found that the kind of pattern which a form follows is an important consideration in its complexity and in how it is best learned. Focus on Form attempts to provide detection when unobtrusiveness is required, and noticing when more obtrusiveness is indicated. Although Situational Language Teaching is an extremely prevalent and practical method, it does not consider these most recent advances in SLA research.

Audiolingualism

An Option 1 method developed by the U.S. Army in order to quickly indoctrinate military personnel in useful foreign language competence is Audiolingualism. This method is based firmly in Behaviorism, classifying language as a type of behavior, and relies on drills to create new mental representations of the target language structures and forms (without regard for meaning) in the learner’s brain through habit-formation (Richards & Rodgers p. 13).

There is no mistaking that repetition of a behavior will eventually insert knowledge of that behavior into a person’s neural pathways. This basic tenet of Behaviorism, while factual, turns out to be less useful pedagogically than in studies. Audiolingualism had limited success in non-military settings, where students didn’t sit for eight or more hours each day engaged in drills. While the military’s version benefitted from the amount and intensity of exposure to target language input, in civilian
classrooms students spend much less time in class each day and have varied levels of motivation and interest.

The implicit learning intended within an Audiolingual lesson occurs because the students are led repeatedly through drills, in which the targeted grammar is intentionally presented to the learners in a series of examples, meant to encode the forms through practice rather than an explicit explanation of the grammar. However, this technique does not provide for those forms that Williams and Evans (1998) suggest are transparent enough for an explicit treatment. Audiolingualism also doesn’t recognize the internal syllabus, by which adult learners advance through unmodifiable stages in development. In addition, there is no provision for meaningful communication, which has been argued to be the most facilitative component in a language learning environment.

The failure of Audiolingualism to create complete language competence through repetitive drills alone demonstrates how language development in the classroom cannot rely merely on habit-formation by the learner. Where Grammar-Translation fails to provide an inductive pathway, Audiolingualism fails to provide the deductive component which appears to be necessary for adult language learning. This would seem to support claims such as Schmidt’s, that noticing (or detection with consciousness) is vital to successful second language development. Also, form-meaning mapping is noted by Robinson (elaboration) as an important part of the learning process. Audiolingualism provides almost no meaning for the forms to be mapped onto. Although repetition or practice can have a beneficial role in reinforcing material for some learners, it is not by itself the means to second language proficiency.
Option 2

On the other hand, Option 2 for language teachers relies entirely on the learner’s internal processes to create new mental representations for the target language grammar. Instead of a focus on forms, there is an exclusive focus on meaning. This option fits into Krashen’s dual system because the Monitor model stipulates that comprehensible input alone will cause the Interlanguage to progress through the natural orders. Of course, the dual system model is at odds with the Noticing Hypothesis, which states that some attention must be directed to form as well as to meaning.

Option 2 for language teachers is the opposite of Option 1 with regard to the role of attention. In Option 2, awareness is not required. Although the other processes of attention are of course expected to occur when the learners encounter the target language, explicit (overt and expressible) knowledge of the forms or rules is not provided or expected.

The Direct Method

The best example of an Option 2 method is the Direct Method. The Direct Method was a reactionist methodology meant to begin replacing Grammar-Translation. It was modeled on naturalistic language development, or incidental learning such as child language acquisition, and became the most widely known of the Natural Methods.

Characteristics of the Direct Method include instruction in the target language, focus on everyday vocabulary and structures, grammar taught inductively, and emphasis on accuracy in pronunciation and grammar. In its original manifestation, the Direct Method benefitted from highly-motivated students and teachers who were native speakers of the target languages. Thus, when this method was applied in new settings where students had normal levels of motivation and the teachers were not native speakers
of the target language, serious problems were discovered (Richards & Rodgers p. 37-49).

A major criticism of the Direct Method is therefore its limited practicality in varied educational environments. Another characteristic was that the teachers were required never to translate, but rather to explain new material in the target language through association. Another criticism of this method has been that so much time and effort is expended in these explanations, which could be covered quickly by a translation.

