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Department of Letters and the English Language

**The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on
Teaching English Past Tenses**

The Case of First-Year LMD Students, University of Constantine 1

**Thesis submitted to the Department of Letters and the English Language in Candidacy
for the LMD Doctorate in “Didactique des Langues Etrangères”**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My beloved parents for their devotion and sacrifice,

My husband Toufik for his patience, support and encouragement,

My dear son Anes and dear daughter Raghad,

My brothers and my sister,

To all my friends.

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Abstract

This research work seeks to explore the role of input-processing instruction in improving students' explicit knowledge and grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses. Students of English at Constantine University 1 seem to be quite deficient not only in their comprehension of tenses in general but also in their production as well. It is commonly believed that learners' weaknesses in the acquisition of the past tenses are due to the traditional method used which is 'output-based instruction' that focuses on immediate production over comprehension. So, it is advocated that teaching past tenses would preferably be associated with a new method called 'input-processing instruction' which is developed by Vanpatten (1996). It focuses on providing students with opportunities for comprehending rich input that may lead to prompter intake. It has been hypothesized that (a) grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction in promoting grammatical accuracy about English past tenses and (b) it would be also more beneficial than output-based instruction in enhancing learners' explicit knowledge about English past tenses. The research work is carried out on two groups of first-year LMD students at the Department of Letters and English Language, University of Constantine 1. The research tools used to gather information are a questionnaire administered to students to see their attitudes towards the methods of instruction used and an experimental method which involved the control group who was taught under output-based instruction and the experimental group who was taught under input-processing instruction. The findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in comprehending and producing tenses. Hence, it has been suggested that this innovative packet would rather be used as an alternative to the traditional method for enhancing both students' explicit knowledge and grammatical accuracy.

List of Abbreviations

- ALM: Audio-lingual Method
- CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
- GTM: Grammar Translation Method
- L2: Second Language
- LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate
- N: Number
- PI: Processing Instruction
- OBI: Output-Based Instruction
- SLA: Second Language Acquisition
- SOV: Subject, Object, Verb
- SVO: Subject, Verb, Object
- T: Total
- TPR: Total Physical Response
- LAD: Language Acquisition Device

List of Figures and Tables

	Page
Figure 1: Traditional Instruction.....	37
Figure 2: Input-Processing Model.....	70
Table 1: Explicit Information (Benati and Lee 2010: 34).....	82
Table 2: Explicit Information and Information about the Processing Problem (Benati and Lee 2010: 35).....	83
Table 3: Affective Structured-Input Activities.....	85
Table 4: Summary of Traditional versus Processing Instruction	87
Table 5: Grammatical Accuracy Pre-test Scores.....	99
Table 6: Grammatical Accuracy Post-test Scores.....	99
Table 7: Grammatical Accuracy Pre-test Scores.....	101
Table 8: Grammatical Accuracy Post-test Scores.....	102
Table 9: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S.1.....	104
Table 10: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	105
Table 11: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	105
Table 12: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	106
Table 13: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	107
Table 14: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	107
Table 15: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	108

Table 16: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	109
Table 17: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	109
Table 18: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	110
Table 19: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	111
Table 20: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	111
Table 21: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	112
Table 22: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	113
Table 23: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	113
Table 24: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	114
Table 25: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	115
Table 26: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	115
Table 27: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	116
Table 28: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	117
Table 29: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	117
Table 30: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	118
Table 31: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	119
Table 32: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	119
Table 33: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	120
Table 34: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	121
Table 35: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	121

Table 36: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	122
Table 37: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	123
Table 38: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	123
Table 39: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	124
Table 40: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	125
Table 41: The Experimental Group pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	125
Table 42: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	126
Table 43: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	127
Table 44: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	127
Table 45: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	128
Table 46: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	129
Table 47: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	129
Table 48: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	130
Table 49: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	131
Table 50: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	132
Table 51: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	132
Table 52: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	133
Table 53: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	133
Table 54: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	134
Table 55: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	135

Table 56: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	135
Table 57: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	136
Table 58: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	136
Table 59: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	137
Table 60: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	138
Table 61: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	138
Table 62: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	139
Table 63: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	139
Table 64: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	140
Table 65: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	140
Table 66: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	141
Table 67: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	141
Table 68: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	142
Table 69: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	143
Table 70: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	143
Table 71: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	144
Table 72: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	145
Table 73: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	145
Table 74: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	146
Table 75: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	146

Table 76: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	147
Table 77: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	147
Table 78: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	148
Table 79: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in s. 11.....	149
Table 80: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	149
Table 81: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	150
Table 82: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	151
Table 83: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	151
Table 84: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S.16.....	152
Table 85: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	152
Table 86: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	153
Table 87: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	153
Table 88: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	154
Table 89: The Control Group Accuracy Pre-test and Post-test Gains in Grammatical Accuracy.....	155
Table 90: The Experimental Group Accuracy Pre-test and Post-test Gains in the Grammatical Accuracy Test.....	156
Table 91: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Pre-test Scores.....	160
Table 92: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Post-test Scores.....	160
Table 93: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Pre-test Scores.....	161

Table 94: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Post-test Scores.....	162
Table 95: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	163
Table 96: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	164
Table 97: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	165
Table 98: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	166
Table 99: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	167
Table 100: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	168
Table 101: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	169
Table 102: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	169
Table 103: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	170
Table 104: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	171
Table 105: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	172
Table 106: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	172
Table 107: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	173
Table 108: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	174
Table 109: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	175
Table 110: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	175
Table 111: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	176
Table 112: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	177
Table 113: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	177

Table 114: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	178
Table 115: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	179
Table 116: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	180
Table 117: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	181
Table 118: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	181
Table 119: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	182
Table 120: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	183
Table 121: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	184
Table 122: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	184
Table 123: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	185
Table 124: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	186
Table 125: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	187
Table 126: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	187
Table 127: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	188
Table 128: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	189
Table 129: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	190
Table 130: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	191
Table 131: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	191
Table 132: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	192
Table 133: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	193

Table 134: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	194
Table 135: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	195
Table 136: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	195
Table 137: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	196
Table 138: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	197
Table 139: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	198
Table 140: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	199
Table 141: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	200
Table 142: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	200
Table 143: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	201
Table 144: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	202
Table 145: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	203
Table 146: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	204
Table 147: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	205
Table 148: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	205
Table 149: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	206
Table 150: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	207
Table 151: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	208
Table 152: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	208
Table 153: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	209

Table 154: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	210
Table 155: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1.....	211
Table 156: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2.....	212
Table 157: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3.....	213
Table 158: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4.....	213
Table 159: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5.....	214
Table 160: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6.....	215
Table 161: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7.....	216
Table 162: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8.....	217
Table 163: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9.....	217
Table 164: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10.....	218
Table 165: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11.....	219
Table 166: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12.....	220
Table 167: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13.....	221
Table 168: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14.....	222
Table 169: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15.....	222
Table 170: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16.....	223
Table 171: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17.....	224
Table 172: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18.....	225
Table 173: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19.....	226

Table 174: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20.....	226
Table 175: The Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Explicit Knowledge.....	228
Table 176: The Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Explicit Knowledge.....	229
Table 177: Number of Years in Studying English.....	235
Table 178: Students' Desire in Studying English.....	236
Table 179: Students' Views on the Time Allocation to Learning Grammar.....	236
Table 180: Rate of the Students who Like Grammar.....	238
Table 181: The Importance of Grammar.....	238
Table 182: The Role of Grammar.....	239
Table 183: Students' Level in Grammar.....	240
Table 184: The Difficulty of Grammar Rules.....	241
Table 185: The Extent of the Difficulties.....	242
Table 186: The Comprehension of Grammar Aspects.....	242
Table 187: The Difficulties in Learning Grammar Aspects.....	243
Table 188: The Students' Difficult Aspect.....	244
Table 189: Students' Preferable Method.....	244
Table 190: The Difficulty in Learning Tenses.....	245
Table 191: The Most Difficult Tense.....	246
Table 192: The Best Way for Learning Tenses.....	247
Table 193: Students' Strategies in Learning Tenses.....	248

Table 194: Students' Reactions when they do not Comprehend Rules.....	249
Table 195: Students' Method in Practising Tenses.....	249
Table 196: The best Method for Learning Tenses.....	250
Table 197: The Effect of Comprehension-Based Instruction.....	251
Table 198: Students' Preferable Method in Practice.....	252
Table 199: The Effect of Comprehension-Based Instruction on Production.....	252
Table 200: The Importance of Comprehension over Production.....	253
Table 201: The Effect of Comprehension upon Production.....	254
Table 202: The Source of Errors.....	254

Contents

	Page
General Introduction.....	2
1. Statement of the Problem.....	2
2. Aims of the Study.....	4
3. Questions.....	5
4. Hypotheses.....	6
5. Key Words.....	6
6. Means of Research.....	6
7. Structure of the Study.....	7
Chapter One: Grammar Instruction.....	10
Introduction.....	11
1.1 Definition of Grammar.....	11
1.1.1 Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Grammar.....	13
1.2 Grammar Types.....	14
1.3 Grammar Instruction.....	17
1.3.1 Form-Focused Instruction vs. Meaning-Focused Instruction.....	19
1.3.1.1 Form-Focused Instruction.....	20
1.3.1.2 Meaning-Focused Instruction.....	21

1.4 Formal Grammar.....	22
1.4.1 The Role of Formal Instruction in L2 Acquisition.....	23
1.4.2 The Effect of Formal Instruction on the Route of L2 Acquisition.....	23
1.4.3 The Morpheme Order Studies.....	23
1.4.4 Longitudinal Studies.....	25
1.4.5 The Role of Formal Instruction on the Rate of SLA.....	26
Conclusion.....	31
Chapter Two: Output-Based Instruction.....	32
Introduction.....	34
2.1 Definition of Output-Based Instruction.....	35
2.2 The Output Hypothesis.....	37
2.3 The Major Approaches /Methods.....	39
2.3.1 The Grammar Translation Method.....	40
2.3.2 The Direct Method.....	42
2.3.3 The Audio-Lingual Method.....	45
2.3.4 The Humanistic Approaches.....	46
2.3.4.1 The Silent Way.....	46
2.3.4.2 Total Physical Response.....	47

2.3.4.3 Community Language Learning.....	48
2.3.4.4 Suggestopedia.....	49
2.3.4.5 The Natural Approach.....	50
2.3.5 Communicative Language Teaching.....	51
2. 4 Deductive vs. Inductive Teaching.....	55
2.5 Focus on Form.....	57
Conclusion.....	59
Chapter Three: Input-Processing.....	60
Introduction.....	61
3.1 Input and Intake.....	61
3.1.1 The Role of Input.....	63
3.1.2 The Role of Attention and Noticing.....	66
3.2 Input-Processing Instruction.....	69
3.2.1 Models of Input-Based Instruction.....	71
3.2.2 Principles of Input-Processing.....	73
3.3 Processing Instruction.....	79
3.3.1 Components of Processing Instruction.....	81
3.3.2 Guidelines for Developing Structured-Input Activities.....	85

3.4 Input-Processing Instruction vs. Output-Based Instruction.....	88
Conclusion.....	90

**Chapter Four: The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Grammatical Accuracy
in the Use of English Past Tenses.....** 92

Introduction.....	93
4.1 Research Methodology.....	94
4.2 Population and Sampling.....	95
4.3 The Materials.....	95
4.4 Treatment.....	98
4.4.1 The t-test for the Pre-test and the Post-test.....	100
4.4.2 Item Analysis of Grammatical Accuracy.....	103
4.4.2.1 The Pre-test.....	104
4.4.2.2 The Post-test.....	131
4.5 Overall Analysis.....	154
Conclusion.....	157

**Chapter Five: The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Learners' Explicit
Knowledge in the Use of English Past Tenses.....** 158

Introduction.....	159
5.1 Results of the Grammatical Explicit Knowledge and the t-test.....	159

5.1.1 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Pre-test.....	161
5.1.2 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Post-test.....	162
5.2 Analysis of the Results.....	163
5.2.1 The Pre-test.....	163
4.2.2 The Post-test.....	194
5.3 Overall Analysis.....	227
Conclusion.....	230
Chapter Six: Students' Attitudes towards Input-Processing Instruction.....	231
Introduction.....	232
6.1 Administration of the Students' Questionnaire.....	232
6.2 Description of the Students' Questionnaire.....	233
6.3 Analysis of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire.....	235
6.4 Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	255
Conclusion.....	257
Chapter Seven: Pedagogical Implications.....	258
Introduction.....	259
7.1 Discussion of the Findings.....	259
7.2 Pedagogical Implications.....	261

7.3 Limitations of the Study.....	263
7.4 Recommendations for Further Research.....	264
Conclusion.....	265
General Conclusion.....	266
Bibliography.....	269

Appendix I: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix II: Test used as Pre and Post Test

Appendix III: Instructional Packets of Output-Based Instruction

Appendix IV: Instructional Packets of Input-Processing Instruction

General Introduction

	Page
1. Statement of the Problem	2
2. Aims of the Study	4
3. Questions	5
4. Hypotheses	6
5. Key Words	6
6. Means of Research	6
7. Structure of the Study	7

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Providing efficient grammar instruction has been the major concern of many teachers and researchers to gain positive outcomes in the learning process. It has been exposed to tremendous changes over the centuries. These changes were affected by the need for developing the teaching system. There was a need for rethinking traditional approaches and seeking for a better way for the sake of improving grammar instruction, especially at the time when researchers became uncertain about its value. With the rise of the Communicative Approach, grammar is no longer gaining popularity and status as in the 1970s. Some researchers came to inquire whether grammar instruction is necessary, and even go as long as to ignore grammar instruction completely such as Krashen (1982, 1985), Krashen and Terrell (1983) and Schwartz (1993). They see that grammar can only be acquired unconsciously through natural exposure and is best taught and learned through context without giving explicit grammar instruction. This fact makes teachers hesitate on whether to cease teaching grammar or not.

The extent to which grammar is needed is still a debatable and controversial issue; yet, the mastery of the language depends a lot on knowing its grammar. Recently, grammar comes to provoke huge interest and discussion since there was a constant effort to improve the way grammar is taught. Nowadays, grammar is seen as an essential component of the language and an integral part of the syllabus design. Perhaps, many English teachers would agree to consider grammar as the basis of language and that students cannot master the language if they cannot acquire knowledge about language.

It is widely assumed that grammar is difficult for learners to attain without receiving formal instruction. The importance of grammar in language acquisition leads researchers to look for appropriate ways for teaching it. So, the point that should be raised is how grammar should be taught. The challenge emerges in offering the most appropriate method for enhancing grammar teaching. Indeed, researchers such as Vanpatten (1996) agree that the real problem lies in the way grammar is taught and not in grammar itself.

Regardless of the fact that learners study grammar at the middle and the secondary school, they come to university with numerous problems related to making correct form-meaning relations and processing the input correctly. Teachers find that students are deficient in grammar, especially in tenses. They consider tenses as the most striking issue, if not the most frightening matter. Students are less capable in using tenses in accurate ways. They commit many mistakes when they engage in spontaneous speech and even planned writing. This fact hinders learners from gaining both fluency and accuracy. More than that, most students still face the same grammatical problems even if they get their Licence degree. It is expected that students should leave university with the ability to speak and write accurately, but they do not do so because tenses seem to be difficult aspects to teach and learn. This fact could be due to the inappropriate methods used by teachers and their concentration on the immediate production over the comprehension of the input.

The traditional ways yield unsatisfactory results because they do not trigger the cognitive abilities of the learners and their performance. In addition, learners may not process the input efficiently; they may misunderstand and misinterpret the kind of input they are exposed to, and this stands as an obstacle for learners' achievements. So, the teaching of grammar is witnessing more and more challenges since learners hardly comprehend, speak and write correct English without grammar mistakes. Learners may lose interest in learning and using tenses and making form-meaning mapping correctly.

Hence, the main interest of grammar teaching should focus on overcoming the main problems faced by learners to guarantee better results.

At the university level, teachers usually perceive that students face difficulties in using the English past tenses correctly. In addition, first-year students do not use various tenses when they want to express the past. They mostly opt for the past simple or past continuous when they want to express the past and they even use the present simple where they have to use the present perfect simple. Even if students are taught forms and rules, they continue to make mistakes in the forms of the verbs and their spelling. They also fail to make correct form-meaning mappings correctly. The traditional methods do not seem to provide enough comprehension for learners and to draw their attention to the wrong strategies they use when they learn the past tenses. For instance, learners may use the past tenses incorrectly because they are prone to make recourse to lexical items such as time adverbials more than semantic meaning for processing the correct use. So, the new method “input-processing instruction” is deemed to help learners to process the past tenses through semantic meaning rather than lexical forms.

2. Aims of the Study

This research work strives to determine the effects of a new method of teaching called “input-processing instruction” on the teaching of English past tenses. So, the teaching of the past tenses should be associated with a more effective method that focuses on learners’ comprehension rather than production. It is a new method of teaching developed by Vanpatten (1996) as opposed to the traditional method “output-based instruction”. It is argued that this type of instruction might be efficient in helping learners convert input into intake.

This study attempts to show the effects of input-based instruction on minimizing the mistakes committed by first-year LMD students of English at the University of Constantine1. It aims to guide learners to make the correct relations between a given tense form and its meaning and to develop their grammatical explicit knowledge and accuracy. Eventually, it seeks to investigate whether students' improvement in acquiring the past tenses is due to input-processing instruction.

3. Questions

This research work seeks to provide answers for some questions raised in teaching and learning grammar. So, the research questions in this study are stated as follows:

1. What are the inadequacies of traditional grammar-based approaches?
2. What is the role of input-processing instruction?
3. Does 'input-processing instruction' help learners process the input correctly?
4. Does 'input-processing' instruction lead to richer intake than 'output-based instruction'?
5. Does 'input-processing instruction' improve grammatical accuracy about past tenses?
6. Does 'input-processing instruction' improve grammatical explicit knowledge about past tenses?
7. Does 'input-processing instruction' strengthen the level of students in other grammatical aspects as well?
8. Could 'input-processing instruction' be a potential alternative to 'output-based instruction'?

4. Hypotheses

The current study is directed by two main hypotheses.

- Grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction in promoting grammatical accuracy about English past tenses.
- Grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction in enhancing learners' explicit knowledge about English past tenses.

5. Key Words

- Input-processing instruction
- Output-based instruction
- Processing instruction
- Structured-input activities
- Grammatical accuracy
- Explicit grammatical knowledge

6. Means of Research

To check the validity of the hypotheses, we rely on two means of research: the experimental method and the students' questionnaire. This research is carried out on first-year LMD students at the Department of Arts and English Language, University of Constantine1. The sample is composed of two groups which are chosen randomly: an experimental group and a control group. The first tool used for the sake of confirming or

disconfirming the hypotheses is the experimental method which involves the control group who will be taught under the traditional method, which is output-based instruction, and the experimental group who will be taught under the new method, which is input-processing instruction. Both groups will receive a pre-test and a post test in order to determine the efficiency of the two packets of instruction. Students will be given a multiple-choice test consisting of twenty sentences to assess their accuracy in the use of English past tenses and a multiple-choice justification test to assess their explicit knowledge. The test is administered to sixty LMD students during the academic year 2012-2013. The results of the pre-test and the post-test are compared and the hypotheses are tested through the students' t-test. The t-test is a robust statistical test used for the aim of knowing whether the results obtained at the end of the research are significant or not.

Another means of research which is used in this research work to examine the effectiveness of input-processing instruction is the students' questionnaire. The questionnaire is delivered to first-year English students at the University of Constantine 1 to gather information and to elicit students' opinions and attitudes towards the new method of teaching grammar which is input-processing instruction.

7. Structure of the Study

The present research work is composed of seven chapters. The first three chapters involve the theoretical part, and the last four chapters involve the empirical part and pedagogical implications about the study. The first chapter defines the term "grammar" and introduces the concepts of descriptive and prescriptive grammar. It also discusses the main types of grammar such as: formal grammar, functional grammar and pedagogical grammar. It further highlights form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction.

