

The effects of input/output enhanced instructions on vocabulary and grammar gains in blended learning*

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Kim, Jeong-ryeol and Young-hee Kim. 2019. The effects of input/ output enhanced instructions on vocabulary and grammar gains in blended learning. *Linguistic Research* 36(Special Edition), 107-122. This paper is to examine the effects of the enhanced input and output on the acquisition of English grammatical items. To this end, input-enhanced instruction (processing instruction) with an output-enhanced instruction (dictogloss) was compared wherein the instruction is blended of off- and on-line classes. A total of 90 university students were assigned to three different classes, where one was meaning-based instruction, another input-enhanced group, and the last another output-enhanced group. The meaning-focused group used a video clip watching and performing ensuing activities for comprehension without any input or output treatment of the text in both on- and off-line. The input-enhanced group used audio tweaking enhancement techniques such as speed and volume adjustments, while the output-enhanced group performed dictogloss tasks in both on- and off-line. An immediate posttest after the semester was administered to assess the learners' gain on vocabulary and grammar. The results gleaned that both input and output-enhanced groups performed significantly better in at least one component, but not both. The input group outperformed both meaning-focused group and output group in grammar gains, while the output group performed better in vocabulary gains. Pedagogic implications drawn from the current study are to teach vocabulary and grammar in two different blended modes of enhancement. (Korea National University of Education · Chungwoon University)

Keywords input enhancement, output enhancement, blended learning, focus on form, comparative effect study

1. Introduction

As it is accepted that language is for communication, this functional thinking of language has led current foreign language education to be more

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communicative and meaning-based rather than form-based. As such, most Asian countries, including Korea, have overhauled their English education curriculum to be more meaning-focused and fluency-based rather than the previously form-focused and accuracy-based frameworks. However, after 20 years of meaning-based communicative language teaching in Korea, a situation has emerged where students lack the basic component knowledge of the target language and chronically are underachieving during their primary and secondary education. Therefore, these underachieving high school graduates stream into the mid and bottom tiers of colleges and universities. This circumstance poses serious challenges to the universities whereas they must facilitate students' English competence in order to be competitive to their national peers and learned as their major field of studies, such as science, engineering, and business use English textbooks. This is a focus as the said students' English skills are substandard to the fluency required for comprehension of the textbook content. Furthermore, the typical three class hours a week dedicated to English cannot be a solution to the aforementioned issue. Therefore, this led to formulating a blended learning model combining on-line component classes with off-line fluency activities.

It is essential that communicative language teaching needs to be scrutinized as students advance through their grades without acquiring an appropriate level of the necessary knowledge and skills required by the curriculum. Similarly, meaning-based group activities hinge on the assumption that students are responsible and willing to participate in the communicative activities; however, the accountability of students in their studies is embedded in the program without a necessary procedure in place in order to check and balance the situation when they are not engaging efficiently or even coasting through with no effort.

Because of this, classroom activities will be explored in the current study wherein students engage in communicative language teaching, but at the same time supplement their weaknesses in the componential knowledge of English required of and for their understanding and the fluency of the skills they are supposed to perform at their level of English. In addition, a comparison will be made via different awareness activities designed for input enhancement and output enhancement. In order to investigate their effectiveness in focus on form

(FnF) learning of English against the baseline communicative classes, input enhancement activity class such as sound tweaking for noticing and output enhancement activity such as dictogloss are compared against the baseline communicative class.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Input and output enhancement

Communicative language teaching in a classroom setting is usually realized in simulated activities to represent real life which take a long preparation time and often result in students' lack of necessary componential knowledge and fluency in the language they are learning. As for input enhancement activities, it has been reported to be effective in vocabulary and grammar development (Doughty and Williams 1998; Ellis 1999; Harley 1994; Robinson 1997; Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman, and Doughty 1995), but there was research reporting negative effects (Alanen 1995). Taking Leeman et al. (1995) as an example, the researchers conducted FnF classes against meaning-based classes and showed that the accurate frequency of use was far greater in the FnF class than the meaning-based class. However, Alanen (1995) conducted comparative experimental classes consisting of input enhanced class, explicit instruction of grammar class, and input enhancement plus explicit instruction of grammar class and meaning-based class. The explicit instruction of grammar class was most effective among different methodological classes. However, the current English curriculum consists of topic-based classes which mean that the core function of the class is still meaning-based and cannot be altered.