Because it was modeled on child language acquisition, this method assumes that conscious learner attention has a small role in language development. This assumption might be valid if another position is adopted: that child language acquisition and adult second language development are identical. And, whether or not the Critical Period Hypothesis is entirely correct about limited access to the Language Acquisition Device in adults, there are obvious and well-researched differences between child and adult language development. The Direct Method is therefore based on a shaky assumption about the similarity of adult and child learning, and in fact Richards and Rodgers claim that the method lacks “a thorough methodological basis” (Richards and Rodgers p. 12-13).

Incidental learning in adults can be characterized as attention without awareness, in which the learner is relying entirely on “decoding” (processing for meaning) the language, but without the “code-breaking” ability (processing for form) such as Grammar-Translation provides. Richard Schmidt and others have stipulated that awareness is necessary for second language development in adults, and the slow pace and difficulty of development for learners relying on decoding supports the claim that the Direct Method is not the best way for learners to achieve success in second language learning.
Suggestopedia

An interesting Option 2 method which purports to rely on knowledge about how the human brain works is known as Suggestopedia. This method has a unique viewpoint on the role of attention and learning. Developed by Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov in 1979, Suggestopedia assumed that the human brain is capable of better learning when it is in a relaxed, receptive state. This method requires comfortable chairs, soothing music and soft colors in the classroom. Students are then able to enter “relaxed states of consciousness,” somewhat similar to a hypnotized person, and language instruction was then presented to the suggestible students (Richards & Rodgers p. 100-107).

Although Soviet psychological research of the time had discovered that the human mind does have this capacity for absorbing information without conscious attention to the material by the subject, Lozanov’s initial claims have been questioned (Brown p. 27-28). Recent research has led most SLA experts to conclude that suggestibility cannot replace noticing input in successful language development. However, the largest barrier to implementing Suggestopedia in most classrooms is a lack of the materials needed, such as the reclining chairs and pastel walls.

The idea that comfort and relaxation can promote retention of information is found even in today’s models of learning. The Monitor Model, in particular, includes the Affective Filter: a barrier in the mind caused by anxiety which, when raised, blocks input from being processed into intake in the brain. Methods or activities which lower the Affective Filter are desirable, and for some students the Suggestopedia classroom is a likely place for them to attain comfort and relaxation. However, for others (perhaps those
students who aren’t fond of baroque music) the unusual setting could even raise the Affective Filter, impeding their ability to utilize the second language input being provided by the teacher.

Although Suggestopedia seems to downplay the role of attention in language development, it is also possible that the suggestible state sought by the method is meant to access some part of the attention network of the brain. Research continues into the ways in which attention occurs without awareness, but overall this method is a poor choice for teachers searching for the most successful language teaching option.

**Total Physical Response (TPR)**

Another method which downplays conscious attention to language input is Total Physical Response (TPR), which relies instead on the known associations in the brain between language and movement. Its developer, James Asher, was recognizing this kind of learning in child language acquisition. TPR lessons would involve acting out the material being covered (Richards & Rodgers p. 73-79).

One of Asher’s intentions was to reduce the anxiety level in the language classroom (Brown p. 29-31). As always, though, what will lower one student’s Affective Filter could raise another’s. However, the major impracticality of this method is its biggest limitation. As students progress, their proficiency will eventually move past forms that are easily acted out physically. Therefore, TPR is often used as a beginning method, and many language students will remember TPR lessons on such vocabulary as body parts. The associations between movement and language can be very effective in these specific instances.

Although TPR downplays the use of rote memorization, learners are directing their attention to the vocabulary or forms, while the physical movement provides an extra
association that seems to strengthen that piece of memorized information. Thus, although
based on child language acquisition, language-movement pairings can prove beneficial
for adult learners of second language in limited contexts.

However, a method which relies entirely on unintentional (incidental) learning
such as children demonstrate seems inadequate for adult learners of foreign language.
Although immersion is an effective setting for language development, it seems that an
adult learner will still need to attend to the input and apply awareness to hypothesis-
creation if no other instruction is available. In this kind of naturalistic setting learners
must rely on their own resources, but without intentional manipulation of attentional
resources such as is provided by instruction. Overall, Option 2 does not achieve the
success sought by learners and teachers in language classrooms.