This chapter shows the effect of formal grammar on L2 acquisition, the route and the rate of acquisition. It concludes with introducing the three theoretical positions that provide a justification for why formal grammar does not affect the natural order of acquisition but facilitates rapid development.

The second chapter highlights the traditional way of instruction which is “output-based instruction”. It illustrates the role of output and reviews the most traditional approaches of teaching grammar. The chapter also sheds some light on traditional ways of teaching including deductive and inductive instruction.

The third chapter casts light on the new method of teaching grammar which is “input-processing instruction” by identifying its main principles and shedding some light on structured-input activities. It further highlights the studies carried out to compare the effects of input-processing instruction with traditional output-based instruction.

The fourth chapter examines the effect of input-processing instruction on improving students’ grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses through the use of a pre-test and a post test. It contains a depiction of the research methodology, the participants and the materials used in the study. It also handles the discussion of the findings of the first hypothesis of the research work.

The fifth chapter deals with the effect of input-processing on the enhancement of learners’ explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses. It provides an analysis of the results yielded by the multiple-choice justification test through the use of the pre and post-test. This chapter also discusses the findings of the research concerning the second hypothesis of the current study.

Chapter six provides a description of the students' questionnaire. It contains a thorough analysis of the students' answers to see whether students have positive attitudes towards grammar and input-processing instruction.

Finally, chapter seven discusses the findings of the research work and reveals some limitations of the study. It also presents some pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research to better help English teachers in dispensing grammar instruction.

Chapter One

Grammar Instruction

	Page
Introduction	11
1.1 Definition of Grammar	11
1.1.1 Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Grammar	13
1.2 Grammar Types	14
1.3 Grammar Instruction	17
1.3.1 Form-Focused Instruction vs. Meaning-Focused Instruction	19
1.3.1.1 Form-Focused Instruction	20
1.3.1.2 Meaning-Focused Instruction	21
1.4 Formal Grammar	22
1.4.1 The Role of Formal Instruction in L2 Acquisition	23
1.4.2 The Effect of Formal Instruction on the Route of L2 Acquisition	23
1.4.3 The Morpheme Order Studies	23
1.4.4 Longitudinal Studies	25
1.4.5 The Role of Formal Instruction on the Rate of SLA	26
Conclusion...	31

Chapter One

Grammar Instruction

Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to an overview of grammar as a whole. It reviews the literature on grammar by firstly presenting various definitions of grammar teaching from its prescriptive and descriptive perspectives. Secondly, the chapter will introduce some types of grammar teaching including form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction. It will also highlight the role of formal grammar instruction and the morpheme order studies on teaching and learning grammar.

1.1 Definition of Grammar

Grammar is a necessary condition for learning. It mediates between the components of the language system which includes the system of sounds on the one hand and the system of meaning on the other hand. Before attempting to know the different types of grammar, it is probably suitable to know what grammar is.

Perhaps the first impression for many learners when they have their first glance at the term “grammar” is associated with rules. Grammar according to them is a set of rules which help in acquiring language. Many linguists study grammar and provide different definitions. Some relate the study of grammar to the combination of morphemes and words. Salvia *et al.* (2010: 220) note that grammar is a combination of morphology and syntax, whereas Crystal (1996: 06) believes that grammar is the business of segmenting a language to pieces to see how it works. Various definitions are teased out by Hartwell (1985: 109-10) who provides his own view point in defining grammar. He starts with the

broadest definition of grammar or what he calls the set of rules of the language shared by the speakers. So according to him, grammar is:

- The set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged to convey larger meanings.
- The branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis, and formalization of language patterns.
- Linguistic etiquette.
- School grammar: the grammar used in the schools.
- Stylistic grammar: grammatical terms used in the interest of teaching writing.

Traditionally, the term grammar has been defined in different ways; however, the traditional view does not go beyond considering grammar as a set of rules governing the language. In simpler words, it is concerned with the study of grammatical forms of language to make up other units.

In point of fact, grammar is not only a matter of teaching and learning rules. It is a tool for conveying meaning without which successful communication would be impossible. Some linguists define grammar as a process of words that helps in clarifying the speaker's or writer's meanings when the contextual information is absent. As Thornbury (1999: 4) notes "grammar is a process for making a speaker's or writer's meaning clear when contextual information is lacking". Grammar is everywhere in communication because it does not only account for a set of forms and structures but it also accounts for meaning as well. Ur (1988: 4) defines grammar as "a way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of

meaning”. Hence, grammar now reflects an important component to the appropriate use of language, which combines form, meaning and use. Gurrey (1962: 45) argues that:

The grammar of language; however, to a grammarian is a description of the form structures and grammatical functions of common occurrence, and of the way that these play their part in various situations in real life-one of their main purposes being to express meaning... the study of grammar, therefore, should mean the study of forms, grammatical functions and structures of language in close association with the meaning they express.

1.1.1 Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Grammar

Nowadays, there exist different concepts of grammar; and within the field of foreign language learning and teaching, there is a distinction between two terms including descriptive and prescriptive grammar. Denham and Lobeck (2010: 9) define descriptive grammar as a “grammar which describes the rule system we use to produce sentences, regardless of the social value we may attach to those sentences”. Therefore, descriptive grammar attempts to describe how people use language, whereas prescriptive grammar is defined as “a set of rules that prescribes or defines how we are supposed to speak typically according to some authority”. Prescriptive grammar, then, prescribes what a speaker speaks and writes. It attempts to draw a distinction between correct and incorrect sentences as it makes judgments on what people say. DeCapua (2008: 13) holds that prescriptive grammar helps people in guiding them how to say a particular thing and what terms they have to use even if the rules go against speakers’ natural inclination. For instance from a perspective point of view, a sentence like: “Anes and me are going outside” is considered as a wrong sentence; we have to say: “Anes and I are going outside”. Huddleston (1984:

47) deals with the distinction between these two kinds of grammar, when he maintains that: “descriptive grammar aims to present the grammar that underlies the actual usage of speakers of the language, while prescriptive grammar aims to tell its readers what grammatical rule they should follow”. So, Huddleston draws this distinction between the two grammars in terms of goals and purposes, whereas Denham and Lobeck (2010: 10) see that the distinction between the two kinds of grammar “can be rather fuzzy” because they mention that:

Many prescriptive rules are simply unnatural; they do not conform to rules of natural language and can be learned only consciously. Others, however, are actually descriptive rules for some speakers the descriptive rules of the language variety that has higher social value.

In contrast to prescriptive grammar, descriptive grammar usually covers broader language structures and goes beyond syntax and morphology. Odlin (1994: 3) considers that descriptive grammar is distinguished from prescriptive grammar by the fact that the former looks at languages with more details than the latter. Descriptive grammar does not only include syntax and morphology but also phonology, phonetics, semantics and lexis.

1.2 Grammar Types

This section explores briefly some types of grammar such as formal grammar, functional grammar and pedagogical grammar.

Formal grammar is primarily concerned with analyzing grammatical rules without taking into account analyzing grammar in context. All its stress is put on rules that govern the grammatical forms. As Lock (1996: 1) states, formal grammar is “a set of rules which specify all the possible grammatical structures of the language”. In his view, there is a

clear cut line between “grammatical and ungrammatical sentences and their relationship to one another than their meaning or their use in different contexts”. Dik (1997: 3) notes that in formal grammar, syntax takes priority over semantics and pragmatics because grammar is analyzed in terms of formal syntax without paying attention to the use of those rules in a particular context. According to this view, syntax takes the whole status in formal grammar because it does not have any direct relationship to communication, whereas semantics and pragmatics play a clear role in language communication. Hence, they do not have a major role in formal grammar.

In the functional view, grammar started to be looked as a device for communication. Functional grammar attempts to account for the use of language. It puts all the stress on analyzing language in terms of use more than usage and focuses on how language operates in a particular context. In other words, it deals with language from the semantic point of view. Lock (*op.cit.*) indicates that: “the focus is usually on the appropriateness of a form for a particular communicative purpose in a particular context”. He mentions that language is a system of communication and not limited to a system of grammatical rules (*ibid.*). Functional grammar is anchored in the idea that the essence of language is grounded in the communicative function of language. Furthermore, for some linguists, language in the functional view is considered as a medium used by people for obtaining their social needs. As Dik (1997: 3) declares, a language in the functional paradigm is in the first place conceptualized as an instrument of social interaction among human beings used with the intention of establishing relationships.

There is another theory associated with the teaching of grammar which is called pedagogical grammar. Generally, the term “pedagogical” is associated with teaching. Pedagogical grammar is the one which is basically established for helping both learners and teachers reaching their needs. So, this type of grammar attempts to render the grammar

of a language in ways which are pedagogically suitable for learners. Dirven (1985; in Geiger and Rudzka-Ostyn, 1993: 202) notes that pedagogical grammar describes the language, which aims at improving the acquisition of the language. Pedagogical grammar provides information about the complex issues of language; it helps both teachers and learners understand the complex topics about language. Berns (2010: 171) states that:

Pedagogical grammar is defined by the specific purpose these grammars serve, namely a source of information for teachers and learners on grammatical topics and appropriateness of use of linguistic structures in specific context of spoken or written interaction.

Pedagogical grammar is a concept which is distinguished from linguistic grammar. In the latter, learners face difficulties in understanding because it is not accessible. Therefore, it is rarely used by the learner or the teacher because it sees language as an abstract object such as Universal Grammar. Römer (2005: 14) notes that:

A linguist grammar, mainly used by the linguist and less frequently by language teachers or learners, is usually perceived to be rather comprehensive and complex.

When linguistic analysis could not meet the teachers' and learners' concerns, this led them to shift attention towards pedagogical grammar. Linguistic rules are found to be difficult for the learners because they were not modified to suit their needs. Stern (1983: 175) observes that it was completely a wrong endeavour when there was tendency in the past to apply directly rules of phonetics, structural linguistics without modification. Since, linguistic studies could not be applied easily; this led to the emergence of pedagogical grammar. According to Chomsky (1965: 46), pedagogical grammar is seen as a tool for

offering linguistic competence and linguistic grammar is a tool for describing how this process is possible.

A grammar describes and attempts to account for the ability of the speaker to understand an arbitrary sentence of his language to produce appropriate sentences on given occasions. If a pedagogic grammar, it attempts to provide a student with this ability, if a linguistic grammar, it aims to discover and exhibit the mechanisms that make this achievement possible.

1.3 Grammar Instruction

The role of grammar instruction is still widely debatable in second language acquisition. Thus, the issue of whether it should be taught or not is a controversial matter. Perhaps one reason that creates this ambiguity is that grammar has not yet been well defined. Grammar does not have one accurate definition, which leads researchers to have different opinions on the role of grammar. Garrett (1986: 134) notes that instead of asking how we should teach grammar, we need first to determine and analyse the basic notion of what grammar is.

In the past, grammar seems to fascinate many scholars; however, in recent years people became uncertain about its usefulness and importance especially with the emergence of the communicative approach. While some linguists see a great effectiveness of giving grammar instruction for the learners, others consider that instruction is a waste of time. They see that grammar instruction has no effect and impact on acquisition. So, it becomes clear then, that the debate arises between researchers who claim that learning takes place only through use and researchers who claim that learning occurs through formal instruction. Among those who do not acknowledge the role of grammar instruction

is Krashen (1982). He supports the role of communication and neglects the role of instruction based on his theory of the natural approach. Rothstein (2009: 2) points to the fact that many teachers ponder about the usefulness of grammar in helping learners ameliorate their reading, writing and speaking ability. Thornbury (1999: 14) states that:

No other issue has so preoccupied theorists and practitioners as the grammar debate, and the history of language teaching is essentially the history of the claims and counterclaims for and against the teaching of grammar. Differences in attitude to the role of grammar underpin differences between methods, between teachers, and between learners.

In the past, the role of grammar instruction did not go further above offering learners the ability to write and read about classical literature. Teaching grammar was restricted to the analysis of language, and it was equated with memorization and extensive drills. Grammar was dominating language teaching; however, it did not receive much attention in public schools. Scarcella (2003: 61) notes that “in the last twenty years grammar has often been ignored or under-emphasized in public school instruction”.

Recently grammar comes to stimulate the interest of many researchers. Ur (1988: 4) raises a discussion of whether it is necessary to have grammar exercises or whether the learners need to induce the rules intuitively through communicative activities. She argues that communicating effectively is not achieved efficiently through pure communication practice in the classroom because grammar decorates the basis for a set of classroom activities. Vanpatten (1996: 59) suggests that grammar instruction is useful in the acquisition process because instruction helps in making particular grammatical forms more salient in the input. He considers that grammar instruction which is given through the input

as being very important and valuable. In addition, it is believed that one main problem in processing is processing form and meaning at the same time. Skehan (1998) and Tomasello (1998), through their studies, found that learners cannot process target language input for meaning and form. According to them, it is better to push learners notice the target forms, in order to avoid processing meaning only.

Furthermore, Nassaji and Fotos (2004: 128) state that one empirical evidence from Pieneman (1989, 1998) which developed the “Teachability Hypothesis” that suggests “while certain developmental sequences are fixed and cannot be altered by grammar teaching, other structures can benefit from instruction any time they are taught”. Another empirical evidence that stresses reconsidering the role of grammar stems from the research of Harley and Swain (1984) and Swain (1985) who declare that Canadian French programs found that learners who receive long-term communicative language teaching at the expense of explicit grammar teaching do not reach high levels of accuracy with particular grammatical forms. There is also evidence that shows that grammar teaching has a positive effect and that stems from the laboratory extensive reviews of studies and classroom-based research (Nassaji and Fotos, 2004: 127).

1.3.1 Form-Focused Instruction vs. Meaning-Focused Instruction

Form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction are two different types of instruction which involve focus on form and focus on meaning. In form-focused instruction, the priority is on teaching language forms whereas in meaning-focused instruction the priority is given to meaning and communication. However, recently, it becomes necessary to incorporate both form-focused instruction and meaning focused instruction.

1.3.1.1 Form-Focused Instruction

There was no accurate definition afforded to the term form-focused instruction because there were many terms used such as formal instruction, focus on form and focus on forms. However, it is agreed that form-focused instruction is a term which is commonly contrasted with meaning-focused instruction. Form-focused instruction is a term which can indicate any sort of teaching that needs learners to attend to formal aspects of language including two ways of instruction, implicit and explicit instruction. Spada (1997: 73) defines form-focused instruction as “any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners’ attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly”. This definition suggests that form-focused instruction focuses on language form.

Nowadays, the main interest of linguists is to provide an effective way for teaching grammar, and this led to the emergence of a number of grammar options. Ellis (2009: 237-38) indicates four options of form-focused instruction: 1) Input-based options, in which the learners are required to manipulate the input available for them. Input-based options comprise input enhancement, where the language structures are made salient, input flooding, where the input consists of multiple examples of the language structures. 2) Explicit types of instruction, which include deductive and inductive presentation of grammatical rules. 3) Production options, in which the learners are required to produce the target structures of the language. 4) Corrective feedback, which can be implicit by means of recast or explicit by means of explanation. The term form-focused instruction is also used synonymously with formal instruction, and it encompasses both a focus on forms and focus on form.

Focus on forms is a traditional approach used in teaching, which is limited to teaching discrete grammar points without clear emphasis on meaning or a deliberate focus on grammar with a complete ignorance of meaning. Cook (2001: 39) defines focus on forms as “deliberate discussion of grammar without reference to meaning”. This approach offers clear attention to grammar rules and guides the learner to use those rules in communication. Focus on forms is a synthetic approach which divides the language to pieces such as words, phonemes, morphemes, and stress. Long and Crooks (1992: 43) define focus on forms as “ the use of some kind of synthetic syllabuses and/or a linguistically isolating teaching “method”, such as audiolingualism, the silent way, or total physical response”. So, focus on forms is no more than a traditional way to teach grammar, whose primary focus is on the teaching of language forms in isolation. This approach has many inadequacies and shortcomings, where the learners only exhibit a mastery of grammatical rules and structures.

1.3.1.2 Meaning-Focused Instruction

Meaning focused-instruction places the major focus on meaning and content. It stresses the idea that learners learn better in a meaningful context. In this approach, learners’ attention is drawn towards meaning and communication without focusing their attention on language forms. Advocates of meaning-focused instruction such as Krashen (1985) claim that language is best acquired implicitly and unconsciously. A good example of this type of instruction is immersion programs when the teacher provides learners with enough content-based input.

This approach aims at using language in real-life communication and regards language as a medium of communication. Norris and Ortega (2001: 160) declare that this approach corresponds with the non-interface position which claims that incidental

acquisition of the L2 occurs when there is an enough exposure to comprehensible input and meaningful use of the L2 in context. Williams (1995: 12) states that meaning-focused instruction has the following characteristics:

- They focus on using authentic language.
- They focus on using tasks that encourage the negotiation of meaning between students, and between students and teachers.
- They focus on successful communication, especially that which involves risk taking.
- They emphasize minimal focus on form, including:
 - a- Lack of emphasis on error correction
 - b- Little explicit instruction on language rules.
- They focus on learners' autonomy.

1.4 Formal Grammar

Formal instruction is defined by Ellis (1990: 13) as “the attempt to teach some specific feature of the L2 code-usually a grammatical feature-in one or another”. Hence, learners need to master the grammatical structures because acquiring the grammatical system of the language is an important matter.

The issue that has been dealt with is whether formal grammar instruction makes a difference in SLA. The debate that emerges is whether instruction helps SLA or appears to have only a facilitative role. Ellis (1985: 215-218) talks about the role of formal grammar in SLA, the route of SLA acquisition, and the rate of SLA.

1.4.1 The Role of Formal Instruction in L2 Acquisition

Two main questions are asked concerning the role of formal instruction, whether it aids SLA, and whether it helps all aspects of language. The first question is raised under the assumption of the possibility to talk generically about formal instruction. The second question is based on the assumption that formal instruction is facilitative. The question being what distinguishes the more from the less successful types (*ibid.*: 216).

The effect of instruction should be considered on the route of development which means the general sequence or specific order of acquisition, and the effect of instruction on the rate of development, that is the speed at which learning takes place and finally the success of development; that is, to what extent proficiency has been achieved. It is a very important distinction because instruction can determine the route, the rate and success or just one of them (*ibid.*).

1.4.2 The Effect of Formal Instruction on the Route of L2 Acquisition

The route of SLA was conceived in terms of a general sequence of development and the order in which specific features are acquired. The evidence stems from the morpheme order studies and longitudinal studies. The studies were carried out where both natural exposure and instruction were considered (*ibid.*: 218).

1.4.3 The Morpheme Order Studies

In testing the effect of formal instruction on the route of acquisition, several studies have been conducted to examine the acquisition of specific grammatical morphemes. These studies dealt with how particular morphological structures are acquired. Fathman (1975; in Ellis 1985: 218) investigates the morpheme order of acquisition of two hundred

children aged from six to fifteen years from different backgrounds through an oral production test. Some students were exposed to instruction, while others did not. The results indicated that the order of acquisition remained constant in the two groups irrespective of instruction. According to Ellis (*ibid.*), the majority of the studies which investigated different groups including second language learners and foreign language learners found that learners follow the same morpheme order in the classroom SLA as in naturalistic SLA, especially when learners engage in language use and emphasize on meaning. Hence, formal instruction does not change the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes.

According to Krashen's natural order hypothesis, the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. Krashen (1985: 14) maintains that the order does not seem to be determined by formal simplicity, as it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes. Then, we can say that despite learners' first language and culture, they proceed in the acquisition of second language according to one universal route of development. They go through the same steps in the acquisition of the target language; at any moment in their learning sequences, they use a system which is neither the first language, nor the second one. Ellis (1985: 56) notes that:

The general picture that emerges is that "the acquisition order" for various grammatical functors is more or less the same, irrespective of the subjects' language backgrounds, of their age, and of whether the medium is speech or writing. The only time that a different order occurs is when the elicitation instrument required the subjects to focus specifically on the form rather than the meaning of their utterances.