Conversely, output enhancement classes were demonstrated to bilingual English and French immersion students to compensate for their lack of native-like French grammatical ability (Swain 1995). She argued for three main points of output enhancement activities: one, learners of language hypothesize the form and functions of grammatical components and test them during their utterances; two, during the utterances students construct their sentences grammatically without using explicit use of grammatical terminologies; three, output enhancement

activities make students aware of what they know and what they do not know, and have students concentrate on what they do not know during the activities. In the process, students learn grammar and vocabulary more effectively with deeper level of cognitive processes (Izumi and Bigelow 2000).

While maintaining the meaning-based English education at a college level, instructional techniques utilizing FnF are lacking the aforementioned input enhancement and output enhancement techniques. In addition to the suggestions that the meaning processing experiences alone will facilitate the language acquisition as elaborated in Krashen (1982) and Krashen and Terrell (1983), as well as Long (1983a, 1983b) elaborated FnFs including conscious raising tasks (Fotos 1993) and input enhancement (Ellis 2001). Conversely, Jin (2013) and Murray (1994) showed that dictogloss tasks are effective for the output enhancement technique.

2.2 Blended learning

The development of information technology has opened a seamless passage interconnecting learners with teachers and learning resources such as audio and video materials. The use of the Internet has become daily multi-modal activities using smart phones, smart pads, and personal computers. This has changed the accessibility to learning resources of a more on-demand and customized platform, and the learning outcome from less planned to more incidental outcomes. As such, blended learning, as a generic term, utilizes the development of information technology to maximize the learning outcomes. Blended learning implies that on-line learning is combined with off-line learning to maximize the language learning effects. Through this format different combinatorial models as to how much on-line learning is mixed with off-line learning is included.

Table 1. Taxonomy of terms related to blended learning

Term	Definition
Web-enhanced	Subjects that make use of a minimal amount of online materials, such as posting a syllabus and course announcements.
Blended	Subjects that utilize some significant online activities in

	otherwise face-to-face learning, but less than 45 per cent.
Hybrid	Subjects in which online activities replace 45–80 per cent of face-to-face class meetings.
Fully online	Subjects in which 80 per cent or more of learning materials are conducted online.

(Wittacker 2013, p. 12)

According to the taxonomy of blended learning in Table 1, blended learning is also a specific term to a combined model of on-line and off-line learning. It rests between web-enhanced learning and hybrid learning wherein web-enhanced learning is a rudimentary use of the technology and hybrid learning is either roughly of equal proportion of on-line and off-line or more on-line learning than off-line learning.

One type of blended learning is called flipped learning which has gained major attention after King (1993) emphasized the importance of the use of class time for the construction of meaning rather than information transmission, and eloquently stated in his publication “from sage on the stage to guide on the side.” Mazur (1997) called for changes in the classroom by removing information transfer of the classroom and information assimilation into the classroom, thus allowing teachers to coach students instead of lecturing. In addition, positive learning effects were reported in flipped classrooms at the college level (Lage, Platt, and Treglia 2000; Sabin and Kurban 2016) and the secondary school level (Khan 2004; Bergmann and Sams 2007).

Flipped learning combines structured on-line learning with unstructured off-line learning. As such, form-focused and accuracy-based learning occurs on-line and off-class in self-directed time and place while the use of language is done off-line and on-class for the interaction using meaning-focused and fluency-based activities. To enhance the accountability of learning, formative quizzes can be added on-line and off-class.

Table 2. Flipped learning model

	On-line	Off-line	On-line
On-class		Interactional activities using language	
Off-class	Assigned watching		Formative quizzes

input/output enhanced learning activities
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The flipped learning model in this paper is based on on-line learning of input enhanced structured learning in a self-directed place and time, with off-line on-class interactional activities among students and between teacher and students, and the final on-line formative quizzes in a self-directed place and time.

2.3 Previous studies

Upon gleaning data from previous studies on the topic, the dominant results confirm the effectiveness of input enhancement technique (Doughty and Williams 1998; Ellis 1999; Harley 1994; Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman, and Doughty 1995; Long and Robinson 1998), but Alanen (1995) reported that explicit teaching of language forms is more effective than the input enhancement technique or the combination of the input enhancement and explicit grammar teaching. However, the latter method of teaching grammar is beyond the scope of an instructor's power even if it is proved to be true, because it relates to the change of the whole curriculum.

Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013) is a collection of 20 case studies, illustrating applications of blended learning in various ELT contexts. Blended learning is usually referring to courses that employ a mix of face-to-face (on-class) and on-line learning (Bonk and Graham 2012). The term is originated from workplace learning literature, but is also now widely used in higher education, often describing courses that have had an on-line component added to them (MacDonald 2006). Attention has been paid to the applications of blended learning in language teaching as a whole (Neumeier 2005; Sharma and Barrett 2007). Neumeier (2005) highlights a need for further research to be conducted into what makes an effective blend.

Comparative studies can be found between input enhancement and dictogloss tasks in Yeo (2002) wherein the intergroup comparison of English participle learning did not show any significant differences despite the significant discrepancies in the pre/post intra group comparison of both groups studied. In

contrast, Jang and Kim (2012) showed that the dictogloss task was more effective than the input enhancement task in three grammatical items of relative pronoun construction, participle construction, and gerundive construction.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

The overall comparison among different FnF tasks has not settled in favor of one over another. In addition, the target population in the previous studies did not cover the wide spectrum of students learning second language by focused investigation on the secondary school population. The current observation of previous studies has led to the problems in which the goal of this study may garner data, and said problems can be stated as follows:

1. Are FnF instructions effective compared to the meaning-focused instruction in enhancing the awareness of English grammar and vocabulary at college level?
2. Which type of FnF instruction shows a comparative superiority in grammar learning between the input enhancement and the output enhancement when using the meaning-focused group as the baseline data?
3. Which type of FnF instruction shows a comparative superiority in vocabulary learning between the input enhancement and the output enhancement when using the meaning-focused group as the baseline data?

3.2 Target vocabulary and grammatical items

The purpose of this paper is to aim to explore comparative instructional effects among meaning-based communicative language teaching, input-enhanced FnF instruction and output-enhanced FnF instruction, in order to optimize the teaching methods of target grammar and vocabulary. The study selected three homogeneous groups of 30 students for each group: One meaning-focused teaching (baseline), one input-enhanced FnF group (FnF-A) and the last being an

output-enhanced FnF group (FnF-B). Students were co-ed freshmen taking media English located in a medium sized suburban city in the central part of Korea. Media English is offered to the students who want to improve their listening and reading comprehension via multimedia English learning resources. The average TOEIC scores of participating students was 550 (listening 295, reading 255), and the average scores of three classes are statistically homogeneous.

To determine a list of vocabulary and grammatical items for the learning outcome, a diagnostic vocabulary test was given on the vocabulary items from the new general service list for spoken English to the students of the other homogeneous group, and resulted in a list of 100 unknown words to at least 80% of students.

<i>ruin</i>	<i>lieutenant</i>	<i>steady</i>	<i>trace</i>	<i>sniff</i>
<i>vital</i>	<i>editorial</i>	<i>peer</i>	<i>underlie</i>	<i>fraction</i>
<i>fortune</i>	<i>interrupt</i>	<i>commissioner</i>	<i>luxury</i>	<i>tale</i>
<i>intervene</i>	<i>laboratory</i>	<i>essence</i>	<i>institute</i>	<i>supportive</i>
<i>signature</i>	<i>mount</i>	<i>relieve</i>	<i>myth</i>	<i>oath</i>
<i>pit</i>	<i>exhibition</i>	<i>utility</i>	<i>grave</i>	<i>disgust</i>
<i>interim</i>	<i>considerable</i>	<i>exposure</i>	<i>jam</i>	<i>asleep</i>
<i>ceiling</i>	<i>overtime</i>	<i>diabetes</i>	<i>protester</i>	<i>valid</i>
<i>shed</i>	<i>measurement</i>	<i>tag</i>	<i>poison</i>	<i>lane</i>
<i>consultation</i>	<i>bitter</i>	<i>legislative</i>	<i>species</i>	<i>integrity</i>
<i>rarely</i>	<i>occupation</i>	<i>momentum</i>	<i>summary</i>	<i>memorial</i>
<i>compensation</i>	<i>interaction</i>	<i>darling</i>	<i>salad</i>	<i>endorsement</i>
<i>composer</i>	<i>adapt</i>	<i>lung</i>	<i>unbelievable</i>	<i>diagnose</i>
<i>snap</i>	<i>retain</i>	<i>courage</i>	<i>pharmaceutical</i>	<i>cartoon</i>
<i>insight</i>	<i>presume</i>	<i>retailer</i>	<i>donate</i>	<i>supposedly</i>
<i>transform</i>	<i>cheat</i>	<i>imagination</i>	<i>tribal</i>	<i>repeatedly</i>
<i>courtroom</i>	<i>assignment</i>	<i>senate</i>	<i>explosive</i>	<i>authorize</i>
<i>excitement</i>	<i>establishment</i>	<i>execution</i>	<i>ambition</i>	<i>fulfill</i>
<i>visual</i>	<i>vet</i>	<i>weld</i>	<i>incorporate</i>	<i>designer</i>
<i>interact</i>	<i>stall</i>	<i>allegedly</i>	<i>electoral</i>	<i>publicity</i>

The grammatical items selected based on the diagnostic pretest included participle construction, hypothetical conditionals, negative polarity construction,

and relative clauses as exemplified in the following two samples respectively to the grammatical item:

[participle construction]

The boy who carried a blue parcel crossed the street.