Option 3

However, in Option 3, the main goal of the teacher is to effectively direct (orient)
and distribute the learners’ attentional resources. Option 3 is the Focus on Form
approach. Focus on Form is a language teaching concept which relies heavily on recent
research into the role of attention in learning. Developer Michael Long’s Interaction
Hypothesis states that second language development is not successful when relying either
on “a purely nativist nor a purely environmentalist theory” (Long & Robinson p. 22).
Long’s proposal is one which language teachers everywhere might recognize
instinctively: traditional grammar-teaching approaches fail to develop communicative
competence and disregard the natural orders, and purely naturalistic language learning,
while possible, is not optimal in many ways for the learner’s proficiency or accuracy. An
enlightened combination of approaches was perhaps inevitable in the face of increasingly
sophisticated research exposing the shortcomings of previous methodologies.

Firstly, Focus on Form recognizes the importance of meaning and meaningful communication for language development. The goal of a successful Focus on Form lesson is to draw the learner’s attention to target forms in an unobtrusive way. If the treatment is too obtrusive, the learners might attend to the treatment itself, debilitating other attentional functions. Because meaning is already primary in natural language processing, or decoding, Focus on Form treatments must divide the attentional resources between meaning and form, and without taxing the orientation functions because this leads to a debilitation of detection. Therefore, meaning is primary in classroom tasks and activities utilizing a Focus on Form approach. Thus, Focus on Form seeks to keep in mind the wealth of SLA knowledge suggesting that meaning and communication can drive language acquisition. However, Focus on Form recognizes the shortcomings of language lessons that rely entirely on interaction or negotiation of meaning for grammatical development. Long and Robinson state, “although learning much of an L2 through experiencing its use is possible, it is inefficient” (Long & Robinson p. 21).

Focus on Form seeks to provide an instructional approach which provides the learner with not merely the possible ways to develop language proficiency but the best ways. Joanna White’s (1995) study mentioned that explicit rule instruction sometimes seems to be a useful part of a Focus on Form lesson and other research has shown the benefits of rule explanation in combination with input processing instruction in helping learners develop automatic access to the target language rule (White p. 103). In this way, Focus on Form can provide a meaning-focused lesson while still recognizing the importance of more explicit processes in language learning.

A critical decision when implementing Focus on Form in the classroom is
whether to use a proactive or reactive FonF approach, and innovator Michael Long insists on a reactive use of Focus on Form. This practical consideration recognizes the importance of both the processes of attention and the internal mechanisms of language learning. The natural orders suggest that instruction such as Focus on Form could be ineffective if presented at the wrong point in development. Also, the noticing hypothesis suggests that if the Focus on Form is provided at the correct time, the learner can direct attention at the level of noticing and successfully recognize the target structure or the gap between the learner’s interlanguage and the target structure.

Although the considerations are complex, a teacher would be wise to adopt the Focus on Form approach because this method benefits from a wide range of theoretical knowledge. The more that is understood about how attention occurs in the brain and how these processes relate to language learning and to language forms, the more ways the teacher and learners have to maximize the available resources and produce the fastest and most successful language learning. In his article, “Beyond Focus on Form,” Robert DeKeyser outlines the conclusions that have so far been drawn about the use of Focus on Form methods in the classroom, “...the vast majority of publications since the early 1990s support the idea that some kind of focus on form is useful to some extent, for some forms, for some students, at some point in the learning process” (Dekeyser p. 42).

Therefore, although research and pedagogy continue to progress, Focus on Form is the most informed choice for language teachers searching for the best way to utilize the limited attentional resources of learners.
Bibliography


Williams, Jessica and Evans, Jacqueline. “What Kind of Focus and on Which Forms?”

Appendices: Focus on Form Study Materials

Name___________________

Appendix A: Grammar Pre-Test

1. Choose the form which best completes the sentence:
   “In the library, it’s better to speak as _________ as possible.”
   a. quiet c. quieter
   b. quietly d. quietness

2. Make the following sentence into a passive sentence:
   “Lee destroyed the room.”
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Choose the best question form for this sentence:
   “Jessica always goes to the mall on Saturdays.”
   a. Will Jessica always go to the mall on Saturdays?”
   b. Does Jessica always goes to the mall on Saturdays?”
   c. Go Jessica always to the mall on Saturdays?”
   d. Does Jessica always go to the mall on Saturdays?”