1.4.4 Longitudinal Studies

Some longitudinal studies were carried out to investigate the effect of formal instruction on the route of acquisition. Among these, the study of Felix (1981) who investigates thirty-four German high school students learning English in a pure formal classroom situation. Students were "tutored" or "instructed" because they were not exposed to English outside the classroom. This study seeks to elicit how the utterances of the instructed learners differed from naturalistic learners. Felix (1981) investigates grammatical structures such as negation, interrogation sentence types and pronouns. The results of the study revealed that both instructed and naturalistic SL learners follow the same learning processes. Felix (*ibid.*) argues that classroom learners are always forced to produce structures they are not ready for. This leads them to follow the same rules that characterize the early stages of naturalistic language acquisition.

According to the morpheme studies and longitudinal studies, formal instruction does not influence the natural route of SLA because classroom learners are required to produce structures beyond their competence. Classroom learners are only able to make use of knowledge acquired through formal instruction when they are focused on form. The morpheme order studies show that even formal instruction may develop L2 knowledge. This knowledge appears in language use only when the learner is focusing on form. Thus, the sequence of development is not influenced by formal instruction whereas the order of development is hardly influenced.

1.4.5 The Role of Formal Instruction on the Rate of SLA

Some studies have dealt with the effects of instruction on L2 proficiency in relation to the effects of simple exposure to the L2 in natural settings. Long (1983: 374) investigates twelve studies on the effectiveness of instruction and concludes that classroom instruction is beneficial in promoting L2 acquisition because six of the studies demonstrate that instruction speeds up the rate of development. Hence, the final result was that there is evidence that illustrates second language instruction makes an impact. Long (1983: 374) notes that “there is considerable evidence to indicate that second language instruction does make a difference”. He argues that its effects are realized for:

1. Children as well as adults,
2. Intermediate and advanced learners as well as beginners,
3. Integrative as well as discrete point test,
4. In input-rich as well as input-poor environments.

Point (4) is a contradiction of Krashen’s monitor theory (1982, 1985) that holds that instruction has an effect only in acquisition-poor environments because the learner is not capable of obtaining sufficient comprehensible input through exposure.

Although the results of the studies show that formal instruction does not affect the route of acquisition, it is of crucial importance in second language because it fosters more rapid developments. Ellis (1985: 229) provides three main theoretical positions which give a justification of why formal instruction does not affect the natural order of SLA but facilitates more rapid development. These theoretical positions provide discussion on whether grammar instruction benefits learning the second language acquisition. They are called the non-interface position, the interface position and the variability position.

The non-interface position was proposed by Krashen (1982) who claims that there is an absolute distinction between two ways of developing competence in second language acquisition. He draws a clear distinction between ‘learned’ knowledge, and ‘acquired’ knowledge. Krashen (1982: 10) notes that second language acquisition is a subconscious process that happens without our interference. In other words, the process is similar to the way children learn their first language, whereas learning a language is a conscious process that goes over time. This means that the learned knowledge is consciously stored in the brain. This view holds that people learn a language through meaningful communication rather than learning grammar rules. Eventually, Krashen (*ibid.*) believes that formal instruction in grammar will not result in the development of acquired knowledge.

Krashen’s (1982: 15) monitor hypothesis provides an explanation of how both acquisition and learning are used. For instance, in producing the utterances, we are using our acquired linguistic knowledge. Nevertheless, after the acquired utterance is used; we tend then to use our learned system to correct errors. Monitoring has a relation only with what is learned and not what is acquired. That is, learning serves as monitoring of acquisition. Krashen (1982: 16) mentions that in order for the monitor to occur, some conditions must be taken into account:

- Time: in order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language performer needs to have sufficient time.
- Focus on form: the performer must also be focused on forms, or thinking about correctness.
- Knowledge of the rule.

The non-interface position affords an explanation of why formal instruction does not influence the natural sequence of second language acquisition. It claims that acquisition is responsible for the sequence, and formal instruction cannot change the sequence. Krashen (1985: 39) argues for his stance by giving an example of an advanced L2 learner who conceives rules such as third person-s and he does not possess the ability to use them in spontaneous communication. This indicates that the rule is learned but not acquired. Other researchers such as Prabhu (1987) also adhere to the non-interface position because he believes that teaching grammar through formal instruction is not useful. Prabhu (1987: 1) states that “the development of competence in a second language requires not systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication”.

The non-interface position also provides an explanation of why formal instruction affects the rate of acquisition. Krashen (1982) takes the stance that formal instruction can especially benefit beginners who confront difficulty in receiving comprehensible input. According to him, classrooms equip learners with comprehensible input that will result in an acceleration of acquisition because they contain “intake environments”, whereas natural settings provide only “exposure environments” which does not alone help acquisition to take place.

The second position is called “the interface position”. Proponents of the interface position such as Johnson (1996) and Seliger (1979) react against the Krashen’s theory by positing that acquisition and learning are not totally separate. They believe that there is a relationship between two types of knowledge: explicit and implicit knowledge. The interface position sees that explicit knowledge (learning) can convert to implicit knowledge (acquisition) when it is well practiced. Johnson (1996: 170-7) maintains that there is a relationship between language acquisition and skill learning. According to him,

skill learning justifies the presentation-practice-production approach because grammar rules which are presented explicitly can be proceduralized and converted into implicit knowledge through practice. The interface position has been debated from a weak and strong position.

One of the proponents of the weak interface position is Seliger (1979) who proposes through his weak version of the interface position that 'learned' knowledge does not entirely turn into acquired knowledge. According to him, learning grammatical rules only facilitates acquisition. Seliger (*ibid.*) argues that the conscious rules learnt by learners are 'anomalous' because different learners end up with different representations of the rules they have been taught. In his view, Pedagogical rules serve as "acquisition facilitators which focus the learner's attention on critical attributes of the real language that must be induced" (Seliger, 1979: 368). Therefore, as indicated earlier, formal instruction does not influence the natural route of SLA, it facilitates the success of development. The weak position accounts for both effects as indicated by Ellis (1985: 236) in the following statement:

pedagogical rules will not alter the sequence in which L2 rules are naturally 'acquired', as their effect will be felt only when the learner is 'ready' to acquire the rules. However, pedagogical rules will enhance the speed of development, because they make the 'acquisitional' process shorter.

Proponents of the strong version of the interface position believe that learning can be converted to acquisition through practice. The strong interface position is headed by Bialystok (1978) and McLaughlin (1978). Bialystok (1978: 72) affords a model of SLA based on the idea that there is an interaction between explicit and implicit knowledge. She

argues that explicit knowledge becomes implicit knowledge through practice. Furthermore, McLaughlin (1978) reacted strongly against Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition. McLaughlin (1978: 318) proposes another distinction between "controlled" and "automatic" processing. Controlled processing requires active attention, whereas automatic processing takes place without attention. Hence, learners move from the controlled to the automatic mode, and there is no necessity to make a distinction between learning and acquisition.

The third position, which is known as the variability position, is associated with Bialystok (1982). According to this position, learner's knowledge is 'variable'. A learner has different styles; each style varies in terms of analyticity and automaticity (Ellis 1985: 241). This position stresses the idea that language use and acquisition are closely related. In other words, language situations that the learner engages in affect the kind of knowledge he is going to acquire. Ellis (1985: 237-8) maintains that:

The kind of language use the learner engages in determines the kind of knowledge that he acquires. Similarly, different kinds of knowledge are used in different types of language performance. Thus, acquiring the necessary linguistic knowledge to perform one kind of activity does not guarantee the ability to perform a different kind of activity.

So, this position stresses the fact that language situations impose variable cognitive linguistic and social demands on the learners. In other words, the learner uses different strategies depending on the type of situation where he is going to move from conscious to unconscious extreme. Bialystok (1982: 183) distinguishes two dimensions involving analysed and automatic factor. The analysed factor makes a distinction between analysed and unanalysed knowledge. In the analysed knowledge, the learner can operate with this

knowledge by transforming it and using it as a means of problem solving because there is awareness of the structure of that knowledge. However, the unanalysed knowledge is the ability to know things without awareness of the structure of that knowledge. In this type of knowledge, the learner cannot operate on that knowledge by transforming it. The automatic factor represents the easiness of accessing the learner to different items of linguistic knowledge. (Bialystok; 1984, in Ellis, 1985: 238).

The variability position sees that formal instruction helps learning because it helps in developing both analicity and automaticity. This position takes into consideration learners' needs and goals when they use the language.

Conclusion

Teaching grammar is a difficult and controversial issue. It is witnessing a paramount necessity in second language acquisition because there is a constant search for the effective methods to improve the way grammar is taught and learned. This chapter has been devoted to the positions that support the role of grammar instruction and the role of form-focused instruction in particular. Form-focused instruction has made its roots in language acquisition because it has been proved that exposure to formal grammar instruction guarantees high levels of grammatical competence and teaching grammar rules assist learners in the learning process.

Chapter Two

Output-Based Instruction

	Page
Introduction	34
2.1 Definition of Output-Based Instruction	35
2.2 The Output Hypothesis	37
2.3 The Major Approaches /Methods	39
2.3.1 The Grammar Translation Method	40
2.3.2 The Direct Method	42
2.3.3 The Audio-Lingual Method	45
2.3.4 The Humanistic Approaches	46
2.3.4.1 The Silent Way	46
2.3.4.2 Total Physical Response	47
2.3.4.3 Community Language Learning	48
2.3.4.4 Suggestopedia	49
2.3.4.5 The Natural Approach	50
2.3.5 Communicative Language Teaching	51
2. 4 Deductive vs. Inductive Teaching	55

2.5 Focus on Form 57

Conclusion 59

Chapter Two

Output-Based Instruction

Introduction

Throughout history, language teaching has witnessed enormous diversity in the methodology of teaching. These changes have had their great effect on facilitating teaching and learning from one side and led to the appearances of multiple approaches from the other side. Hence, there have been many theories that have been provided for the sake of facilitating the teaching and learning processes. Each theory has its main principles that provoke an interest in studying grammar because the main purpose of the emergence of these theories was due to the need to meet and suit the learners' needs.

Undoubtedly, traditional instruction creates many problems because it places an emphasis on presenting language forms in isolation. In spite of this, traditional output-based instruction is still dominating the teaching system. In this chapter, output-based instruction will be explored and some light on the role of output will be spotted. It will also explore the most noticeable traditional approaches and methods of teaching by focusing on their characteristics and weaknesses. The chapter also seeks to introduce the new approach of teaching that emerges as a reaction to traditional grammar-based approaches and that stresses the importance of communication. However, due to the limitation of both focus on forms and focus on meaning, there has been a call for integrating both form-focused and meaning-focused instruction.

2.1 Definition of Output-Based Instruction

It is right to point that most of the traditional approaches to grammar instruction are output-oriented. Learners are provided with an explicit explanation about the target language, then learners engage in different output exercises and activities. The main focus of the traditional approaches lies in the grammatical competence where the typical language lesson includes three main stages known as the PPP: presentation, practice and production. Richards (2006: 8) presents the three main stages:

- Presentation: the teacher presents the new grammar structure for the students by means of conversation or short texts. The teacher provides an explanation of the new structure and checks the comprehension of the students.
- Practice: this stage involves the practice of the new structure through substitution exercises and drills.
- Production: the new structure is practised by the student in different contexts using their own information to develop fluency.

The traditional way of presenting grammar instruction has also been introduced by Paulston (1971) who introduces the main stages for holding the grammar lesson. She announces that grammar instruction should proceed from mechanical to meaningful to communicative practice. Paulston and Bruder (1976: 4) state that the “grammar lesson should consist of grammatical rules that explain the particularities of the structural pattern to be learned plus a series of drills from mechanical to communicative level in order to give the students optimum practice in language production”. Mechanical drills are those which are set without comprehension of words or sentences to produce a correct response. Paulston and Bruder (1976: 4) hold that mechanical drills are “drills where there is

complete control of the response and only one correct way of responding”. For instance, a typical mechanical drill is a substitution drill as the following example illustrates:

Teacher: -“I am a student”. He...”

Student: - He is a student.

Meaningful drills are activities that focus on an understanding of the vocabulary used in a sentence in order for the student to produce a correct response. Meaningful drills have only one correct answer that includes a given information. Paulston and Bruder (1976: 7) state that “the students cannot complete these drills without fully understanding structurally and semantically what is being said”. For instance, a student can be shown pictures and then pushed to answer question such as:

Teacher: -“Is this pen blue or red?”.

Student: - This pen is blue.”

Communicative drills draw students’ attention to meaning, but in comparison with meaningful drills, there is no single correct answer. Paulston (1971: 207) highlights “the main difference between a meaningful drill and a communicative drill is that in the latter the speaker adds new information about the real world”. Communicative drills need an exchange of new or unknown information. For instance, the teacher might ask an open-ended question that students answer freely.

Teacher: - What are you going to do this holiday?

Student: - I am going to travel to many places.

Output-based instruction emphasizes the manipulation of learners' output and provides explanation and output practice of a grammatical structure. Vanpatten (2000: 54) states that traditional grammar instruction is defined as "explanation plus output practice that move learners from mechanical to communicative drills". Output-based instruction offers more emphasis on production rather than comprehension. This type of instruction includes traditional methods used in teaching which exclude the use of real life communication such as the grammar translation method, the direct method, and the audiolingual method. Vanpatten (1993: 436) has largely criticized such methods of teaching due to their inadequacies and especially because they push learners "to produce when the developing system has not yet had the relevant intake data". Traditional instruction then stresses learners' output to cause changes in their developing system. It is interested in how L2 learners produce the target language. (See Figure 1)

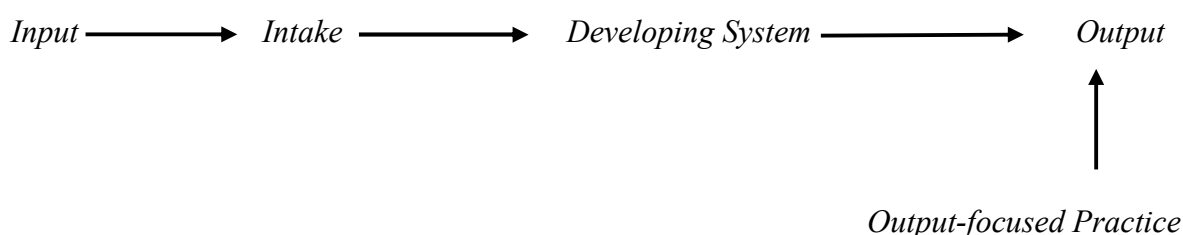


Figure 1: Traditional Instruction (Benati and Lee 2008: 25)

2.2 The Output Hypothesis

It has been announced by researchers that output plays an effective role in language acquisition. Vanpatten asserts that "output may play a number of important roles in language development" (2002: 762). Henceforth, particular studies have been carried out and focused on the role of output. Swain (1985: 249), through her output hypothesis declares that output pushes learners from semantic processing during comprehension to the syntactic processing indispensable for encoding meaning. The output hypothesis posits that

output pushes learners to make appropriate comprehension for acquisition. However, there is a debate among researchers on whether to give priority to input or output for facilitating language acquisition. Swain (1985, 1995) does not exclude the role of input, but sees that both output and input play a role in acquisition. She conceives that output is important when she observes that children suffer from providing a target-like language after years of immersion programs in Canada. Swain (1995) found that learners in spite of the fact that they were exposed to enough input, they were unable to produce language well. Swain (1985: 249) highlights that production may act as “the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning”. It is further announced that output contributes in pushing learners from comprehension to accurate production. Swain (1995: 128) maintains that “output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open ended non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production”.

Given the importance of output, it has certain functions in language learning. Swain (2005: 474-478) provides three main functions of output. The first function is known as noticing, this function among others, helps learners notice the gap between their linguistic resources and the target language system. Its place when learners attempt to produce the target language. Production helps learners in finding the gaps and overcoming their problems. According to Swain (*ibid.*: 474) production may help second language learners to recognize consciously some of their linguistic problems. The second function is called hypothesis-testing which permits learners to know how the target language functions after being aware of the gaps that exist when they produce the output. The learner makes hypothesis about the target language and tests his hypothesis through the product of the language by making the necessary modifications as it includes error correction. The

hypothesis-testing function helps the learner in his output. The third function is metalinguistic function, in this function, the learner reflects on the learned knowledge. Swain (1995: 126) states that this function enables the learners to become aware of their output and “control and internalize linguistic knowledge”. Therefore, when learners produce language, they reflect on their language use which helps them in language learning. According to Swain (2005: 478): “using language to reflect on language by others or the self mediates second language learning”.

2.3 The Major Approaches /Methods

It is very important to note that grammar did not receive the same importance throughout the history of teaching. It enjoyed a whole position in a particular method and is rejected definitely in another one. Perhaps, this fact led to uncover the real value of grammar as a subject and the extent to which we need it for both learning and teaching processes. This fact led to set several methods and approaches for the goal of facilitating language acquisition.

In the past, language teaching was depending on the explicit analysis of language. Language forms were taught in isolation like in the grammar translation method and the direct method. However, these ways of teaching did not manage to achieve the results and aims they were supposed to. No longer, the assumption that the traditional way of teaching grammar has an effect in promoting learners’ communicative competence. Basically, the interest of the traditional way of teaching did not give attention to meaning. Traditional instruction focuses on the production of the learners of particular language forms above the comprehension of the input. Lee and Vanpatten (2003: 133) state that traditional approaches to teaching grammar are problematic because they push students to produce

output immediately. Lee and Vanpatten (*ibid.*) believe that production does not develop fluency and accuracy.

Before tackling the characteristics and inadequacies of traditional grammar-based approaches, it would be suitable to define the term “traditional”. According to (Jin and Cortazzi 2011: 562), the term traditional is “moving a target”. It can be defined as a series of five possible definitions including:

- A Classical definition of “grammar translation” with: a deductive focus on grammatical paradigms, examples and explanations in L1.
- A wider definition of “grammar translation” with: lesson organization centred around grammatical explanations.”
- An Audiolingual approach with: an emphasis on structures, oral skills and mimicry memorization.
- A general term for the established mainstream approach: mixed approach, includes presentation, practice, production and communicative activities.
- Some diverse approaches generally known collectively as “humanistic” or “alternative”.

2.3.1 The Grammar Translation Method

The Grammar Translation Method is the oldest and the dominant method used in teaching which played a huge impact through the century. It was the basic of instruction and an indispensable method that led to successful learning where it was appreciated only through its rules. According to Howatt and Widdowson 2004: 152, the grammar translation method started taking place in Germany more specifically in Prussia at the end of the nineteenth century as a favoured methodology. As the name implies, teaching grammar

was associated with translation for the aim of facilitating language learning. It was assumed that learners learn better when they use translation at various stages. In this respect, there is a high probability in much learning when students compare parts of the mother tongue with the foreign language. Grammar was taught in a detailed manner through deductive way. Danesi (2003: 4) holds that grammar is taught in explicit, deductive ways. This method was used in order to help reading and appreciating the foreign language learning when it was first used in teaching classical languages: Latin and Greek. Reppy and Adames (2000: 86) hold that, the prior goal of this method is to help students read literature in English because they are required to learn the grammar rules and vocabulary of English in order to acquire skills in reading and listening. Hence, the overall characteristics of the GTM are summarized below as have been presented by Richards and Rodgers (2001: 6).

- Vocabulary is taught in isolated words.
- Grammatical rules are explained through the mother tongue.
- It neglects the development of linguistic competence of the learners.
- Communication is not taken into account.
- The stress is put on the writing and reading skills.
- Words are taught through memorization.
- The student's mother tongue is the medium of instruction.

Concerning the practice, grammar was practised through different kinds of exercises which include translating sentences from and into the mother tongue. Accuracy is given the major focus because the most exercises involve the completeness of sentences. Stern (1983: 455) notes that “the learner practises the language through an active problem solving situation”.

Using the mother tongue helps in understanding the difficult terms, and learning becomes better and quicker. In addition, it serves in memorization through associating foreign words with translated one. The process of teaching will be easily mastered when English grammar is compared with the grammar of the mother tongue. In spite of these advantages, this method still has great weaknesses. Learners spend more time in reading, translating and writing. So, less attention was given to important skills like listening and speaking, and perhaps these facts among others, which made the method unsatisfactory. Some important aspects of language are difficult to be translated like pronunciation. The students are not given the opportunity to participate or discuss. In addition to that, students are not going to think directly in English. Translating in the mother tongue does not allow students to read in English. This method did not provide the opportunity to use the FL in real communication. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 4) describe the GTM as “a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempts to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose”.