→ *The boy carrying a blue parcel crossed the street.*

The battle was fought at this place. The battle was very significant.

→ *The battle fought at this place was very significant.*

[hypothetical conditioning construction]

I am not hungry now, but this is what I would do if that were the case

→ *If I were hungry, I would eat.*

I was not hungry in the past, but this is what I would have done if that were the case.

→ *If I had been hungry, I would have eaten.*

[negative polarity]

I liked the film at all.

→ *I did not like the film at all.*

John has any potatoes.

→ *John does not have any potatoes.*

[relative clause construction]

I told you about the woman. She lives next door.

→ *I told you about the woman who lives next door.*

Do you see the cat? She is lying on the roof.

→ *Do you see the cat which is lying on the roof?*

3.3 Experimental design

Three homogeneous groups were selected to compare the input enhanced class and the output enhanced class against the baseline meaning-focused class. The meaning-focused group required students to watch a class hour share of

soap opera segment on-line before the class, and as on-class activities students discuss their understanding in a group, then watching the clip again to confirm their understanding, and retell one or two lines of their favorite character's lines in the same imitated tone of voice and emotion. FnF-A watched the same soap opera along with the English script, but FnF-A is required to learn on-line new words and target grammar points marked in different speed/volume of voice to raise the students' awareness before on-class interactional activities. FnF-B watched the same soap opera in the same interactional meaning-based activities, but FnF-B is required to do dictogloss on-line activity wherein students are asked to transcribe key words of the story in the blanked spaces to reconstruct the story in English before the on-class interactional activities. After the on-class interactional session, students take quizzes in the form of reconstructing the storyline using target words and grammar. They had Korean language subscript to assist their understanding of the story whenever needed. Students received three hours of 13 week instruction using English soap opera in three different groups: two compared groups of input enhancement versus output enhancement on-line activities plus meaning-focused interactional language activities, and one baseline group of meaning-focused language teaching.

The instruments include the pre- and post-test of 30 target grammar items and 100 target vocabulary items. After the class, 20 words for understanding and 20 words for expression were given on a test, and the scores are compared against each other among three groups. For grammar, 20 items for understanding and 10 items for expression are given on the test for comparison.

4. Result and discussion

The study attempted to answer to the three research questions raised: the efficacy of learning vocabulary and grammar items in FnF instructions compared to the commonly practiced communicative language teaching in meaning-focused instruction, a comparative superiority in learning grammar items between input-enhanced learning and output-enhanced learning, and a comparative superiority in learning vocabulary items between input-enhanced learning and output-enhanced learning. The answer to the first question is partially positive

since both FnF instructions show more effective gains only in one componential domain, but not in both vocabulary and grammar. The answer to the second question is that input-enhanced learning is more effective in grammar gains than output-enhanced learning. The answer to the third question is that the output-enhanced group performed better than the input-enhanced group.

After the instruction, vocabulary and grammar gains are compared among the meaning-focused baseline group, the input-enhanced FnF-A group, and the output-enhanced FnF-B group. The results are shown in Table 3 as an analysis of fixed effects was conducted in terms of vocabulary and grammar gains and their average score comparison among different classes along with standard deviation, F-value, and the post-hoc was calculated.

items	classes	students	post-test average	SD	F-value	Post-hoc
vocabulary	Baseline	30	78.1	9.95	-3.75**	Baseline=FnF
	FnF-A	30	78.7	8.95		-A<FnF-B
	FnF-B	30	84.7	8.66		
grammar	Baseline	30	71.1	10.45	-3.67**	Baseline=FnF
	FnF-A	30	84.7	8.66		-B<FnF-A
	FnF-B	30	75.5	9.32		

(**=P<.01)

The result as shown in Table 3 indicates that the output-enhanced learning (FnF-B) shows more effective improvement than the comparative group and the baseline group in the vocabulary test with a statistical probability of 99%, and the input-enhanced group (FnF-A) outperformed the comparative group and the baseline group in the grammar test with statistical significance of the same probability. However, no significant statistical difference in total average was found between the input-enhanced group and the output-enhanced group. The conclusion from the result could bear pedagogical implications, such as that general English education must use the eclectic method of adopting communicative language teaching with FnF of input-enhanced target grammar and output-enhanced target vocabulary to supplement the students with basic vocabulary and grammar requirements.