4. Fill in the blank to describe the best way for a runner to win a race:
   “To win the race, the runner should run as ________________________ as possible.”

5. Choose the sentence with the closest meaning to:
   “John hit Bill with a baseball bat at Sara’s party.”
   a. At Sara’s party, John was hit by bill with a baseball bat.
   b. Bill was hit by John with a baseball bat at Sara’s party.
   c. Bill was hit by Sara at John’s party with a baseball bat.
   d. Sara was hit by John and Bill with a baseball bat at the party.

6. Make the following sentence into a question:
   “A good student does homework everyday.”
   ____________________________________________________________
Appendix B: Grammar Consciousness-Raising Activity

1. In the following sentences, incorrect sentences are marked with the asterisk (*).

1a. The skyscraper is perfect. It was constructed perfectly.
1b. The theater is poor. *It was constructed poor.
1c. His birthday cake was beautiful. It was baked beautifully.
1d. His shoes are shoddy. *They were sewn shoddy.
1e. The apple farmer is careful when he picks apples. They’re picked carefully.
1f. The artist is very quick when he paints portraits. *He paints very quick.

Describe why you think the incorrect sentences are wrong:

1b. _____________________________________________________________________

1d. _____________________________________________________________________

1f. _____________________________________________________________________

2. In the following sentences, incorrect sentences are marked with the asterisk (*).

2a. Saul loves to play cards. Does Saul love to play cards?
2b. Lee enjoys lifting weights. *Lee enjoy lifting weights?
2c. Callie will go away next week. Will Callie go away next week?
2d. Sam will try to fix it. *Sam try to fix it?
2e. Felix went to work already. Did Felix go to work already?
2f. Katy went to the mall today. *Did Katy went to the mall today?

Describe why you think the incorrect sentences are wrong:

2b. _____________________________________________________________________

2d. _____________________________________________________________________

2f. _____________________________________________________________________

3. In the following sentences, incorrect sentences are marked with the asterisk (*).

3a. The bear ate all the food. All the food was eaten by the bear.
3b. Karl threw the book. *Karl was thrown by the book.
3c. Laura finished the report. The report was finished by Laura.
3d. The horse chewed the hay. *The hay chewed by the horse.

Describe why you think the incorrect sentences are wrong:

3b. _____________________________________________________________________

3d. _____________________________________________________________________
1. Choose the form which best completes the sentence:

   “Agatha won first place in the talent show because she sings _________.
   
   a. beautiful c. beauty
   b. more beautiful d. beautifully

2. Turn this sentence into a passive sentence:

   “Kara knocked over some tables in the cafeteria.”

3. Which is the best question form for this sentence:

   “Saul lost his job last week.”

   a. Will Saul lose his job last week? c. Did Saul lose his job last week?
   b. Saul did lose his job last week? d. Did Saul lost his job last week?

4. Describe the best way for a rock climber to reach the top of the mountain:

5. Choose the sentence with the closest meaning to:

   “Bill and Jill bought ten bulldog puppies at the pet store on Saturday.”

   a. Bill and Jill were bought by ten bulldog puppies at the pet store on Saturday.”
   b. Ten bulldog puppies were bought by Bill and Jill at the pet store on Saturday.”
   c. Ten bulldog puppies bought Bill and Jill at the pet store on Saturday.”
   d. Bill and ten bulldog puppies were bought by Jill at the pet store on Saturday.”

6. Turn this sentence into a question:

   “Panthers live in the deepest parts of the jungle.”
Appendix D: GCR Followup activity

Subjects were provided the following paragraph and asked to perform the following:

1. circle adverbs
2. bracket questions
3. underline passives

Name ________________________

Propaganda in the U.S.- from “Age of Propaganda”

Has censorship occurred in American history? President Franklin D. Roosevelt, much like other U.S. presidents, attempted to influence the news, more subtly than his European counterparts, by flooding the news media with pro-administration information. Could such control be easily accomplished? In fact, attempts to completely censor the news required immense efforts. For example, during a typical three-month period in 1936, 146 full-time and 124 part-time publicity agents were employed by the Roosevelt administration. Over 7 million copies of about 4,800 public news releases were issued by these agents. How much would this kind of effort cost? Well, the Works Progress Administration alone spent over 1 million in one year on printing— all in an effort to encourage the news media to convince the American people of the necessity of the New Deal. During this time, the news was censored by other groups as well.