2.3.2 The Direct Method

The failure of the GTM in meeting the needs of the students led to an emergence of a new one called the Direct Method. This new method reacted against the traditional one by emphasizing on teaching grammar in the target language. It puts all the stress on the direct

engagement of students when learning the foreign language. It is based on the idea that learners acquire the rules of grammar in the same way children acquire the grammar of the mother tongue. In learning the mother tongue, the child does not depend on practice, but his learning comes through a natural process. So, the learner acquires his language directly through natural exposure. In the direct method, grammar is taught inductively. According to Thornbury (1999: 49):

The inductive route would seem, on the face of it, to be the way one's first language is acquired: simply through exposure to a massive amount of input the regularities and patterns of the language become evident.

According to Norland and Pruet-Said (2006: 5), this method goes back to 1880 with the work of Gouin, who brought insights in the language teaching and learning through his observation of children learning in natural settings. Later on, it was popularized in the United States by Charles Berlitz. Podgorski (2006: 4) states that the direct method was developed in the 19th century with another type of teaching called the natural method. Both methods have the same basis of idea, but they differ slightly. The natural method does not distinguish between the acquisition of the first and second language, whereas the direct method sees the second language as new language which is not taught by translation (*ibid.*).

The aim of the method is to enable students communicate and think directly in the target language as opposed to translating from the native language to the second language. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 23) points out that the principle of the method has been applied for many years by language teachers when the goal of instruction became learning how to use a foreign language to communicate. Basically, no translation is allowed and the meaning is

to be conveyed directly in the target language. Patel and Jain (2008: 80) summarize the most common characteristics as follows:

- There is no interference of the mother tongue.
- The sentence is the basic of teaching. The teacher relates the use of sentence in a particular context through performing particular activities.
- The Direct method is taught through actions and showing objects.
- Both comprehension and speech were taught.
- The focus is put on correct use of grammar and pronunciation.

The direct method has been largely criticized because of its weaknesses. It is no longer believed that the comparison between the acquisition of the first and the second language is right in all its terms. Furthermore, it is difficult to keep showing an object or performing an action in teaching, as it is difficult to be applied in overcrowded classes. The method does not help in ameliorating reading and writing ability. It needs various audio visual aids which are difficult to be provided in our schools. Richards and Rodgers (2007: 12-13) maintain that the method has several drawbacks because it required teachers who were native speakers or who had native-like fluency in the foreign language.

2.3.3 The Audio-Lingual Method

The fact that the direct method could not manage in presenting the appropriate goal, this pushed to adopt new method called the Audio-Lingual method. According to Harmer (2007: 22-23), the Audio-lingual method was also referred to as the “Michigan Method” because Charles Fries (1945) of the University of Michigan led the way in applying principles from structural linguistics in developing the method. The origin of the method comes from the army education in the 1960, and then it was enhanced by the arrival of the language Laboratory in 1960. So, the ALM is an outcome of experiments carried out in language teaching during the World War II.

The shift towards the audiolingual method was an essential challenge to the preceding methods which did not develop the speaking and the listening skills. The core of the audiolingual method is teaching structural patterns using repetitive drills. Language was presented to the learners through intensive oral drilling and much time is devoted to pronunciation. According to Thornbury (1999: 21), audiolingualism stems its basis from the behaviourist theory where language is seen as a form of behaviour learned through habit formation. Harmer (2007: 49) states that this method was based on stimulus-response-reinforcement. It emphasizes on the relationship between the grammatical patterns and the behaviourist theories of learning. These theories see that habit leads to much learning; a reward is given when performing the correct response to stimulus.

Drilling can be an effective and useful technique in teaching especially for beginners. Noland and Pruett (2006: 3) see that drilling helps the shy students to speak as it can help them to be fluent. Students through extensive drilling went through the same grammatical pattern for the benefit of acquiring good language habits. Yet, the audiolingual method lost its popularity because language learning goes far from the formation of habits. The method

did not render the grammatical rules in the same way like the grammar translation did. However, the emphasis was on learning grammatical structures and not real life communication. The students were far from using natural language and therefore, they lacked to be exposed to realistic language.

2.3.4 The Humanistic Approaches

Different approaches and methods appeared to influence language teaching known as alternative or humanistic approaches. Humanistic approaches differed in the way languages are learned, but they are all grammar-based. The focus in these methods lies on analysing language forms without much focus on language functions. These approaches pay a great attention to feelings of the person. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 94) argues that these methods are called designers nonmethods because “none of them, deserves the status of a method”. They are just considered as procedures, and are certainly important in particular circumstances.

2.3.4.1 The Silent Way

Many other methods took place after the grammar translation and the audio-lingual methods such as the silent way which aims at enabling the students to express their feelings and thoughts through using the target language. According to Rosenthal (2000: 69), the silent way is associated with Caleb Gattegno (1972), and its name is derived from the idea that students learn more of the target language, and the teacher says less. It is developed on the idea that learners learn independently of the teacher. In other words, the more students take their responsibility in learning, the better they will be.

Students engage in learning new materials through the use of Cuisenaire rods (small coloured rods of varying lengths), in addition to a series of wall charts. Students, then, work independently and choose what they want to learn (Baker and Prys Jones 1998: 682). However, the approach has not been used so much because students need more contribution from the teacher. Norland and Pruet-Said (2006: 14) talk about the strategy followed in this way of teaching.

- The teacher uses charts or cuisines rods to modify a new structure.
- Students reproduce what they have learnt.
- The questions that are addressed to the teacher are given between activities or sessions.
- The teacher keeps introducing a new structure in the same way.

2.3.4.2 Total Physical Response

The Total physical response TPR emerges because of the needs to direct students' behaviour by their teachers. It involves physical movements or actions, where students are going to indicate a word, phrase or a concept. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 73) note that "total physical response TPR is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action", it attempts to teach language through physical (motor activity) and concentrates on the psychological side of the student. Asher (1977: 43), who is the founder of the total physical response, states that when children learn their first language, they go through an extensive listening before speaking. The listening of the children is followed by physical responses like moving and looking.

In the TPR, the class uses the imperative mood even at more advanced levels because using commands were regarded as an easy way to lead to the movements of the learners where no verbal response was important. Asher (1977: 4) holds that “most of the grammatical structure of the target language, and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skilful use of imperative by the instructor”.

This method of teaching aims at reducing learners’ anxiety and creates a better atmosphere for learning. Asher (1977) believes that the atmosphere of classroom is usually the source of anxiety which necessitates a method that is less stressful to the learners. However, this method encourages a way of imitation and does not improve language use in real settings.

2.3.4.3 Community Language Learning

There was a place for a method called community language learning. This method entails that in learning the target language, the feelings and desires of the students should not be neglected by their teachers. It stresses on creating cooperation between students in order to form a sense of community in the classroom. Norland and Pruett-Said (2006: 12) declare that community language learning is propounded by the psychologist Charles Curran (1976) who believes that students often face obstacles in learning the target language, and this leads to make teachers act as counsellors to help students learn the language.

Since the approach is an affective one, it focuses on the emotions of the students and takes into account how to make them feel better within the classroom. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 92) mentions that teachers should be aware of the learners’ emotions to deal with

the situations of language learning. They should get rid of threatening environments in the classroom to create trust between learners, so that they will help each other.

Despite the fact that the method represents a real community, it is time consuming to apply the method. It also relies on induction and it excludes deduction. The method ignores communication as a vital factor in acquiring the language.

2.3.4.4 Suggestopedia

Another way of teaching which is called suggestopedia is based on the idea that when students learn the target language, they are mainly affected by the environmental, the social, and psychological factors. According to Norland and Pruett-Said (2006: 15), suggestopedia is devised by Georgi Lozanov 1970, the Bulgarian psychologist who believes that because of psychological factors, learners face difficulties in learning the language. This leads him to propose physical exercises, art, psychotherapy and yoga as well as playing music to help the mind in getting relaxed. All these factors would help in acquiring the language effectively and make students learn the language easily. Knibbeler (1989: 10) states that

In the suggestopedic classroom, the students sit in comfortable chairs and the table is decorated with real flowers. Music is played before and during lessons-classroom activities are interrupted by physical and mental relaxation exercises. Teachers and students evidently enjoy themselves.

2.3.4.5 The Natural Approach

The evolution of the natural approach as a method of foreign language teaching was in the United States to provide the needs of beginning and early intermediate adult learners (Krashen and Terrell 1982; Terrell *et al.* 1990 in Markee, 1997: 25). As opposed to the preceding methods, the natural approach is based on communication and natural use of language through comprehensible input. Richards and Rodgers (2007: 190) state that the natural approach “emphasises comprehensible and meaningful practice activities, rather than production of grammatically perfect utterances and sentences”. Hence, the natural approach stresses input rather than output. Krashen and Terrell (1985; in Wong, 2006: 20) declare that second language learners can also have advantage from a period of time when they listen to sounds, vocabulary and structures before they speak the language. This period is called the “silent period”, where the students are not required to speak. Norland and Pruett-Said (2006: 36) summarize the main principles of the natural approach as follows:

- Comprehension comes before production and students are not required to speak until they feel they are ready.
- Production takes place in stages; beginning with nonverbal responses and the mistakes that not hinder communication is not going to be corrected.
- The syllabus is carried out in communicative orientation, and not in grammatical orientation.

2.3.5 Communicative Language Teaching

It was recognized that an exclusive presentation and manipulation of the grammatical forms are no longer suitable for mastering the language. Traditional Grammar based-approaches did not meet the needs of the learners because they kept on analysing the structures of the language and neglect the role of communication. Grammar instruction was limited to teaching grammar as a set of rules and structures using the deductive way without giving much attention to real life communication. Nassaji and Fotos (2011: 5) declare that, in traditional grammar approaches, language is regarded as a deductive and linear presentation of the rules, where it is assumed that the learners would develop the knowledge they require for spontaneous language use through the presentation of grammar rules.

Shifting away from focusing on language forms to focusing on meaning and language use in a communicative setting is called the Communicative Approach. It emerges as a reaction to the weaknesses and the shortcomings of the preceding approaches. Richards (2002: 22) states that “the proponents of communicative language teaching established it through convincing critiques of the inadequacy of the linguistic and pedagogical theory underlying grammar-based approaches”. Hence, the traditional methods were replaced by the communicative approach that was born on the basis of treating the language as means of real communication and aims at achieving communicative competence. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 69) note that the aim of the communicative approach is to develop learners’ communicative competence and develop communication as the primary goal.

Moreover, the main interest of CLT lies in developing the four skills including reading, writing, speaking and listening, but it was basically established against mechanical

drills and providing an explicit focus on grammatical forms. This new type of pedagogy that seeks to help learners communicate effectively and efficiently appears mainly when it was observed that most of the students could not have the ability to use the target language communicatively even they know the grammar rules. This approach did not render any formal instruction, but it focused on the input because it was assumed that learners would acquire the forms and vocabulary naturally. The advocates of the communicative approach believe that learners achieve linguistic competence by natural acquisition through real communication when they are exposed to language use. Krashen and Terrell (1983: 58) state that “learners would arrive at intuitive “correctness” of their language when exposure to L2 without including explicit grammar instruction.” Nevertheless, communicative language teaching is accepted as an approach rather than a method. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 172) highlight that communicative language teaching should be regarded as an approach rather than a method because “it refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures”.

Harmer (2007) introduces two main guiding principles of communicative language teaching. The first principle entails that language is not only patterns of grammar with vocabulary items slotted in but includes language functions like: inviting, greeting, suggesting ...etc that obliges the student to learn how to perform them by a variety of language exponents. For instance, we can invite somebody by saying “do you fancy coming to the cinema”? or “what about coming to the cinema. The second principle of communicative language teaching holds that if students have exposure to languages and chance for language use, language learning will be more useful. So, its aim is to make students communicate real messages and not just grammatically controlled language

(Harmer *ibid.*). Richards and Rodgers (1986: 72) state that CLT comes to realize three specific theoretical principles that are stated as follows:

- The communicative principle: activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- The task principle: activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- The meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Communicative approaches shifted attention from traditional approaches that have been widely criticised on the grounds that they do not develop learners' communicative ability to functional approaches that were influenced by the work of sociolinguists such as Hymes (1972) who coined the term "communicative competence". Therefore, communicative competence is viewed as a central concept in communicative language teaching, which has been introduced by Hymes (1972), who believes that Chomsky's (1965) distinction between linguistic competence and performance was unsuitable. Chomsky (1965) makes a distinction between "linguistic competence", the linguistic knowledge of the idealized native speaker and "linguistic performance", the ability to use language adequately. Chomsky (1965: 3) states that:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions, such as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

Hymes (1972a: 13) points out that communicative competence is “the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language which the speaker-listener processes”. This definition assumes that communicative competence includes knowledge of the language and the ability to use the knowledge in context. Furthermore, Hymes (1972b: 277) declares that when children learn to communicate, they develop a language knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) and rules of appropriate use. Communicative competence has been also defined by other proponents of the communicative language teaching, such as Savignon (1991: 264) who defines communicative competence as “the ability to interact with other speakers to make meaning, as distinct from the ability to demonstrate grammatical competence on discrete point tests”. In this sense, we can understand that language teaching should help in the development of communicative competence through collaboration between people. Brown (2007: 219) argues that communicative competence is the “aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts”. So, linguists agree that communication requires more than linguistic competence, it also encompasses the communicative competence.

The communicative approach appeared mainly to meet the learners’ needs, to fulfil their demands and to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional approaches. However, it was criticized because of its weaknesses. Nassaji and Fotos (2004: 128) point that there is “.....a large body of research pointing to the inadequacies of teaching approaches where the focus is primarily on meaning-focused communication, and grammar is not addressed”. Furthermore, it is still ambiguous for many people to know what CLT is. Harmer (2003: 289) suggests that “the problem with communicative language teaching is that the term has always a multitude of different things to different people”. The inadequacies of the communicative approach that focuses exclusively on communication and meaning and

ignores the role of formal grammar led to an emergence of new approach called “focus on form”.

2.4 Deductive vs. Inductive Teaching

Since the birth of language teaching, language teachers have constantly attempted to use the appropriate way for teaching grammar. The manner of learning has been shifted from deductive methods, where the learners start from rules to arrive at knowledge of language and inductive methods where the learners induce rules from examples. Actually both inductive and deductive approaches were constantly used in grammar teaching.

Deductive learning is an approach which starts by introducing the grammatical rules for the students, and then the students apply those rules. In other words, the teacher in his instruction starts from the general to the specific for explaining the grammatical structure. Thronbury (1999: 29) states that a deductive approach starts with “the presentation of a rule and it is followed by examples in which the rule is applied”. This means that the teacher starts by an explanation of the grammar rules for the sake of learners’ comprehension and provides different activities to make learners engage in practising the grammatical structure. As Cross (1992: 27) notes: “the teacher’s role is to provide a language-rich environment in which the learners meet comprehensible language as they engage in activities of various kinds”.

The deductive method has its own advantages and disadvantages. This approach is mainly suitable for teaching beginners. An important advantage of this approach is that it saves time for teachers. More than that, Thronbury (1999: 30) claims that the deductive approach serves in respecting the intelligence and maturity of many students, especially those who are adult as well as it does not force teachers to anticipate and prepare language

structures in advance. It means that it helps teachers to deal with language points as they come. Actually, the deductive approach can be appropriate in particular cases. Larsen-Freeman (2001: 264) notes that in particular cases when students possess particular cognitive styles that are not yet suitable for language analysis, or when there is a particular linguistic rule which is difficult for the students to understand, it will be better to go first at presenting rules. Meanwhile, the deductive approach is still has its disadvantages. Since the deductive approach is teacher-centred approach, it does not prompt students' contribution in class. As it encourages students' passivity and inhibits their communication.

On the other hand, the inductive approach or what is called discovery learning starts with presenting examples where the students were required to induce the rules from those examples. Purpura (2004: 2) states that students are presented with examples of the target language and led to discover its underlying organizational principles in order to be able to formulate set of rules and prescriptions. In other words, the rule is not explained by the teacher; the learner is the one who is pushed to discover the rules of the target structure. Henceforth, in explaining the grammatical structure, the teacher moves from specific to general.

The inductive approach also has advantages and disadvantages. It will be appropriate for learners with basic knowledge and an acceptable level. Since learners are required to figure out the rules by themselves, they will be more active in class (Thronbury 1999: 54). Inductive approach makes students remember things and stimulate their interest through their involvement and contribution. The inductive approach develops learners' autonomy because it is learner-centred (*ibid.*). However, it still has its disadvantages. In finding out the rules, students may spend a lot of time and energy. Sometimes it is wrong to push

learners induce rules by themselves because some rules are difficult which may lead them to hypothesis wrong rules (*ibid.*).

2.5 Focus on Form

The debate arises between researchers who claim that learning takes place only through use such as Krashen (1982, 1985) and Prabhu (1987) and researchers who claim that learning occurs through formal instruction. However, recently some researchers see that there must be an exclusion of focus on language forms at the expense of meaning and vice versa, and they call for the necessity to make a balance between form and meaning. These researchers believe that it is better to integrate both form-focused and meaning-focused instruction through an approach called “focus on form”. Fotos and Ellis (1991: 605) mention that “providing learners with grammar problems they must solve interactively, integrates grammar instruction with opportunities for meaningful communication”. This new type of instruction is welcomed and praised by many researchers because it appears to highlight the inadequacies of purely communication and purely focus on formal instruction. Poole (2005: 47) states that many teachers and researchers “praised it as it were the miracle method they had always been searching for”.

Focus on form is a term introduced by Long (1991) which is distinguished from another type called focus on forms to relate both language forms and meaning. It draws the learners to make form-meaning connections. Long (1991: 46) states that focus on form “overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication”. According to him, focus on form is defined as a type of instruction where the priority is devoted to meaning and communication with a considerable attention to linguistic elements as they appear incidentally in lessons. However, Long and Robinson (1998: 23) note that focus on form

“consists of an occasional shifts of attention to linguistic code features-by the teacher and / or one or more students-triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production”.

According to Long’s definition, focus on form is a way of teaching that draws learners’ attention to form in meaningful context. Focus on form can be also defined as an instruction where the teacher makes a contribution to help students when confronting a certain difficulty or obstacle in doing certain tasks. Spada and Lightbown (2008: 185) note that long’s focus on form refers to an instruction in which the main stress still on communicative tasks but in which the teacher intervenes to aid students to use language accurately. Ellis *et al.* (2001: 411-412) expand the definition of focus on form as originally defined by Long (1991), and which according to them has the following characteristics:

- It occurs in meaning-centered discourse.
- It is observable, i.e. it occurs interactionally.
- It is incidental, i.e. it is not preplanned.
- It is transitory.
- It is extensive, i.e. it attends to several different forms in the context of a single lesson.

According to Ellis (2001: 14), focus on form is distinguished into planned focus on form and incidental focus on form. In planned focus on form, attention to form is predetermined. It involves the preselection of linguistic forms and involves the use of focused tasks which are specifically designed to elicit the use of specific linguistic forms in the context of meaning-centered classrooms. In incidental focus on form, attention to form is not predetermined (*ibid.*). That is to say, attention to form is not predetermined in a sense that attention is given to form as they appear spontaneously in the lesson. It involves

the use of unfocused communicative tasks designed to elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms (*ibid.*).

Conclusion

The search for the suitable method for teaching language has started in the past. Various traditional methods have influenced grammar acquisition before the rise of the communicative approach. However, their influence did not contribute successfully and completely in achieving the required aims. The traditional type of instruction which is presentation-practice-production receives great criticism and creates constant doubts about its efficiency in teaching. Nonetheless, it is still the appreciated and adopted type of instruction in teaching today.

Henceforth, learners were accustomed to output-based instruction that emerged to assist them in their language acquisition. The premise of output-based instruction is that learners acquire language and improve their level through language production because they are given the priority to produce output rather than comprehending input. Despite the fact that output-based instruction leads to make the role of grammar controversial and creates doubts on its necessity, it is undeniable to say that it appears to have some benefits as well.