The objectives of FnF tasks are to draw students' attention to the target form of language and raise awareness to the language components which is believed to interrupt their understanding of the language. The previously executed comparative effect studies left questions either unanswered or still arguable, in particular to grammatical awareness. Grammatical awareness is more complex than vocabulary since the grammatical device shows different degrees of prominence in its constructive manipulation. Tag questions, for example, are embedded with an input enhancement device in the construction, and enhancing the input with font manipulation resulted in a questionable effect (Han, Park, and Combs 2008; Izumi and Bigelow 2000). It was found in this study that indication of the FnF instructions may be subject to the grammatical items in the resulting effects. With this possibility in mind, the research scope of the current study addresses only five constructions listed as target grammar items in the experiment.

Blended learning in this study consisted of on-line off-class, off-line on-class and on-line off-class. On-line session before the off-line on class covered three different modes of focused activities: meaning-focused, input-enhanced and output-enhanced. On-line session after the off-line on-class covered gave evaluation of what students learned. The blended learning adopted in this study was similar to the flipped learning with respect to the self-directed on-line session placed before the off-line on-class session (Bergman and Sams 2012).

It should be noted of the cognitive load difference between input enhancement tasks and output enhancement tasks wherein the latter requires a reconstruction load of the story they processed through the input either through listening or reading. Thus, the output task includes the decoding process plus the encoding process which involves the target language forms. During the process, the cognitive load of output divides into input processing load and output formulation mode, which means that the failure of output tasks does not necessarily mean that the students did not learn from the input processing; but rather, students can more easily understand words and constructions without being able to utter or write the words and constructions. Different degrees of processing complexity between vocabulary and grammar allow students to be able to perform lesser complexities of difference between understanding and expression in vocabulary tests than in grammatical tests.

The pedagogical implications drawn from the discussion are that the grammar components need to be reconsidered regarding embedding the output enhancement tasks, and they may be better suited to the input enhancement tasks to the group of students who lack component knowledge, such as that of a participle construction, hypothetical conditionals, negative polarity construction or relative clause construction. In opposition, vocabulary processing is more meaning-centered than grammatical construction, and it is relatively simple in cognitive processing. This property of vocabulary learning indicates that they are more suited to the output enhancement tasks where the learning impact may be better facilitated.

5. Conclusion

Comparative studies between meaning-focused learning and output-enhanced learning showed mixed result as shown in Yeo (2002) and Jang and Kim (2012) wherein the former concluded that no significant difference exist between an input-enhanced group and an output-enhanced group in English participle learning. The latter, conversely, concluded that an output enhanced group outperformed an input enhanced group significantly in relative pronoun, participle construction, and gerundive construction. As such, the current study may be aligned with Yeo (2002) where no significant result was found in output-enhanced group. In addition, it can be concluded from the data derived from the study that no difference in output-enhanced learning is attributed to the complexity of grammar learning as implicit knowledge compared to the process of vocabulary learning. Important findings to support this are that output-enhanced learning is more effective in vocabulary learning while input-enhanced learning is more effective in grammar learning.

The results gleaned from this study provide a theoretical basis for pedagogical procedures that elevate the effects of FnF tasks by appropriating language components which challenge students to learn wherein the video stimulus is viewed by the students along with vocabulary output enhancement tasks and grammar input enhancement tasks to be performed during pre-viewing and while-viewing stages. It is worthy to note that the current general English

education posits serious challenges to the instructors, because some students are not sufficiently ready to cope with authentic English materials due to their lack of vocabulary and grammar despite the fact that English is the most important instrument for their successful college life. Thus, the current suggestion provides a pedagogical solution which can be implemented along the learning cycle to thwart the dilemma which the local universities face in their general English education today in Korea.

The limitations of the current study included that the level of students were narrowly defined, which posed difficulty to capture the generalization of the population. In the same vein, the target vocabulary and grammar might also pose problems of generalization for different vocabulary group and grammatical categories. Thus, the aforementioned limitations cautioned the further generalization beyond the current scope of population and vocabulary/grammar band.

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