In present-day western democracies, what factors determine which news items are selected for television and radio newscasts and for publication in magazines and newspapers? In totalitarian regimes, news is routinely censored by ruling elites. Such blatant control is rare in western democracies and when it does occur often results in immediate public outcries. But can censorship be fully avoided? And yet, censorship may be inevitable unless the journalists themselves are entirely honorable. Otherwise, the content of the news is chosen by public opinion.
It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it, a colored poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a meter wide: the face of a man about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

The Ministry of Truth was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred meters into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

With the deep, unconscious sigh which not even the nearness of the telescreen could prevent him from uttering when his day’s work started, Winston pulled the speakwrite towards him, blew the dust from its mouthpiece and put on his spectacles.
Then he unrolled and clipped together four small cylinders of paper which had already been dropped out of the pneumatic tube on the right-hand side of his desk.

In the walls of the cubicle there were three openings. To the right of the speakwrite, a small pneumatic tube for written messages; to the left, a larger one for newspapers; and in the side wall, within easy reach of Winston’s arm, a large oblong slit protected by a wire grating. This last was for the disposal of waste paper. Similar slits existed in thousands or tens of thousands throughout the building, not only in every room but at short intervals in every corridor. For some reason they were nicknamed memory holes. When one knew that any document was due for destruction, or even when one saw a scrap of waste paper lying about, it was an automatic action to lift the flap of the nearest memory hole and drop it in, whereupon it would be whirled away on a current of warm air to the enormous furnaces which were hidden somewhere in the recesses of the building.

As soon as Winston had dealt with each of the messages, he clipped his speakwritten corrections to the appropriate copy of the Times and pushed them into the pneumatic tube. Then, with a movement which was nearly as possible unconscious, he crumpled up the original message and any notes that he himself had made, and dropped them into the memory hole to be devoured by the flames.

What happened in the unseen labyrinth to which the pneumatic tubes led, he did not know in detail, but he did know in general terms. As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of the Times had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films,
soundtracks, cartoons, photographs— to every kind of literature or documentation which might *conceivably* hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct; nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a story, scraped clean and re-inscribed exactly as *often* as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place. The largest section of the Records Department, far larger than the one in which Winston worked, consisted simply of persons whose duty it was to track down and collect all copies of books, newspapers and other documents which had been superseded and were due for destruction. A number of the Times which might, because of changes in political alignment, or mistaken prophecies uttered by Big Brother, have been re-written a dozen times still stood on the files bearing its original date, and no other copy existed to contradict it. Books, also, were recalled and re-written again and again, and were *invariably* re-issued without any admission that any alteration had been made. Even the written instructions which Winston received, and which he *instantly* got rid of as soon as he had dealt with them, never stated or implied that an act of forgery was to be committed: always the reference was to slips, errors, misprints or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interests of accuracy.

But actually, he thought as he re-adjusted the Ministry of Plenty’s figures, it was not every forgery. It was merely the substitution of one piece of nonsense for another. Most of the material that you were dealing with had no connection with anything in the real world, not even the kind of connection that is contained in a direct lie. Statistics were
just as much a fantasy in their original version as in their rectified version. A great deal of the time you were expected to make them up out of your head. For example, the Ministry of Plenty’s forecast had estimated the output of boots for the quarter at a hundred and forty-five million pairs. The actual output was given as sixty-two millions. Winston, however, in re-writing the forecast, marked the figure down to fifty-seven millions, so as to allow for the usual claim that the quota had been over-fulfilled. In any case, sixty-two millions was no nearer the truth than fifty-seven millions, or than a hundred and forty-five millions. Very likely no boots had been produced at all. Likelier still, nobody knew how many had been produced, much less cared. All one knew was that every quarter astronomical numbers of boots were produced on paper, while perhaps half the population of Oceania went barefoot. And so it was with every class of recorded fact, great or small. Everything faded away into a shadow-world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain.
Winston meets a young Party member named Julia who feels the same way as he does about Big Brother. They meet together in secret and decide to join the resistance movement, known as the Brotherhood.