Chapter Three

Input-Processing Instruction

	Page
Introduction	61
3.1 Input and Intake	61
3.1.1 The Role of Input	63
3.1.2 The Role of Attention and Noticing	66
3.2 Input-Processing Instruction	69
3.2.1 Models of Input-Based Instruction	71
3.2.2 Principles of Input-Processing	73
3.3 Processing Instruction	79
3.3.1 Components of Processing Instruction	81
3.3.2 Guidelines for Developing Structured-Input Activities	85
3.4 Input-Processing Instruction vs. Output-Based Instruction	88
Conclusion	90

Chapter Three

Input-Processing Instruction

Introduction

Through this chapter, input-processing and processing instruction are going to be investigated. The chapter starts with defining the terms ‘input’ and ‘intake’ and explores the role of input in the different approaches including the behaviorists, the interactionists and the cognitivists. The chapter mainly concentrates on input-processing, its principles and the main strategies used by the learners in processing input. It also highlights processing instruction that focuses on helping learners make better form-meaning connections and explores structured-input activities.

3.1 Input and Intake

Learners usually get input either from written form when they read a particular thing in a particular place or from a spoken form when they listen to language by means of interaction. In other words, input is all the information that learners receive either in formal or informal settings. Due to its importance, it has been studied and defined by different researchers. One of the simplest and clearest definitions is given by Vanpatten and Williams (2007: 9), who define input as “language the learner hears (or reads) and attends to for its meaning”. Another definition is provided by Mackey and Abbuhl (2005: 207), who also define input as the linguistic forms to which learners are exposed.

Input is the initial source of data for language acquisition. However, learners would not actually acquire and use the data they are exposed to because not all input is going to be processed by the learners. Intake is defined as “that part of input which has actually been processed by the learner and turned into knowledge of some kind” Sharwood Smith (1994: 8). This definition suggests that intake is what gets processed from the input since learners process and internalize only portion of input. Input and intake are two concepts which have been distinguished many years ago. Corder (1967: 165) makes a distinction between them in the following quote:

The simple fact for presenting a certain linguistic form to a learner in the classroom does not necessarily qualify it for the status of input, for the reason that input is “what goes in” not what is available for going in, and we may reasonably suppose that it is the learner who controls this input, or more properly his intake.

This report suggests that input is seen as “what is available for going in”; i.e., it is the available knowledge, whereas intake is “what goes in”; i.e., it is the part of that available knowledge that takes place. The learner is the one who is responsible for directing his input. Yet, Corder’s definition of intake has been extended by other researchers. Later on, Hatch (1983) goes further above this distinction. He notes that:

If we wish to keep both terms, we may say that input is what the learner hears and attempts to process. That part that learners process only partially is still input, though traces of it may remain and help in building the internal representation of the language. The part the learners actually successfully and completely processed is a subset called intake. That part, then, is the language that is already part of the internal representation (Hatch 1983: 81).

This quote entails that intake is not only what “goes in” and which is controlled by the learner, but it is “what successfully processed” by the learner. Input is what is partially processed and depends exclusively on learners’ internal processes and what they want to process.

3.1.1 The Role of Input

Input is an essential criterion for language acquisition to take place, and providing learners with an enough amount of input may help learners acquire the language. Gass (1997: 1) outlines that input is regarded as “the single most important concept of second language acquisition”. When the importance of input was recognized, many studies were carried out to investigate how input is processed. The role of input has been described by the behaviourist, the interactionist and the cognitive models. Although each one looks at the role of input differently, they may all agree on the fact that there must be at least some input to assist language acquisition.

The behaviourist model of learning has been introduced in the 1940s. This model carries that learning occurs through habit formation when associating a stimulus with response. The behaviourist approach considers language learning as mechanical process that is based on constant repetition. Lightbown and Spada (1999: 9) declare that language learning is regarded by traditional behaviourists as the outcome of imitation, practice, feedback on success and habit formation. This model sees that there is a direct relationship between input and output. Ellis (1994: 243) notes that the behaviourists do not obey the idea of “mind” and ignore the internal processes that occur inside the learner. Ellis (*ibid.*) postulates that input is composed of stimuli and feedback. With stimuli, the learner internalizes specific linguistic forms; whereas feedback takes place when there is positive

reinforcement or correction. Therefore, the behaviourist view believes that environment determines language learning.

In the cognitive model, (Chomsky 1965; in Freeman *et al.* 2004: 13) argues that humans are born with an innate “language acquisition device” LAD that makes them process language. His observation stems from children who use elements of language they are familiar with to say something they ignore. This fact leads him to suggest that children possess an innate capacity for language. Since the nativist models argue that humans are already born with an innate knowledge, they see that input plays only a minor role. Ellis (1994: 243) states that “input is seen only as trigger that sets off internal language processing”.

The interactionist model regards input that is modified in the process of interaction as input which can be easily acquired and enters in the learner’s internal mechanisms. Ellis (1994: 244) holds that input does have a determining function in language acquisition but only within the constraints imposed by the learner’s internal mechanisms. The interactionists put the great emphasis on the environment because they see that learners depend on their own capacities and the environment for acquiring the language.

However, the interactionists claim that comprehension of input depends on linguistic modifications. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 144) state that modification of the interactional structure of conversation is a better candidate for a necessary (not sufficient) condition for acquisition. The role it plays in negotiation for meaning helps to make input comprehensible while still containing unknown linguistic elements, and hence, a potential intake for acquisition.

The importance of input was also considered by the input hypothesis developed by Krashen (1982). The input hypothesis stresses the role of comprehensible input for

language to take place. Krashen (1985: 2) declares that “second languages are acquired by understanding messages or by receiving compressible input”. In this sense, the stress lies on comprehensibility as an essential means for input to take place. According to Krashen (1982: 33):

... In order to acquire, two conditions are necessary. The first is comprehensible (or even better, comprehended) input containing $i+1$, structures a bit beyond the acquirer’s current level, and second, a low or weak affective filter to allow the input “in”. This is equivalent to saying that comprehensible input and the strength of the filter are the true causes of second language acquisition.

This quote entails that there are two main factors for language to be acquired. The first is based on the comprehensibility of input which contains $i+1$. Krashen (1985: 2) notes “we move from i , our current level to $i+1$, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing $i+1$ ”. Understanding means that, the stress lies on meaning and not form. According to him, context and our linguistic knowledge help us to understand the language that contains structures we have not yet acquired (Krashen, 1982: 21).

The second factor for the acquisition of comprehensible input to be acquired is associated with the low affective filter that means the learners’ positive attitudes towards L2 learning like motivation. Stevick (1976; in Krashen, 1982: 30) defines filter as follows:

The affective filter acts to prevent input from being used for language acquisition. Acquirers with optimal attitudes are hypothesized to have “low” affective filters. Classrooms that encourage low filter are those that promote low anxiety among students, that keep students “off the defensive”.

The input hypothesis makes a distinction between ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’. ‘Acquisition’ is a process similar to the way children develop ability in their first language; it is a subconscious process where language learners are not always aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language. On the other hand, learning is a conscious and explicit learning. That is to say, learners are aware of the process. Hedge (2000: 10-11) states that the acquisition process is often referred to as a creative construction process. An example of a creative construction process involves the series of stages that children proceed through for the aim of acquiring rules.

3.1.2 The Role of Attention and Noticing

Attention is assigned a crucial role in learning because it is regarded as a helping factor that leads to better acquisition as it contributes to converting input into intake. Thus, focusing seriously our attention on target structures of the language helps learners to understand the input and acquire the language. As Schmidt (2001: 6) notes “attention appears necessary for understanding nearly every aspect of second and foreign language learning”. However, it is evident that learners cannot pay attention to every aspect of language because of the nature of the humans’ brain. This fact leads to suggest that attention should be selective. Regarding the notion of selective attention, Osborne and Wittrock (1983: 494) note that:

The pathway to the construction of meaning from any experience does not begin with that experience. Rather it begins with selective attention to that experience, where selective attention is influenced by a variety of aspects long term memory and cognitive processes.

Among the different models that treat attention is the model of Tomlin and Villa (1994). They provide three components of attention which consist of alertness (readiness to deal with incoming stimuli), orientation (the direction of attentional resources to a certain type of stimuli), and detection (the cognitive registration of stimuli). However, detection is considered as the most important component above the other components (*ibid.*: 191-92).

In the conversion of input to intake, it is also believed that a conscious noticing is an essential and sufficient factor stressed on in improving learners' awareness of the target language. Schmidt (2001) develops a hypothesis called 'the noticing hypothesis' which holds that noticing particular forms in the input lead to successful learning. Schmidt (2001: 3-4) announces that "SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in the target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be". This aspect that plays an important role in the learning process is defined by Bastone (1996: 273) as "the intake of grammar as a result of learners paying attention to the input where intake refers to input which becomes part of the learning process".

The role of noticing has been also investigated by Gass (1997) who presents different stages for converting input to output: Apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration and output. The first stage helps learners to know the gap that exists between the knowledge they have or what they produce with what others produce. Gass (1997: 4) defines apperceived input as "a bit of language that is noticed by the learner due to some particular recognizable features". The learners recognize a particular form as apperceived

input by some factors including frequency and saliency in the input, prior knowledge and the affective side of the learner (motivation, fatigue...).

At the second stage, Gass refers to the fact of making a separation between comprehended input and comprehensible input. The former is restricted to the control of the learner because he is the one who takes the responsibility for comprehending input. Gass (1997: 5) points out that “the focus is on the hearer (the learner) and the extent to which he or she understands”. She further illustrates that only comprehended input converts to intake, however not all comprehended input becomes intake. The learner can be interested in processing the input only for an immediate aim, which hinders input from further processing and intake.

The third stage of intake concerns internalizing and processing that comprehended information. Gass (1997) mentions that this process of intake permits learners to draw generalizations about input based on existing linguistic rules, where fossilization may take place because of incorrect psycholinguistic process.

The fourth stage which is integration may take place when the input can be understood and processed by the learner. The input comes part of grammar acquisition, when the learners’ hypothesis about a certain form is confirmed or rejected. Gass and Selinker (1994) note that, if learners’ hypothesis is confirmed, the input comes as part of the learners’ language system. If rejected, the learners’ hypothesis must be modified.

The final stage which is output is assigned a crucial role in second language acquisition because it permits for testing out the new acquired information. According to Gass and Selinker (2001: 410) “the output component represents more than the product of language knowledge; it is an active part of the entire learning process”.

3.2 Input-Processing Instruction

There was a shift in research from whether grammar instruction makes a difference as stated by Long (1983) to how grammar should be taught and what types of grammar instruction are more effective than others. Norris and Ortega (2000: 418) say, “relatively well-defined research agenda appears to have emerged in L2 instruction research since Long (1983) concludes that instruction makes a difference in L2 acquisition, when compared with naturalistic exposure”. In the field of explicit grammar instruction, the work of Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993a) gave an interest to a new type of explicit instruction.

One of the multiple processes that has its significant role in acquiring a language and which helps learners make the initial connection between a grammatical form and meaning is called ‘input-processing’. It is a model developed by Vanpatten (1996) which is based on how learners process input that stemmed its basics from Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis. Since researchers such as Vanpatten (1996) and Benati (2001) are interested in finding out how input is processed, they believe that input really has an impact on language development than output. They stress the importance of making learners fully understand the amount of input given to them in order to assist learners in comprehending and processing the input accurately.

Lee and Vanpatten (1995: 96) define input-processing as the “process of making form-meaning connections from linguistic data in the input for the purpose of constructing a linguistic system”. Input-processing is also defined by Sanz and Vanpatten (1998: 264) as “a research domain about how learners make form-meaning connections as well as parse incoming sentences in the L2”. From these two definitions, we can say that input-processing is concerned with how learners process linguistic data they hear or read either how they get form from input or how they assign grammatical roles to nouns by comprehension.

The main interest of input-processing instruction is how input converts to intake. Input-processing seeks to help learners derive intake from input without taking into account the language being learned and without paying attention to the context. In other words, input-processing is concerned with making sense of the language we hear and read and how we get the intake from that input. According to Vanpatten (2002: 775), input-processing is “concerned with how learners derive intake from input regardless of the language being learned and regardless of the context (i.e. instructed, noninstructed)”. The following figure which is illustrated by Vanpatten (1993: 436) shows the conversion of input to intake.



I=Input-Processing

II=Accommodation and Restructuring

III=Monitoring, Access, Retrieval

Figure 2: Vanpatten (1993: 436) Input-Processing Model

This figure represents the conversion of input to intake (stage1) which is called input-processing. The second stage as illustrated in the figure is called accommodation and restructuring. The two concepts contribute in the incorporation of intake into the developing system (*ibid.*: 436). The last stage involves the use of the developing system to make output.

Indeed, any word carries a certain meaning, but at the same time, it has a particular form. This latter affects meaning, so learners through input-processing should know how to make form-meaning mappings correctly. Furthermore, Input-processing seeks to change

and affect strategies used by learners when they make a link between a grammatical form and its meaning, and it aims at helping learners make better relations between form-meaning to improve comprehension when they are exposed to a particular amount of input. Vanpatten (2002: 757) announces that input-processing “attempts to explain how learners get form from input and how they parse sentences during the act of comprehension while their primary attention is on meaning”.

In general, input-processing is concerned with two main issues: the formation of form-meaning connections and parsing sentences. Vanpatten (2004b: 30) notes that when learners go through initial form-meaning connections, these connections can be whole, partial, correct or incorrect. On the other hand, parsing “refers to how learners assign syntactic categories to words they comprehend and to what kind of syntactic representation learners build during comprehension” (*ibid.*).

3.2.1 Models of Input-Based Instruction

When we know that attention and noticing play a role in converting input to intake, there must be a necessity for helping learners draw their attention towards particular forms of the language. Different approaches have been proposed for this purpose such as input enhancement. It is the process whereby input becomes better noticed and enhanced. Input enhancement has been defined by Sharwood Smith (1991: 119) as “the process by which language input becomes salient to the learner”. It involves the use of different techniques such as bolding, underlining and colour coding (*ibid.*).

One distinction that is made by Sharwood Smith (1993: 177) is between negative and positive enhancement. Positive input enhancement comes through bolding or highlighting what is correct, whereas negative input enhancement involves highlighting what is not correct from the language. Sharwood Smith (*ibid.*) notes that “positive input would supply

and make more salient certain correct forms in the input. Negative input enhancement would flag given forms as incorrect, that signalling to the learner they have violated the target norms”.

One type of input enhancement that contributes to foster acquisition is called ‘input flood’. This type provides learners with rich examples of the target language. Input flood can be provided either through written or oral form. However, it is argued that input flood may have no concrete effect for developing language acquisition because its role is limited only for helping learners notice certain target forms. Wong (2005: 37) provides certain guidelines for developing input flood activities “grammatical tasks using input flood should either be used in written or oral input; the input learners receive must be modified so that it contains many instances of the same form / structure; input flood must be meaningful and learners must be doing something with input”.

Another technique of input enhancement that enhances noticing of the target language is textual enhancement. Textual input enhancement aims at drawing learners’ attention to certain items of the target language in the written or oral input through some techniques such as highlighting, underlining or using italics. Textual enhancement is said to be implicit instruction because it provides learners with the target forms in an implicit way. Through this technique, the teacher should focus on providing the learner with the efficient way for making learners focus their attention on the content of the text when they are exposed to a written input. Wong (2005: 48) states that, in order to develop textual input enhancement, we have to take into account particular guidelines:

- When textual enhancement is developed, it should be carried out using written input.
- Visual enhancement of the target form comes through different forms either bolding, underlining, or italicizing (*ibid.*).

3.2.2 Principles of Input-Processing

Vanpatten (2004a), talks about the principles of processing instruction and their corollaries which provide an explanation of why learners filter the input. Based on Vanpatten's theory, there are two major principles of input-processing; each principle consists of further (sub.) principles. These two prominent principles include the primacy of meaning principle and the first Noun principle. The first principle entails that the most concern of L2 learners when engaging in a communicative setting is meaning. The second principle holds that the priority is assigned to the first noun encountered in the sentence. Learners are influenced by the order of words that occur in a sentence which plays a role in assigning relations among words. The first main principle of input-processing includes:

1. *The Primacy of Meaning Principle: Learners process input for meaning before they process it for form (Vanpatten, 2004a: 7).*

As it is clearly stated in this principle, the priority is given to meaning upon form when learners process input. Vanpatten and Williams (2007: 7) state that “learners are driven to look for the message or communicative intent in the input”. So, the whole aim of the learner when he is exposed to an L2 input is to have an access to the message being communicated. Vanpatten (1996: 17) highlights that learners are required to know “what is this person say to me?” before “how that message is encoded”. This principle is divided into other sub-principles. The first sub principle involves:

1.a *The Primacy of Content Words Principle: learners process content words in the input before anything else (Vanpatten, ibid.: 8).*

Vanpatten (2004a: 8) believes that “content words” play the major role in assigning meaning over the “function words”. He supports his argument based on different works

including the work of Klein (1986) and Mangubhai (1991) who illustrate that when learners of early stage asked to repeat utterances; they repeat only content words. Meanwhile, only the advanced level learners had the ability to repeat utterances correctly with content words plus functors. Vanpatten (*ibid.*) summarizes this sub-principle by noting that there are “big words” that help in getting meaning and “little words” that can be omitted or partially processed. Yet, this principle creates another problem because languages often have a great deal of redundancy.

1.b The Lexical Preference Principle: Learners will tend to rely on lexical items as opposed to grammatical form to get meaning when both encode the same semantic information (Vanpatten, 2004a: 9).

Sometimes the sentence carries more than one semantic notion. One example includes the third person singular marking. For instance, the third person singular referent in the example “he plays” is marked twice; the first time by the (pron.) and the second time by the verb form. In this case, learners tend only to depend on lexical item for that semantic information and not the form (*ibid.*).

1.c The Preference for Nonredundancy Principle: learners are more likely to process nonredundant meaningful grammatical form before they process redundant meaningful forms (Vanpatten, 2004: 11).

1.d The Meaning before Nonmeaning Principle: Learners are more likely to process meaningful grammatical forms before nonmeaningful forms irrespective of redundancy (ibid.).

As noted earlier, some forms can be redundant, but they may have no semantic value. Furthermore, not all forms are equal in relation to the meaning they carry. In other words, some forms express meanings while others do not. According to the preference for nonredundancy principle, the process of a particular form is based on its communicative value. Vanpatten (1996: 24) declares that “communicative value refers to the relative contribution a form makes to the referential meaning of an utterance and is based on the presence or absence of two features: inherent semantic value and redundancy within the sentence/utterance”.

Vanpatten (2007: 119) shows how learners tend to process the nonredundant grammatical form before redundant forms through giving an example of the progressive marker “ing”. The sentence, “the cat is sleeping” is considered to possess inherent semantic value because it encodes progressive aspect which is not redundant. Lee and Benati (2007: 26) provide another example concerning the gender markings on adjectives. They consider the example of “mio Fratello basso” That means “my short brother” is often redundant and non-meaningful. Gender markings on adjectives are redundant because the gender markings on the word “basso” is the third masculine marker, and this fact creates problems for second language learners during processing the input.

1.e The Availability of Resources Principle: for learners to process either redundant meaningful grammatical forms or nonmeaningful forms, the processing of overall sentential meaning must not drain available processing resources (ibid.).

This principle holds that learners can process redundant meaningful forms or nonmeaningful forms. However, Vanpatten observes that learners would lack comprehension during such processing. Vanpatten (2007: 116) announces that:

Comprehension for learners is initially quite effortful in terms of cognitive processing and working memory. This has consequences for what the input-processing mechanisms will pay attention to. At the same time, learners are limited capacity processors and cannot process and store the same amount of information as native speakers can during moment-by-moment processing.

This quote entails that gaining comprehensibility is a difficult task to be achieved because of cognitive processing and working memory. However, the principle suggests that learners can process the input the “overall sentential meaning”.

1.f The Sentence Location Principle: learners tend to process items in sentence-initial position before those in final position and those in medial position (ibid.: 14).