from *Nineteen Eighty-four*
by George Orwell

But she only questioned the teachings of the Party when they in some way touched upon her own life. *Often* she was ready to accept the official mythology, simply because the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important to her. She believed, for instance, having learnt it at school, that the Party had invented airplanes. (In his own schooldays, Winston remembered, in the late ‘fifties, it was only the helicopter that the Party claimed to have invented; a dozen years later, when Julia was at school, it was already claiming the airplane; one generation more, and it would be claiming the steam engine.) And when he told her that airplanes had been in existence before he was born, and long before the Revolution, the fact struck her as totally uninteresting. **After all, what did it matter who invented airplanes?** It was rather more of a shock to him when he discovered from some chance remark that she did not remember that Oceania, four years ago, had been at war with Eastasia and at peace with Eurasia. It was true that she regarded the whole war as a sham: but apparently she had not even noticed that the name of the enemy had changed. ‘I thought we’d *always* been at war with Eurasia,’ she said *vaguely*. It frightened him a little. The invention of airplanes dated from long before her birth, but the switch-over in the war had happened only four years ago, well after she was grown up. He argued with her about it for perhaps a quarter of an hour. In the end he succeeded in forcing her memory back until she did *dimly* recall that at one time Eastasia
and not Eurasia had been the enemy. But the issue still struck her as unimportant. ‘Who cares?’ she said impatiently. ‘It’s always one bloody war after another, and one knows the news is all lies anyway.’

Winston reads to Julia from “the book,” a collection of anti-Big Brother writings he has secretly obtained. “The book” describes the workings of the Party and Big Brother:

At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is infallible and all-powerful. Every success, every achievement, every victory, every scientific discovery, all knowledge, all wisdom, all happiness, all virtue, are held to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration. Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the posters, a voice on the telescreen. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die, and there is already considerable uncertainty as to when he was born. Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to show itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization. Below Big Brother comes the Inner Party, its numbers limited to six millions or something less than two per cent of the population of Oceania. Below the Inner Party comes the Outer Party, which, if the Inner Party is described as the brain of the State, may be justly likened to the hands...

A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone. Wherever he may be, asleep or awake, working or resting, in his bath or in bed, he can be inspected without warning and without knowing that he is being inspected. Nothing that he does is indifferent. His friendships, his relaxations, his behavior towards his wife and children, the expression of his face when he is alone, the words he mutters in sleep, even the characteristic movements of his body, are all jealously scrutinized. Not only any actual misdemeanor,
but any eccentricity, however small, any change of habits, any nervous mannerism that could possibly be the symptom of an inner struggle, is certain to be detected. He has no freedom of choice in any direction whatever. On the other hand his actions are not regulated by law or by any clearly formulated code of behavior. In Oceania there is no law. Thoughts and actions which, when detected, mean certain death are not formally forbidden, and the endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments and vaporizations are not inflicted as punishment for crimes which have actually been committed, but are merely the wiping-out of persons who might perhaps commit a crime at some time in the future...

The alteration of the past is necessary for two reasons. The first reason is that the Party member, like the commoner, tolerates present-day conditions partly because he has no standards of comparison. He must be cut off from the past, just as he must be cut off from foreign countries, because it is necessary for him to believe that he is better off than his ancestors and that the average level of material comfort is constantly rising. But by far the more important reason for the readjustment of the past is the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party. It is not merely that speeches, statistics and records of every kind must be immediately brought up to date in order to show that the predictions of the Party were in all cases right. It is also that no change in doctrine or political alignment can ever be admitted. For to change one’s mind, or even one’s policy, is a confession of weakness. If, for example, Eurasia or Eastasia (whichever it may be) is the enemy today, then that country must always have been the enemy. And if the facts say otherwise, then the facts must be altered. Thus history is continuously rewritten. This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the
Ministry of Love.