This principle stresses the idea that learners start mostly with processing items that occur in initial position than those which occur in final position. Vanpatten (2004a: 13) states that “elements that appear in certain positions of an utterance are more salient to learners than others, namely, sentence initial position is more salient than sentence final position and that in turn is more salient than sentence final position and that in turn is more salient than sentence internal or medial position”. Partial evidence has been provided to support this principle, which is based on Barcroft and Vanpatten (1997), and Rosa and O’Neill (1998). Learners favour processing the first items they confront in the sentence, and they turn their attention to the final position of a sentence through investigating the location of target elements in sentences. They required learners to repeat sentences they heard and then examined how successful the learners repeated the targeted items in each

position. They found that learners repeated successfully items in initial position, than items in the middle position and the final position.

The first principle and its sub-principles reveal that learners process input for meaning where learners in achieving meaning depend on content words more than grammatical forms to appreciate meaning. More than that, they rely on lexical items when both lexical items and grammatical forms are included in the same sentence. The final step that helps learners get the meaning is depending on the initial element of the sentence more than the elements that appear in the middle or final position.

2. The First Noun Principle: learners tend to assign subject or agent status to the first (pron.) noun they encounter in the sentence (ibid.: 15).

As it is indicated in the introduction, input-processing theory consists of two major principles. The first principle concerns “meaning”. The second principle concerns “form” because some languages have some forms which are different from others. The English language is restricted to "SVO" order; however, others like Spanish permits for either "SVO", "SOV" or "OVS". These shifts in the word order create problems for learners when they start processing the input. According to this principle, learners usually misinterpret the role of the first noun they encounter. This principle holds that learners treat the first noun or the pronoun they face in the sentence as the subject or agent. Benati (2009: 172) gives an example of misinterpreting the sentence: “Love Maria” as “He sees Mary” while the correct one is “Mary sees him”.

From such an example, we understand that learners misuse the semantic role of the agent about the first noun they encounter. In this case, initial position creates problems for interpreting the right use of the “object” when it is inserted at the beginning.

2.1. The Lexical Semantic principle: *Learners may rely on lexical semantics, where possible, instead of on word order to interpret sentences (ibid.: 17).*

In addition to the fact that learners apply the first noun strategy, they depend on lexical semantics. Learners are aware of some issues that help them assign semantic roles. For instance, when they face an inanimate noun, they assume that it cannot perform the action. For instance, the word “table” is inanimate and automatically it cannot perform the action. This fact may help learners interpret the meaning of the sentence correctly. LoCoco (1987: 124) provide the following example:

La Cervezale trae el muchcho a la muchacha. / Das bier bringt der junge dem Määdchen.

- The beer to her brings the boy to the girl.
- The boy brings the beer to the girl.

2.2. The Event Probabilities principle: *Learners may rely on event probabilities, where possible, instead of word order to interpret sentences (ibid.).*

This principle carries that the back ground knowledge of the world plays a crucial role in interpreting sentences. This takes place when we have two nouns which both of them can perform the action. In the following example “Le professeur fait étudier le verb être à l’élève” the professor makes the student study the verb “être” (Vanpatten and Wong; 2004: 101). Event probabilities help to interpret that students study the verbs “être” and not the professor. This principle in the view of (Vanpatten, 2007: 123) “is possible (though not

necessary) that the probability of real life scenarios might override the first Noun principle”.

2.3. The Contextual Constraint Principle: Learners may rely less on the first noun principle if preceding context constrains the possible interpretations of a clause or a sentence (ibid.).

The contextual constraint principle holds that learners may less depend on the Noun principle if they are given internal contextual cues. Thanks to this principle, learners may engage in parsing sentences in the right way. Vanpatten and Houston (1998) show the advantage of the context on sentence interpretation. They gave the following example concerning the role of the context.

- Ricardo está enojado porque lo insulto Susana en la reunion.
- Ricardo is angry because him insulted Susana in the meeting.

The example means that “Ricardo” is the person who is insulted by Susana because he is angry. This context is referred to as an internal context as opposed to external context. (Benati and Lee 2008: 20).

3.3 Processing Instruction

The fact that language acquisition cannot take place without the conversion of input to intake leads researchers to find out appropriate methods to help language acquisition. Vanpatten’s input-processing model (1996) has inspired second language acquisition through a new type of explicit grammar instruction called processing instruction. Processing instruction is a psycholinguistic approach which is an input-based that focuses on the learners’ processing strategies and seeks to show learners the best way for following

efficient strategies and get rid of problems they may confront during the processing of the input. Processing instruction appears as a reaction to traditional instruction to make learners engage in processing input and does not push learners towards production. Vanpatten (2005: 272) defines processing instruction as “a type of explicit instruction or focus on form derived from the insights of input-processing”. Since this approach is consistent with the principles of input-processing, it is interested in helping learners process the input and improving learners’ developing system as opposed to output grammar instruction.

Because of learners’ psychological factors and their limited capacities, they cannot process and memorize everything. Therefore, processing instruction aims to solve the problems of the learners since they cannot process all what they receive. The goal of processing instruction is to alter how learners process input and lead for better form-meaning connections. Vanpatten (1996: 60) notes that the purpose of processing instruction is to change the processing strategies used by the learners for the sake of comprehension and guide them to use better form-meaning connections more than if they left to their own devices. Vanpatten (1993: 438) states that the aim of processing instruction is also to “direct learners’ attention to relevant features of grammar in the input and to encourage form-meaning mappings that in turn result in better intake”. In this case, the essential criterion for input to become intake is to focus learners’ attention on particular features of grammar. Lee and Benati (2009: 37) provide the main characteristics of processing instruction:

it is based on the input-processing model; it is a psycholinguistics motivated approach; it is intended to make learners make better form meaning connections in the input learners receive; it is a type of instruction that keeps meaning in focus; it is intended to bring learner's attention to incorporate processing strategies; it is input-based as opposed to output-based; it is "focus on form" as opposed to "focus on forms"; it is communicative as opposed to traditional; it is a three –component approach to grammar instruction.

One obvious feature of processing instruction is based on the input-processing model. It is the most noticeable feature of this approach that takes into consideration the multiple psycholinguistics process applied by the learners while they are processing the input. Processing instruction constantly gives priority to make learners focus on meaning as opposed to traditional approach to grammar instruction. Processing instruction is an approach to explicit grammar instruction that focuses on form. Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998) state that focus on form helps learners in their acquisition. This approach is also characterized by the fact that it is made up of three components.

3.3.1 Components of Processing Instruction

Vanpatten (1996: 60) outlines that processing instruction has three main components: The explanation of the relationship between a given form and the meaning it can convey, information about processing strategies and structured input activities. The explanation of the relationship between a given form and the meaning implies that learners should be given the amount of information needed for getting the correct relationship between a particular form and its meaning. Vanpatten (*ibid.*) considers that this component can be similar to the traditional approaches for grammar instruction in presenting the information

for the learners. We provide an example about explicit information in table (1). This example is used to clarify the role of explicit information for Italian adjective agreement.

You have probably noticed descriptive adjectives have different gender; Italian adjectives must agree in number and gender to the noun they modify.	
Masculin=o	Feminine=a
Bello	Blla
Un ragazzo bello	una ragazza bella
Clinton è bello	claudia schiffer è bella
You must pay attention to the adjective ending in order to understand who and what we are referring to. In addition to that, you need to understand the meaning of the sentence containing the adjective.	

Table 1: Explicit Information (Benati and Lee, 2010: 34)

In information about processing strategies, learners are provided with information about the input-processing strategies that hinder learners from processing the language correctly. Learners should know why they tend to use wrong and inappropriate directions for processing the target structures. So, the role of processing instruction lies in altering learners' wrong strategies towards effective and efficient ones. This component as stated by Vanpatten (1996: 60) is restricted to processing instruction where learners are supposed to abandon their inefficient strategies. The example of explicit information and information about the processing problem will be illustrated through table (2). One principle of input-processing instruction entails that learners tend to process the lexical markers and temporal adverbs upon the verbal morphology. The following example clarifies this component.

Explicit information

The past simple tense is one of the tenses most used to talk about events in the past. It does refer to finished actions and events. Very often the English past simple tenses ends in-ed :

I invited John for lunch.

I played tennis with Paula.

When you talk about a finished time in the past, the English past simple tense is often accompanied by a temporal adverb. Yesterday I smoked 20 cigarettes.

Information about the processing problem

Do not rely on the temporal adverb to understand when the action takes place. As sometimes you can hear a sentence without the temporal adverb.

You must pay attention to the tense ending to understand when the action takes place.

In the case of describing past events pay attention to the ending of the verb: ed

Table 2: Explicit Information and Information about the Processing Problem (Benati and Lee 2010: 35)

In structured-input activities, students are required to pay attention to the form of the language and process its meaning. These activities do not push learners to produce the language structures at any time. Lee and Vanpatten (2003: 160) present types of structured-input activities that do not force learners to produce the activity while they engage in using the target language. These types involve binary options, ordering, ranking, selecting alternatives, matching surveys, and supplying information. This component is a vital and an integral part of processing instruction because it guides learners in making form-meaning mappings.

This component also aims to change learners' ways in adapting the incorrect strategies and follow the more suitable ones. Vanpatten (1996: 60) notes that instruction that is based on "structured-input activities in which learners process form from the input in controlled situation so that better form-meaning connections might happen compared with what might happen in less controlled situations". The development of structured-input activities is basically based on illustrating the problem that is confronted while processing

the target language. Wong (2004: 37) states that “for an activity to be an SI activity, that activity must somehow push learners to circumvent an efficient processing strategy”.

The role of structured-input processing permits learners to go through further processing of a particular form or structure after identifying the problem. As mentioned earlier, the Spanish language word order creates the problem of the first noun principle. Input activities then are designed for the purpose of offering exercises concerning the sentence alternate. Vanpatten (1996: 63) outlines that there are two types of structured activities which include referential and affective activities. The first type is used to check whether the form-meaning connections have been made in an appropriate way. In this kind of activity, there is right or wrong answers. According to Leow (2007: 28), learners through this type of activities are going to rely on form in order to get meaning, where they are going to have an implicit feedback about whether their response is correct. The following example concerning this type is adapted from (Vanpatten 2009: 57). This activity aims to make learners process the tense markers correctly. Learners are required to match each sentence with an appropriate adverb.

Listen to each sentence and then select the word or phrase that goes with the sentence.

(1) [Learners hear: john dropped the plate]

a- Right now **b-** Last night **c-** In two days

(2) [learners hear: Mary will eat in the cafeteria]

a- Right now **b-** Last night **c-** Tomorrow

The second type of structured-input activities is called the affective structured-input activities. This type of activity makes learners express their opinions and attitudes. For instance, they express agreement or disagreement about a particular matter. The following

example is used to show this kind of structured-input activities. This example is taken from (Nassaji and Fotos 2011: 32). The exercise aims at leading learners process the present and the past participle adjectives.

Read the following sentences and decide whether you agree with the statement:

	Agree	Disagree
1. The book was boring.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am bored when someone tells a joke.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. People who gossip a lot are very irritating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I get irritated with small talk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is interesting to talk about yourself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The book was interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 3: Affective Structured-Input Activities (Nassaji and Fotos 2011: 32)

3.3.2 Guidelines for Developing Structured-Input Activities

Structured-input activities are designed for the aim of helping learners comprehend the input without any direct intention for producing the target language. Lee and Vanpatten (2003: 154) provide certain guidelines for developing structured-input activities. They state them as follows:

- Present one thing at a time.
- Keep meaning in focus.
- Move from sentences to connected discourse.
- Use both oral and written input.
- Have the learner do something with the input.
- Keep the learner's processing strategies in mind.

As everybody knows, learners cannot process a huge amount of information because of their limited capacity for doing so. So, it will be greatly wrong, if we overload their heads with enormous information. When providing learners with a huge number of information during one lesson, we would expect that learners would skip processing particular amount of information or process some other information but in a wrong way. So, it is better to divide the material that is going to be presented to the learner in smaller pieces.

The second guideline stresses the necessity of making the learners reach the meaning of a particular message. For instance, learners cannot fill in a certain activity if they do not attend to the content and the meaning of the utterances used in that activity. Learners should always keep meaning in focus because the aim of structured-input activities is to rely on the form to extract and get the real meaning of the target language. Vanpatten (1996: 68) states that “if meaning is absent or if learners do not have to pay attention to meaning to complete the activity, then there is not enhancement of input-processing”.

The third guideline holds the preference for starting with short sentences before moving to connected discourse. The first reason is associated with the abilities of the learners for the sake of facilitating the process of intake. This guideline is mostly useful for beginners who start learning at their first stages. Generally, simple and short sentences are easily understood before long and complex sentences. So, the ideal structured-input activities are those that give priority to individual sentences before moving to connected discourse.

Regarding the differences between learners, it is better to provide them with both oral and written input. Some students benefit from oral input while others do better through

written input. Farley (2005: 15) says “hearing the forms allows only for sound meaning connections, whereas written form-meaning connections are made via reading”.

In order for effective structured-input activities to happen, learners must do something with the input. It is not enough to expose learners to either oral or written input, but they should respond and do something with that input. They can engage in different tasks to ensure that they attended to the input presented to them. Vanpatten (1996: 68) states through examples that learners can show agreement or disagreement, say "yes" or "no", complete a survey or select alternatives (a, b, c, d).

Structured-input activities are mainly concerned with eliminating the wrong processing strategies used by the learner. Before designing any activity, the teacher should be aware of the probable problems that learners may face. Structured-input activities should give the priority to replace and get learners change the inappropriate strategies with more optimal ones. Wong (2004: 42) notes if learners depend on lexical items instead of lexical morphemes to interpret tense, then we have to develop activities to make learners depend on grammatical morphemes.

Cadierno (1995: 184) provides a summary of both output-based instruction or what he referred to as traditional instruction and input-processing instruction in table (4).

Traditional Instruction	Processing Instruction
- Explanation and Practice	Explanation and Practice
- Practice in Output	Practice in Processing Output
- Paradigmatic	Non-Paradigmatic
- Some Focus on Meaning	Meaning always in Focus

Table 4: Cadierno’s Summary of Traditional versus Processing Instruction (1995)

3.4 Input-Processing Instruction vs. Output-Based Instruction

The effect of processing instruction was compared with traditional output-based instruction by Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993a, 1993b). These studies compare the effectiveness of both types of instruction on teaching Spanish word order rules and the clitic direct object pronouns to second-year university L2 learners to find out whether processing instruction improves learners' acquisition of language. The traditional output-based instruction is composed of these stages: presentation and practice where students firstly are provided with "explanation concerning the form and position of direct object pronouns within the sentence....and a paradigmatic chart that includes all persons and an explanation of what objects and object pronouns are...as well as a description with examples of correct placement of object pronouns within a sentence" (Vanpatten and Cadierno 1993a: 230). The traditional output-based instruction involves "moving the subjects from mechanical form-oriented practice (oral and written transformation and substitution drills) to meaningful practice (oral and written questions, simple sentences formation), and finally to more open ended communicative practice (oral and written question and answer, conversation)" (*ibid.*).

However, input-processing instruction starts with a presentation stage that explains, illustrates and contrasts the grammatical concepts of the subject and object of a verb with subject and object pronouns. The explanation was directed towards helping learners understand the position of object pronouns in Spanish (*ibid.*: 231). Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993) observe that Spanish learners' face difficulty in processing Spanish structures including (word order rules and direct object pronouns) because Spanish possess a flexible word order in comparison to English. Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993b: 47) highlight that the position of Spanish direct objects create misinterpretation for learners who assign agentive status to the first noun in a sentence.

In order to investigate the effects of processing instruction, learners were divided into three treatment groups. The control group received no instruction on object pronouns; the traditional instruction group, and the input-processing group received processing instruction. According to Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993a, 1993b), the results illustrate a significant gain on the sentence interpretation task, whereas there is a variation in the results for the production task. In Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993a), both the traditional groups and the processing group showed significant improvement on sentence production tasks despite the fact that, the processing instruction group was never pushed to produce the target structures during instruction. In Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993b), there were no significant difference between processing instruction group and traditional instruction group. However, the traditional instruction group was significantly better than the control group for production.

Several other studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of processing instruction. Cadierno (1995) carries out a research in order to examine the effectiveness of processing instruction on the acquisition of the Spanish past tense. Cadierno's (1995) study stemmed its basics from the principle that says when a lexical item and a grammatical form encode the same semantic information; the learner will process the lexical item over the grammatical form. Cadierno (1995) deleted all adverbs of time from her structured-input activities to push the learners to process verb ending to indicate tense. There were three treatment groups: a control group that received no instruction, a traditional instruction group that received traditional instruction (grammar explanation and output-based practice), and a processing instruction group that received processing instruction (grammar explanation and input-based practice). The results of the study revealed that learners who were taught under processing instruction showed better

results in comprehension and production, whereas learners who were taught under traditional instruction showed positive results only in production (*ibid.*).

Another study is presented by Benati (2001) who compared meaningful output instruction and processing instruction on the acquisition of the Italian future tense. Input-processing instruction involves grammar explanation and comprehension practice, whereas the output-based practice involves explanation and written and oral production. Three groups were under study: the processing group, the traditional instruction group and the control group. The results indicated that the processing instruction group outperformed both the output and the control groups in the interpretation tasks; for the production tasks there was no statistical difference between the three groups.

Conclusion

Due to the problems and limitations associated with output-based instruction, different approaches to grammar instruction have appeared and made the role of grammar valuable and indispensable such as input-processing instruction, input flooding, and consciousness raising tasks. During the past few years, much research has been conducted to look for the remedial method such as input-processing instruction and to explore the significant influence of this method on language acquisition and grammar teaching. Therefore, a great deal of attention has been directed on how input is acquired and processed by students.

The chapter presented a detailed description of the theoretical model of input-processing instruction derived from Vanpattens' theory. Input-processing instruction provides insights in learning and teaching grammar that should be taught as process rather than a product. The chapter also provided a theoretical background about the practical

method which is processing instruction. Processing instruction helps students by determining their needs through approaching the strategies which they follow in their learning that positively will intervene in developing appropriate future instructional materials.

Chapter Four

The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Grammatical

Accuracy in the Use of English Past Tenses

	Page
Introduction	93
4.1 Research Methodology	94
4.2 Population and Sampling	95
4.3 The Materials	95
4.4 Treatment	98
4.4.1 The t-test for the Pre-test and the Post-test	100
4.4.2 Item Analysis of Grammatical Accuracy	103
4.4.2.1 The Pre-test	103
4.4.2.2 The Post-test	131
4.5 Overall Analysis	154
Conclusion	157

Chapter Four

The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Grammatical

Accuracy in the Use of English Past Tenses

Introduction

This chapter describes the experiment to examine the possible effects of processing instruction (PI) and output-based instruction (OBI) on learners' grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses. The experiment aims to find out whether the experimental group would achieve a significant progress after applying the instruction in comparison with the control group who was subjected to output-based instruction.

Learners can be seriously inhibited in learning due to the fact that they confront difficulties in using tenses accurately and process the input correctly. This fact may affect both students' achievement and performance. Indeed, first-year LMD students experience difficulties in using past tenses accurately more than the present and future tenses. This may be due to the different tenses used to express the past on the one hand and the complexity of the past tense on the other hand.

In this experiment, the students of both experimental and control groups are pre-tested through a multiple-choice test to assess accuracy. After administering the pre-test, the treatment period takes place throughout two months. At the end of the treatment period, the participants have been post-tested by adapting the same tool of measurements used in the pre-test.

4.1 Research Methodology

Before exploring the empirical study of the research work and investigating the effect of input-processing instruction on teaching English past tenses, it is worth restating the research work hypotheses and questions. The following hypotheses are to be investigated and tested through this study:

- Grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction for promoting grammatical accuracy about English past tenses.
- Grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction for enhancing learners' explicit knowledge about English past tenses.

For exploring the effect of input-processing instruction on English past tenses, the current study seeks to highlight the following research questions:

- Does input-processing instruction lead to better comprehension about past tenses than output-based instruction?
- Does input-processing instruction help learners process input correctly?
- Does input-processing instruction lead to richer intake than traditional output-based instruction?