The changeability of the past is the central tenet of Ingsoc. Past events, it is argued, have no objective existence, but survive only in written records and in human memories. The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. And since the Party is in full control of all records, and in equally full control of the minds of its members, it follows that the past is whatever the Party chooses to make it.

from *Nineteen Eighty-four* by George Orwell

Winston is arrested for Thoughtcrime and taken to the Ministry of Love:

The wave of pain receded almost as quickly as it had come. ‘That was forty,’ said O’Brien. ‘You can see that the numbers on this dial run up to a hundred. Will you please remember, throughout our conversation, that I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose. If you tell me any lies, or attempt to prevaricate in any way, or even fall below your usual level of intelligence, you will cry out with pain, instantly. Do you understand that?’

‘Yes,’ said Winston.

O’Brien’s manner became less severe. He resettled his spectacles thoughtfully, and took a pace or two up and down. When he spoke his voice was gentle and patient. He had the air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than punish...

‘There is a Party slogan dealing with the control of the past,’ he said. ‘Repeat it, if you please.’

‘“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past,”’ repeated Winston obediently.
“Who controls the present controls the past,” said O’Brien, nodding his head with slow approval. ‘Is it your opinion, Winston, that the past has real existence?’

Again the feeling of helplessness descended upon Winston. His eyes flitted towards the dial. He not only did not know whether ‘yes’ or ‘no’ was the answer that would save him from pain; he did not even know which answer he believed to be the true one.

O’Brien smiled faintly. ‘I will put it more precisely. Does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?’

‘No.’

‘Then where does the past exist, if at all?’

‘In records. It is written down.’

‘In records. And...’

‘In the mind. In human memories.’

‘In memory. Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not? Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to re-learn, Winston.’ O’Brien paused a few moments, as though to allow what he had been saying to sink in.

The Chestnut Tree was almost empty. A ray of sunlight slanting through a
window fell yellow on dusty table-tops. It was the lonely hour of fifteen. A tinny music trickled from the telescreens.

Winston sat in his usual corner, gazing into an empty glass. Now and again he glanced up at a vast face which eyed him from the opposite wall. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said. Unbidden, a waiter came and filled his glass up with Victory Gin, shaking into it a few drops from another bottle with a quill through the cork. It was saccharine flavored with cloves, the specialty of the café.

Winston was listening to the telescreen. At present only music was coming out of it, but there was a possibility there might be a special bulletin from the Ministry of Peace. The music from the telescreen stopped and a voice took over. Winston raised his head to listen. No bulletin from the front, however. It was merely a brief announcement from the Ministry of Plenty. In the preceding quarter, it appeared, the quota for bootlaces had been overfulfilled by ninety-eight per cent.

A shrill trumpet-call had pierced the air. It was the bulletin! Victory! Under the table Winston’s feet made convulsive movements. He had not stirred from his seat, but in his mind he was running, swiftly running, he was with the crowds outside, cheering himself deaf. He looked up again at the portrait of Big Brother. The colossus that stood atop the world!

The voice from the telescreen was still pouring forth its tale of prisoners and booty and slaughter, but the shouting outside had died down a little. The waiters were turning back to their work. One of them approached with the gin bottle. Winston, sitting in a blissful dream, paid no attention as his glass was filled up. He was not running or cheering any longer. He was back in the Ministry of Love, with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow. He was in the public dock, confessing everything, implicating
everybody. He was walking down the white-tiled corridor, with the feeling of walking in sunlight, and an armed guard at his back. The long hoped-for bullet was entering his brain.

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.
1. Fill in the bingo board using each of the following grammar forms once:
   - adverb
   - adjective
   - plural
   - interjection
   - passive voice
   - preposition
   - modal
   - perfect tense
   - question
   - conjunction
   - article
   - present continuous
   - pronoun
   - gerund
   - future tense
   - infinitive

2. If you notice the form, write the word (or words) in the box below the form.

   Appendix G- sentences for Bingo noticing activity
News is censored by many groups.

Who censors news?

Editors are censoring newspapers.

Sometimes, people who have power are responsible.

The power is political or financial.

We might be unaware of this process.

But censoring has happened throughout history.