This research work is based on an experimental research design. According to Marczyk *et al.* (2005: 3), an experimental design focuses on testing cause-and-effect hypotheses and drawing conclusions by comparing two groups on one possible outcome. So, to investigate the effect of “input-processing instruction” on the acquisition of English past tenses, we need to establish a pre-test-post-test experiment. For investigating the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable, we opted for a t-test as an essential robust test to analyse the data obtained.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The target population of this study is first-year LMD students at Constantine University 1 during the academic year 2012-2013. The population consists of twenty (20) groups about forty (40) students per group. The sample comprises two groups: the control group involves thirty (30) students and the experimental group also involves (30) students. The number of the participants in the experimental group was more than thirty (30) students; however, we decided to work with only thirty students because some participants were absent in the pre-test, others during the instruction and some others were absent in the post-test. The subjects have been randomly selected as assigned by the administration. Their age approximately varies from eighteen (18) to twenty-two (22) years old. The students have been studying English for eight years.

4.3 The Materials

The students were introduced during two months to two different instructional packets: output-based instruction and processing instruction. These types of instruction were based on Vanpatten's model of input-processing instruction (1996, 2002).

The instructional packet used for the output-based instruction group involved presentation and practice. In the presentation stage, the control group was provided with a thorough explanation of the English past tenses using the deductive and inductive ways of instruction. In finding the form of past tenses, students were given some examples about the affirmative, negative and interrogative form of each past tense. The teacher then asked the students to induce the form of the tenses by themselves. If the students fail to provide the correct answer, the teacher interferes by presenting the right answer. The teacher then kept the same examples given at first and asked the students to induce the rules that govern

the use of the past tenses by themselves without providing them with multiple-choice answers. When the students could not find the correct answer, the teacher helped them and provided the appropriate explanation (See Appendix III).

At the practice stage, the teacher provided the control group with activities in which they were requested to produce the target form. The types of activities in output-based instruction constituted a series of isolated sentences and texts to push learners practise the tenses through context. In all the exercises, students were required to put the verb between brackets in the right tense. The aim of these activities is to enable students to use the target structures accurately in different contexts. Students also were exposed to free writing activity to help them practise the target structures in less controlled ways. This kind of activity enables students to use their own knowledge in a real context (See Appendix III).

The materials which were developed for the processing instruction group involved three stages: an explanation of the target grammatical structure, information about processing strategies and structured-input activities. At the end of instruction, students were expected to use past tenses accurately and ameliorate their explicit knowledge about English past tenses.

In the explanation stage, the experimental group was exposed to an explicit instruction of the English past tenses using the deductive and the inductive ways of instruction. Students firstly were given a set of examples of each past tense and their affirmative, negative and interrogative form in disorder, in which they were required to match each sentence with its correct form. The students were not asked to find the form of tenses by themselves in order not to force them towards production. After that, students were provided with multiple-choice options about the rules which govern the use of past tenses about the same sentences given to them at first, and they were required to select the

appropriate answer from the alternatives. The students were pushed to comprehend and interpret those examples carefully to induce and find the rules that govern each tense. When the students did not manage in finding out the rules by themselves, the teacher provided a thorough explanation to help them make a correct connection between a given form and its use (Appendix IV).

At the processing information stage, students were given information on how to process input correctly and abandon their inefficient strategies when they express the past such as: translation from the mother tongue, overgeneralization of rules, making wrong hypotheses about the correct rule and over emphasizing their dependence on time markers. The aim of this stage is to help learners get rid of confusion between English past tenses and reduce the problems that learners of English are confronted with while processing the input. This stage was exclusively directed to the experimental group since traditional instruction does not focus on processing the input. Henceforth, some of the information which guided and helped students contrast between the past tenses for enriching their comprehension and reducing confusion between those tenses for expressing the past are illustrated in (Appendix IV).

At the practice stage, students were provided with structured-input activities to push the processing group process the form and the meaning of the past tenses through comprehension-based activities. Structured-input activities require a right or wrong answer that indicates whether or not the students have processed the input correctly. These activities involve the contrast between each two past tenses which provoke the most errors for the students. The students were required to depend on both time markers and context for interpreting the correct meaning of the past tenses and receiving the relevant intake data without any production required. These activities were taken from different grammar

books which made students process the accurate use of the past tenses through selecting alternatives and matching. An example of these activities is shown in (Appendix IV).

4.4 Treatment

Before the treatment took place, students were provided with twenty (20) multiple-choice sentences about the use of six types of English past tenses (the past simple, the past continuous, the present perfect simple, the present perfect continuous, the past perfect simple and the past perfect continuous) to assess their grammatical accuracy. The test also provided learners with twenty multiple-justification sentences for the use of English past tenses to assess their explicit knowledge. The students were asked to opt for the appropriate tense from three or four alternatives and to opt for the correct justification for each tense used. The test was administered before and after the treatment took place as a pre-and a post-test.

In conducting the experiment, the researcher was the instructor of the two groups where each group was exposed to three hours of instruction per week. The three hours of time were devoted to the explanation of the past tenses and different activities assigned to each group. The activities which were used as a practice for the experimental and the control group were taken from different grammar books. The treatment sessions and tests took place during subjects' schedule programme and some additional sessions.

The following tables present the scores of both experimental and control groups in the multiple-choice grammatical accuracy pre and post-test. The typical score of the test is twenty (20) points. For the grammatical accuracy, one point is awarded to each correct answer and, of course, no points for incorrect answers, for a total of twenty (20) points. The results of the grammatical accuracy test are indicated in the following tables:

Control Group			Experimental Group		
Score X_2	Frequency f	fX_2	Score X_1	Frequency f	fX_1
3	1	3	4	3	12
4	1	4	5	4	20
5	3	15	6	4	24
6	3	18	7	6	42
7	10	70	8	4	32
8	5	40	9	2	18
9	4	36	10	2	20
10	1	10	11	2	22
13	1	13	12	2	24
14	1	14	13	1	13
	$N_2=30$	$\Sigma X_2 = 223$		$N_1=30$	$\Sigma X_1 = 227$
	$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{223}{30} = 7.43$			$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{227}{30} = 7.57$	

Table 5: Grammatical Accuracy Pre-test Scores

As Table (5) reveals, the mean score of the control group in the pre-test in terms of grammatical accuracy was (7.43), whilst the mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test was (7.57). Therefore, the scores exhibit that there is no big difference between the means of the two groups in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

Control Group			Experimental Group		
Score X_2	Frequency f	fX_2	Score X_1	Frequency f	fX_1
6	1	6	6	1	6
7	2	14	7	2	14
8	2	16	8	2	16
9	4	36	10	3	30
10	5	50	11	4	44
11	6	66	12	4	48
12	5	60	13	4	52
14	3	42	14	6	84
15	2	30	15	3	45
			16	1	16
	$N_2=30$	$\Sigma X_2 = 320$		$N_1=30$	$\Sigma X_1 = 355$
	$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{320}{30} = 10.67$			$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{355}{30} = 11.83$	

Table 6: Grammatical Accuracy Post-test Scores

It is clear from Table (6) that the mean score of the control group in the post-test in terms of grammatical accuracy was (10.67), while the mean score of the experimental group was (11.83). The results show that there is a remarkable difference between the

means of the two groups after the implementation of the experiment with a difference of (1.16).

4.4.1 The t-test for the Pre-test and the Post-test

In order to measure learners' gains which might have occurred as a result of the treatment, a quantitative analysis has been carried out to analyse the data. The research was carried out based on an experimental design which involved the use of the t-test to find out whether there was a significant difference in the mean score between the experimental and the control groups. The t-test serves us in confirming or disconfirming the validity of the research hypotheses. Miller (1975: 78) suggests the following general procedure for the computation of the t-test for independent samples:

$$t_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

N_1 stands for the number of subjects in the experimental group.

N_2 stands for the number of the subjects in the control group.

\bar{X}_1 stands for the mean of the experimental group.

\bar{X}_2 stands for the mean of the control group.

S_1^2 stands for the variance of the experimental group.

S_2^2 stands for the variance of the control group.

Control Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_2 &= 7.43 & \bar{X}_2^2 &= 55.25 \\ \Sigma X_2 &= 223 & \Sigma X_2^2 &= 1807 \\ S_2^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2 = \frac{1807}{30} - 55.25 = 4.98 \\ S_2 &= \sqrt{S_2^2} = \sqrt{4.98} = 2.23\end{aligned}$$

Experimental Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_1 &= 7.57 & \bar{X}_1^2 &= 57.25 \\ \Sigma X_1 &= 227 & \Sigma X_1^2 &= 1903 \\ S_1^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{1903}{30} - 57.25 = 6.18 \\ S_1 &= \sqrt{S_1^2} = \sqrt{6.18} = 2.49\end{aligned}$$

The t Value

$$\begin{aligned}t_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} &= \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} = \frac{(7.57 - 7.43)\sqrt{(30 + 30 - 2)30 \times 30}}{\sqrt{(30 \times 6.18 + 30 \times 4.98)(30 + 30)}} = \\ &= \frac{30.46}{141.72} = 0.21\end{aligned}$$

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

In order to find out the value of the students' t-test, we should check in the t-table and see the value corresponding to 58 degrees of freedom for 0.05 level of significance. By checking in the t-table, we found that there is no row for 58 degrees of freedom. Therefore, we decided to use the value 60 to be the degree of freedom. Hence, for 60 degrees of freedom, the value of t required for 0.05 level of significance is 2.000.

Groups	N	Mean (\bar{X})	Df	SD	t_N
Control	30	7.43	58	2.23	0.21
Experimental	30	7.57	58	2.49	

Table 7: Grammatical Accuracy Pre-test Scores

As Table (7) clarifies, the t-value calculated (0.21) is less than the t values in the t-table: 2.000 for 0.05 level of significance, we therefore accept the null hypothesis that the difference between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group were found to be nonsignificant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statistical results reveal that there is no

significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group before the experiment.

The Control Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_2 &= 10.67 & \bar{X}_2^2 &= 113.78 \\ \Sigma X_2 &= 320 & \Sigma X_2^2 &= 3570 \\ S_2^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{3570}{30} - 113.78 = 5.22 \\ S_2 &= \sqrt{S_2^2} = \sqrt{5.22} = 2.29\end{aligned}$$

The Experimental Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_1 &= 11.83 & \bar{X}_1^2 &= 140.03 \\ \Sigma X_1 &= 355 & \Sigma X_1^2 &= 4405 \\ S_1^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{4405}{30} - 140.03 = 6.81 \\ S_1 &= \sqrt{S_1^2} = \sqrt{6.81} = 2.61\end{aligned}$$

The t Value

$$\begin{aligned}t_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} &= \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} = \frac{(11.83 - 10.67)\sqrt{(30 + 30 - 2)30 \times 30}}{\sqrt{(30 \times 6.81 + 30 \times 5.22)(30 + 30)}} = \\ &= \frac{1048.83}{147.14} = 7.13\end{aligned}$$

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

Groups	N	Mean (\bar{X})	Df	SD	t_N
Control	30	10.67	58	2.29	7.13
Experimental	30	11.83	58	2.61	

Table 8: Grammatical Accuracy Post-test Scores

The table above depicts that the t- value calculated (7.13) is more than the t values on the table of t values: 2.000 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference between the two means is significant at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

According to the statistical results above, there is a significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group after implementing the new method of teaching which is “input-processing instruction”. Therefore, the first research hypothesis is confirmed.

4.4.2 Item Analysis of Grammatical Accuracy

Item analysis is a technique used to gauge the efficiency of questions and the test as a whole. It is a suitable method to analyse students' answers from a multiple-choice test in order to help the researcher investigate the common mistakes made by the participants and to explore the students' strategies used when using the past tenses. It further seeks to eradicate the problems confronted by the students in learning tenses. According to Gulliksen (1950: 363), item analysis addresses "the problem of selecting items for a test so that the resulting test will have certain specified characteristics".

Item analysis has been chosen to assess each item used in the multiple-choice as it evaluates the performance of the students on each item in the test. This technique is useful in approaching and noticing the kind and reasons of mistakes the students make when they express the past. Brown (1996: 50) states that item analysis technique is "the systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the individual items on a test". In general, item analysis technique provides the necessary data to approach students' strategies and help in improving the instructional program by noticing the developmental stages which students go through in processing input and develop their interlanguage. In the analysis of the data, we started with the item analysis of the multiple-choice test about the grammatical accuracy of both groups: the experimental and the control group.

4.4.2.1 The Pre-test

The test consisted of twenty (20) items, targeting English past tenses. In terms of grammatical accuracy, the students were required to select one suitable answer from three or four options.

The Control Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

a. were having

c. have had

b. had

d. had had

O1	N	%
a	15	50
b	11	36.67
c	2	6.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 9: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S.1

50% of the students found the right answer (a) –the past continuous, perhaps because the rule which governs this tense is well-known by most of the students. 36% of the students opted for (b) –the past simple, this also indicates that a huge number of the students ignore the rule that governs the past continuous. Only 6.67% opted for (c) –the present perfect simple and the same number of students 6.67% opted for (d) –the past perfect simple.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

a. has made

c. had made

b. made

d. has been making

O2	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	10	33.33
c	9	30
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 10: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

33.33% of the students ticked the correct answer (b) –the past simple. The same number of the students 33.33% ticked the wrong answer (a) –the present perfect simple, 30% of the students opted for the third choice (c) –the past perfect simple and 3.33% opted for (d) –the present perfect continuous. These results explain the fact that students face difficulties in choosing between the simple past, the present perfect simple and the past perfect simple when they express the past.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

O3	N	%
a	3	10
b	14	46.67
c	11	36.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 11: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

46.67% of the students found the right answer (b) –the past perfect simple, this could be justified by the fact that students relied on the expression (by the time) to notice the right tense. 36.67% of the students chose (c) –the present perfect simple which clarifies that the students confuse between the use of the past perfect simple and the present perfect

simple. As it is clearly indicated on the table, only 10% of the students opted for (a) –the past simple and 6.67% chose (d) –the past continuous.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

a. has been cooking

b. was cooking

c. had been cooking

O4	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	14	46.67
c	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 12: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

As it is illustrated on the table above, a considerable number of the students ignore the rule that governs the use of the present perfect continuous. 46.33% of the students chose the wrong answer (b) –the past continuous, whereas 43.33% of the students provided the correct answer (a) –the present perfect continuous. The confusion lies in distinguishing between the past continuous and the present perfect continuous. Only 10% chose option (c) –the past perfect continuous.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

a. have been working

c. was working

b. had been working.

d. worked

O5	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	8	26.67
c	6	20
d	12	40
T	30	100%

Table 13: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

In this sentence, the majority of the students 40% selected the wrong option (d) –the past simple, maybe because they considered the reference “last year” as a reference which is used with the past simple without processing the meaning of the whole expression “this time last year” that indicates the progression of the action. 26% of the students selected option (b) –the past perfect continuous thinking that the use of “for” is usually compatible with tenses like the present perfect simple, the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous. Hence, students went through wrong strategies to process the use of past tenses correctly. Only 20% of students selected the right answer (c) –the past continuous, whereas minority of the students chose option (a) –the present perfect continuous.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- b. has left
- c. had left
- d. had been leaving

O6	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	12	40
c	6	20
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 14: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

The majority of the students 40% opted for the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect simple; 33.33% of students opted for the correct answer (a) –the past simple and 20% of the students chose the wrong answer (c) –the past perfect simple. 6.67% of the students also provided the wrong answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. In addition to the ignorance of the rules that govern the use of past tenses, the majority of the students went through wrong processing strategies to choose the correct tense. Perhaps students did not pay attention to the specific reference used in the sentence to indicate a definite time “a few minutes ago”, they opted for the present perfect simple because they relied on the adverb “just” which is generally used with the present perfect simple.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

O7	N	%
a	6	20
b	6	20
c	8	26.67
d	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 15: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

As the table reveals, 33.33% of the students gave the right answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. 26.67% provided the wrong answer (c) –the present perfect simple which indicates that learners ignore the use of the past perfect continuous from the one hand and there is a probability that students believed that the use of “for” is usually used in conjunction with the present perfect simple from the other hand. Whereas 20% of the

students chose the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect continuous and 20% chose option (a) –the past perfect simple.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

a. finished

b. have finished

c. had finished

O8	N	%
a	6	20
b	13	43.33
c	11	36.67
T	30	100%

Table 16: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

As the table above describes, 43.33% of the students provided the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect simple, 36.67% of the students provided the right answer (c) –the past perfect simple and only 20% of the students provided the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. These results show that the past perfect simple is problematic for most of students.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

a. never visited

c. Have never visited

b. Have never been visiting

d. had never visited

O9	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	8	26.67
c	12	40
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 17: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

In spite of the fact that there was no specific reference to indicate the past simple, 26.67% of the students did not find the correct answer by choosing (a) –the past simple. Only 40% chose the correct answer (c) –the present perfect simple. Surely, these students in processing the correct tense relied on the adverb ‘never’, which is generally compatible with the present perfect simple. The other students 26.67% chose (b) –the present perfect continuous, and only 6.67% chose (d) –the past perfect simple.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- b. watched
- c. was watching
- d. had been watching

O10	N	%
a	12	40
b	3	10
c	11	36.67
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 18: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

The table shows that 40% of the students answered correctly by choosing the present perfect continuous. The table also shows that 36.67% of the students answered in a wrong way by choosing the past continuous. It seems that the students knew that the action was in the progressive form, but they did not know when to use the past continuous and the present perfect continuous. Only 10% of the students opted for (b) –the past simple and only 13% opted for (d) –the past perfect continuous.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

a. did not eat

b. had not eaten

c. have not eaten

O11	N	%
a	15	50
b	7	23.33
c	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 19: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11

As the results show, 50% of the students ticked the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. Only 26.67% ticked the correct answer (c) –the present perfect simple and 23.33% opted for (b) –the past perfect simple. It seems that the distinction between the present perfect simple and the past simple is the most problematic area for the students. The use of the time adverbial “today” misleads and creates confusion between the present perfect simple and the past simple for the students. In other words, the students could not distinguish between finished and unfinished time.

12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since December.

a. was studying

c. have been studying

b. had been studying

d. studied

O12	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	10	33.33
c	7	23.33
d	9	30
T	30	100%

Table 20: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12

It seems that the students did not process the meaning of this sentence correctly because only 23.33% of the students found the right answer (c) –the present perfect continuous. The majority of the students ticked answer (b) –the past perfect continuous believing that this action is the first one which had been taking place. The others opted for option (a) –the past continuous, and option (d) –the past simple.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having
- b. were having
- c. had been having
- d. had had

O13	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	17	56.67
c	1	3.33
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 21: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

This sentence seems to be easy for the students to answer because 56.67% of the students found the correct answer (b) –the past continuous. 23.33% of the students opted for (a) –the present perfect continuous. This indicates that the students confuse between the past continuous and the present perfect continuous. Only 3.33% opted for (c) –the past perfect continuous and 16.67% opted for (d) –the past perfect simple.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

- a. have known
- b. had known
- c. knew
- d. have been knowing

O14	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	13	43.33
c	9	30
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 22: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

As it is clearly indicated on table (22), 43.33% of the students succeeded to find the correct answer (b) –the past perfect simple. This indicates that these students knew that this action occurred before the first action. However, many students did not find the exact answer: 30% chose the past simple, 13.33% chose (a) –the present perfect simple and also 13.33% of the students chose (d) –the present perfect continuous.

15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.

Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.

a. lost

b. have lost

c. had lost

O15	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	13	43.33
c	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 23: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

Although the past time adverb is mentioned in the sentence above, many students could not use the correct tense. Perhaps, the second part of the sentence causes the trouble for the students who were not able to process the meaning of the whole sentence. This fact indicates that students provide an immediate production without taking their sufficient time in comprehension. The table shows that students really face difficulties in using the past

simple and the present perfect simple accurately because 46.67% of the students ticked the right answer (a) –the past simple and 43.33% of the students ticked the wrong answer (b) – the present perfect simple. Only 10% of the students ticked option (c) –the past perfect simple.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

a. lost

b. has lost

c. had lost

O16	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	16	53.33
c	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 24: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

As far as this sentence is concerned, 53.33% of the students provided the correct answer (b) –the present perfect simple. 13.33% of the students provided the wrong answer (a) –the past simple, whereas many students opted for (c) –the past perfect simple 33.33%. The obtained results show that the use of the present perfect simple in this situation is somehow easy. The aim of this sentence and the preceding one is to make students understand the importance of context and time markers.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

a. did not see

b. have not seen

c. had not seen

O17	N	%
a	15	50
b	10	33.33
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 25: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

Needless to say that the present perfect simple and the past simple are particularly confusing and troublesome for students because they do not know when to use the present perfect simple and the past simple correctly. This sentence seems to be difficult for students; however, it was designed to push them process the meaning of the required tense in a specific context. This context requires the use of the present perfect simple; however, only 33.33% of the students provided the correct answer. Half of the students opted for the past simple, and 16.67% chose (d) –the past perfect simple. The results explain that students ignore the use of some adverbials such as “today”.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

a. have just had

b. had just had

c. had just

O18	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	11	36.67
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 26: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

In this sentence, the majority of the students 46.67% opted for the wrong answer (a) –the present perfect simple. In addition to the ignorance of the rule that governs the past perfect simple, the students were misled by the use of “just” which led them to process the

meaning of the tense in a wrong way. Only 36.67% provided the right answer (b) –the past perfect simple and 16.67% provided the wrong answer (c) –the past simple.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

- a. have been working
- b. was working
- c. worked
- d. had been working

O19	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	6	20
c	12	40
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 27: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

The table shows that the majority of the students answered in a wrong way, 40% of the students chose option (c) –the past simple. Only 26.67% answered correctly by choosing (d) –the past perfect continuous, 13.33% ticked (a) –the present perfect continuous and 20% ticked (b) –the past continuous. These results are justified by the fact that most of the students ignore the rule that governs the past perfect continuous. Moreover, the results also explain why tenses like the past perfect continuous are less used by students.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing
- b. played
- c. were playing
- d. have been playing

O20	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	9	30
c	7	23.33
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 28: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

In this sentence, 33.33% of the students provided the right answer (a) –the past perfect continuous; however, a large number of the students did not render the correct answer. 30% of the students selected option (b) –the past simple, 23.33% selected (c) –the past continuous and 13.33% chose option (d) –the present perfect continuous. The use of the past perfect continuous seems to be ignored by the majority of the students which make them to confuse it with other tenses.

The Experimental Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
- b. had
- c. have had
- d. had had

O1	N	%
a	17	56.67
b	5	16.67
c	4	13.33
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 29: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

56.67% of the students found the right answer (a) –the past continuous, perhaps because the rule which governs this tense is well-known by most of the students. So, the

past continuous appeared somewhat easier for the students. Only 16.67% of the students opted for (b) –the past simple, 13.33% ticked (c) –the present perfect simple and also 13.33% ticked (d) –the past perfect simple.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
- b. made
- c. had made
- d. has been making

O2	N	%
a	9	30
b	16	53.33
c	3	10
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 30: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

53.33% of the students ticked the correct answer (b) –the past simple. This shows that the past simple is somehow easier for the students. A considerable number of the students 30% ticked the wrong answer (a) –the present perfect simple, 10% of students opted for the third choice (c) –the past perfect simple and 6.67% opted for (d) –the present perfect continuous. These results explain the fact that students face difficulties in choosing between the simple past and the present perfect simple when they express the past.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

O3	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	13	43.33
c	5	16.67
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 31: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

43.33% of the students found the right answer (b) –the past perfect simple. This could be justified by the fact that students relied on the expression (by the time) to notice the right tense. 36.67% of the students chose (a) –the past simple which clarifies that the students confuse between the use of the past perfect simple and the past simple. As it is clearly indicated on the table, 16.67% of the students opted for (c) –the present perfect simple and only 3.33% chose (d) –the past continuous.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

O4	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	14	46.67
c	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 32: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

As it is illustrated on the table above, a considerable number of the students ignore the rule that governs the use of the present perfect simple. 46.67% of the students chose the wrong answer (b) –the past continuous, whereas 43.33% provided the correct answer (a) –the present perfect continuous. The confusion lies in distinguishing between the past

continuous and the present perfect continuous. Only 10% of the students chose option (c) – the past perfect continuous.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working
- b. had been working.
- c. was working
- d. worked

O5	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	7	23.33
c	8	26.67
d	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 33: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

In this sentence, the majority of the students selected the wrong option (d) –the past simple, maybe because they considered the reference “last year” as a reference which is used with the past simple without processing the meaning of the whole expression “this time last year” that indicates the progression of the action. 23.33% selected option (b) –the past perfect continuous thinking that the use of “for” is usually compatible with tenses like the present perfect simple, the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous. Hence, students went through wrong strategies to process the use of past tenses correctly. Only 26.67% of the students selected the right answer (c) –the past continuous, whereas minority of the students 16.67% chose option (a) –the present perfect continuous.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- c. had left

b. has left

d. had been leaving

O6	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	14	46.67
c	6	20
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 34: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

The majority of the students 46.67% opted for the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect simple; 26.67% opted for the correct answer (a) –the past simple and 20% of the students chose the answer (c) –the past perfect simple. 6.67% also provided the wrong answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. In addition to the ignorance of the rules that govern the use of past tenses, the majority of the students went through wrong processing strategies to choose the correct tense. Perhaps students did not pay attention to the specific reference used in the sentence to indicate a definite time “a few minutes ago”, they opted for the present perfect simple because they relied on the adverb “just” which is generally used with the present perfect simple.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

a. had eaten

c. have eaten

b. have been eating

d. had been eating

O7	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	3	10
c	13	43.33
d	12	40
T	30	100%

Table 35: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

As the table reveals, 40% of the students provided the right answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. 43.33% of the students chose (c) –the present perfect simple which indicates that learners ignore the use of the past perfect simple on the one hand and there is a probability that students believed that the use of “for” is usually used in conjunction with the present perfect simple on the other hand. 10% of the students chose the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect continuous and 6.67% chose option (a) –the past perfect simple.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

a. finished

b. have finished

c. had finished

O8	N	%
a	9	30
b	7	23.33
c	14	46.67
T	30	100%

Table 36: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

As the table above describes, 46.67% of the students provided the right answer (c) – the past perfect simple, 30% of the students provided the wrong answer (a) –the past simple and only 23.33% of the students ticked option (b) –the present perfect simple. These results show that many students in the experimental group know the rule that governs the past perfect simple. However, more than half of the students misuse the past perfect simple. The results display that the past perfect simple is hardly used by the students.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

a. never visited

c. Have never visited

- b. Have never been visiting d. had never visited

O9	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	6	20
c	14	46.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 37: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

In this sentence, 46.67% of the students found the correct answer (c) –the present perfect simple. Surely these students relied on the adverb ‘never’ in processing the correct tense, which is generally compatible with the present perfect simple. So, it is evident that students rely on time adverbials in using tenses properly. The other students 20% chose (b) –the present perfect continuous, 26.67% chose (a) –the past simple and only 6.67% chose (d) –the past perfect simple.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching c. was watching
 b. watched d. had been watching

O10	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	4	13.33
c	10	33.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 38: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

The table shows that 46.67% of the students answered correctly by choosing the present perfect continuous. The table also shows that 33.33% of the students answered in a wrong way by choosing (c) –the past continuous. It seems that the students knew that the

action was in the progressive form, but they did not know when the past continuous and the present perfect continuous are used. Only 13.33% opted for (b) –the past simple, and only 6.67% opted for (d) –the past perfect continuous.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

a. did not eat

b. had not eaten

c. have not eaten

O11	N	%
a	16	53.33
b	6	20
c	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 39: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11

Although there is no reference to indicate that the time is over, 53.33% of the students ticked the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. Only 26.67% of the students ticked the correct answer (c) –the present perfect simple, whereas 26.67% of the students opted for (b) –the past perfect simple. It seems that the distinction between the present perfect simple and the past simple is the most problematic area for the students, despite the fact that it was easy to discover that the present perfect simple is the best tense used because the result of the action is still valid in the present “ I am very hungry”. In other words, it is clear that the action has continued up to the present.

**12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since
December.**

a. was studying

c. have been studying

b. had been studying

d. studied

process and others are difficult. Students confuse between the past continuous, the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous as 36.67% opted for the right answer (b) –the past continuous, 23.33% opted for (a) –the present perfect continuous, and 23.33% opted for (c) –the past perfect continuous. Only 16.67% chose (d) –the past simple.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

- a. have known
- b. had known
- c. knew
- d. have been knowing

O14	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	12	40
c	6	20
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 42: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

40% of the students managed to find the exact answer which is (b) –the past perfect simple. However, many students did not find the exact answer: 20% of the students chose the past simple, 33.33% chose (a) –the present perfect simple and only 6.67% chose (d) –the present perfect continuous. The incorrect use of the tense is mostly due to the ignorance of the rule since the past perfect simple is rarely used by the students in expressing the past.

**15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.
Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.**

- a. lost
- b. have lost
- c. had lost

O15	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	12	40
c	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 43: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

40% of the students provided the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect simple, in spite of the use of the specific reference “yesterday”. This table shows that students really face difficulties in using the past simple and the present perfect simple accurately because only 33.33% of the students ticked the right answer (a) –the past simple. 26.67% also ticked the wrong answer (c) –the past perfect simple. It seems that students do not take an enough time to comprehend and process the right meaning of the sentence. The results show that students provide immediate production without an exact interpretation and comprehension.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

a. lost

b. has lost

c. had lost

O16	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	12	40
c	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 44: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

In this sentence, 40% of the students provided the correct answer (b) –the present perfect simple. 26.67% of the students provided the wrong answer (a) –the past simple, whereas many students opted for (c) –the past perfect simple (33.33%). The results

illustrate the less concentration and comprehension of the students on the one side and the inability to make a distinction between finished and unfinished time on the other side.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

a. did not see

b. have not seen

c. had not seen

O17	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	6	20
c	11	36.67
T	30	100%

Table 45: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

It is evident that the present perfect simple is troublesome for students because they do not know when to use the present perfect simple and the past simple correctly. This sentence was designed to push students process the meaning of the required tense in a specific context. This context requires the use of the present perfect simple; yet only 20% provided the correct answer by choosing (b) –the present perfect simple. 43.33% of the students opted for the past simple, and 36.67% chose (d) –the past perfect simple. The results indicate that students ignore the use of certain time adverbials such as “today”, which can be used with the present simple, the present perfect simple or the past simple. The students did not opt for the present perfect simple because they did not understand that the day is not over yet. Moreover, the majority of the students opted for the past simple because there is a probability that they relied on the time adverbial “yesterday” in the first part of the sentence. This indicates the concentration on the production at the expense of comprehension.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

a. have just had

b. had just had

c. had just

O18	N	%
a	17	56.67
b	6	20
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 46: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

In this sentence, the majority of the students 56.67% opted for the wrong answer (a) –the present perfect simple. In addition to the ignorance of the rule that governs the past perfect simple, the students were misled by the use of “just” which led them to process the meaning of the tense in a wrong way. Therefore, the majority of the students opted for the present perfect simple believing that the time adverbial “just” is generally used with this tense. Only 20% of the students provided the right answer (b) –the past perfect simple and 23.33% provided the wrong answer (c) –the past simple.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

a. have been working

c. worked

b. was working

d. had been working

O19	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	7	23.33
c	5	16.67
d	13	43.33
T	30	100%

Table 47: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

As the table clarifies, 43.33% of the students found the right answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. However, the majority of the students answered in a wrong way: 16.67% chose option (a) –the past simple, 23.33% ticked (b) –the past continuous and 16.67% ticked (c) –the past simple. The results show that students ignore the rule which governs the use of the past perfect continuous.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing
- b. played
- c. were playing
- d. have been playing

O20	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	4	13.33
c	12	40
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 48: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

As the results reveal, the students understood that the action should be put in the progressive form; however, they were misled by the use of “when”. This led many students 40% to use the wrong tense (c) –the past continuous believing that the action took place in the middle of another action. Only 36.67% offered the right answer (a) –the past perfect continuous. A minority of students (13.33%) selected (b) –the past simple and also a few students (10%) chose option (d) –the present perfect continuous.

4.4.2.2 The Post-test

The Control Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
- b. had
- c. have had
- d. had had

O1	N	%
a	23	76.67
b	1	3.33
c	2	6.67
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 49: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

As it is well observed, a considerable improvement appeared in this sentence. 76.67% provided the right answer (a) –the past continuous may be because the rule that governs the use of this tense is well known by most students. The minority of the students provided the wrong answer: 3.33% chose (b) –the past simple, 6.67% chose (c) –the present perfect simple and 13.33% chose (d) –the past perfect simple.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
- b. made
- c. had made
- d. has been making

O2	N	%
a	6	20
b	19	63.33
c	4	13.33
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 50: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

63.33% of the students succeeded to find the correct answer (b) –the past simple while the rest did not manage to find the right answer. 20% of the students ticked (a) –the present perfect simple, 13.33% ticked (c) –the past perfect simple and 3.33% ticked (d) – the present perfect continuous.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

O3	N	%
a	3	10
b	17	56.67
c	10	33.33
d	00	00
T	30	100%

Table 51: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

The results show that 56.67% of the students found the correct answer (b) –the past perfect simple may be because the use of the expression “ by the time” which is usually used with the past perfect simple helped the students to find the appropriate tense. 10% of the students chose option (a) –the past simple, 33.33% selected (c) –the present perfect simple and nobody chose the past continuous.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

a. has been cooking

b. was cooking

c. had been cooking

O4	N	%
a	19	63.33
b	8	26.67
c	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 52: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

More than half of the students provided the appropriate answer, 63.33% opted for the right answer (a) –the present perfect continuous. Some students still confuse between the use of the present perfect continuous and the past continuous as 26.67% ticked the wrong answer (b) –the past continuous. Only 10% of the students chose (c) –the past perfect continuous.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

a. have been working

c. was working

b. had been working.

d. worked

O5	N	%
a	6	20
b	5	16.67
c	10	33.33
d	9	30
T	30	100%

Table 53: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

Only 33.33% provided the correct answer (c) –the past continuous. 30% of the students chose the wrong choice (d) –the past simple may be because the students were

still influenced by the use of “last year”. 20% of the students chose (a) –the present perfect continuous and 16.67% chose (b) –the past perfect continuous.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- b. has left
- c. had left
- d. had been leaving

O6	N	%
a	13	43.3
b	12	40
c	2	6.67
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 54: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

43.33% of the students found the correct answer (a) –the past simple; however 40% of the students did not provide the right answer by choosing (b) –the present perfect simple. The students did not comprehend well the sentence as we suppose they relied on the use of “just” which led them to use the present perfect simple. Only 6.67% opted for (c) –the the past perfect simple and 10% of the students opted for (d) –the past perfect continuous.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

O7	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	5	16.67
c	6	20
d	15	50
T	30	100%

Table 55: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

From the results on table (55), the increase in the use of the past perfect continuous shifted from 33.33% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test. Half of the students picked the appropriate answer (d) –the past perfect continuous.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

a. finished

b. have finished

c. had finished

O8	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	7	23.33
c	16	53.33
T	30	100%

Table 56: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

The majority of the students offered the appropriate answer, 53.33% ticked (c) –the past perfect simple. The rest of the students still have a problem with the past perfect simple as 23.33% of the students ticked the wrong option (a) –the past simple and 23.33% ticked (b) –the present perfect simple.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

a. never visited

c. Have never visited

b. Have never been visiting

d. had never visited

O9	N	%
a	12	40
b	4	13.33
c	13	43.33
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 57: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

43.33% gave the correct answer (c) –the present perfect simple may be because it was used with the adverb “never” which is generally used in conjunction with the present perfect simple. Meanwhile 40% of the students gave the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. This means that these students have not yet acquired the rule that governs the present perfect simple. 13.33% of the students opted for (b) –the present perfect continuous and 3.33% opted for (d) –the past perfect simple.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- b. watched
- c. was watching
- d. had been watching

O10	N	%
a	17	56.67
b	3	10
c	2	6.67
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 58: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

The table illustrates that 56.67% of the students managed to find the right answer (a) –the present perfect continuous. 26.67% of the students chose option (d) –the past perfect continuous which shows that the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous

are still confused by some students. Only 10% of the students ticked (b) –the past simple and 6.67% ticked (c) –the past continuous.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

a. did not eat

b. had not eaten

c. have not eaten

O11	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	3	10
c	13	43.33
T	30	100%

Table 59: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11

As it is observed above, the students still confuse between the present perfect simple and the past simple may be because of the mother tongue interference. There is no equivalent for the present perfect simple in Arabic, which makes learners face difficulties in using such tense. In this sentence, 43.33% provided the right answer (c) –the present perfect simple and 46.67% provided the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. Only 10% of the students opted for (b) –the past perfect simple.

12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since December.

a. was studying

c. have been studying

b. had been studying

d. studied

O12	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	6	20
c	15	50
d	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 60: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12

Half of the students managed to answer this sentence correctly, 50% of the students opted for (c) –the present perfect continuous. The remaining students failed to answer correctly: 6.67% chose (a) –the past continuous, 20% of the students chose (b) –the past perfect continuous and 23.33% opted for (d) –the past simple.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having c. had been having
 b. were having d. had had

O13	N	%
a	3	10
b	20	66.67
c	2	6.67
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 61: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

66.67% provided the right answer (b) –the past continuous. However, other students provided wrong answers: 10% of the students selected (a) –the present perfect continuous, 6.67% chose the past perfect continuous and 16.67% chose the last option (d) –the past perfect simple.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

a. have known

c. knew

b. had known

d. have been knowing

O14	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	17	56.67
c	3	10
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 62: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

56.67% of the students gave the right answer (b) –the past perfect simple, nevertheless many students answered in a wrong way. 26.67% of the students ticked (d) – the present perfect continuous, students ignore the fact that some verbs represent a “state” rather than an “action”, which cannot be put in the continuous form. 6.67% selected (a) – the present perfect simple and 10.67% selected (c) –the past simple.

15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.

Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.

a. lost

b. have lost

c. had lost

O15	N	%
a	18	60
b	5	16.67
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 63: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

More than half of the students (60%) noticed the right answer (a) –the past simple. 16.67% chose the wrong option (b) –the present perfect simple and 23.33% opted for (c) – the past perfect simple.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

a. lost

b. has lost

c. had lost

O16	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	18	60
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 64: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

60% of the students provided the correct answer (b) –the present perfect simple. 23.33% misused the present perfect simple because they chose the past simple. The minority of the students chose (c) –the past perfect simple.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

a. did not see

b. have not seen

c. had not seen

O17	N	%
a	15	50
b	11	36.67
c	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 65: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

It can clearly be seen that students still misuse the present perfect simple due to the mother tongue interference and that most students still ignore that some words like “today”

are used with the present perfect simple when they express an unfinished time. Hence, only 36.67% of the students provided the correct answer (b) –the present perfect simple and half of the students ticked the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. 13.33% of the students chose (d) –the past perfect simple.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

- a. have just had b. had just had c. had just

O18	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	12	40
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 66: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

As it is observed on table (66), the students are still influenced by the use of the time adverb “just” as 36.67% opted for the wrong option (a) –the present perfect simple. 40% of the students answered correctly by choosing option (b) –the past perfect simple and 23.33% chose (c) –the past simple.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

- a. have been working c. worked
 b. was working d. had been working

O19	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	4	13.33
c	3	10
d	16	53.33
T	30	100%

Table 67: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

The results above indicate that 53.33% of the students provided the appropriate answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. However, approximately half of the students still ignore the use of the past perfect continuous because 23.33% ticked (a) –the present perfect continuous, 13.33% ticked (b) –the past continuous and 10% of the students ticked (c) –the past simple.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing c. were playing
 b. played d. have been playing

O20	N	%
a	18	60
b	3	10
c	7	23.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 68: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

60% of the students provided the appropriate answer (a) –the past perfect continuous. The rest of the students still ignore the use of the past perfect continuous and they confuse it with tenses like the past continuous. So, 23.33% opted for (c) –the past continuous, 10% of the students ticked (b) –the past simple and 6.67% ticked (d) –the present perfect continuous.

The Experimental Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having c. have had
b. had d. had had

O1	N	%
a	24	80
b	4	13.33
c	2	6.67
d	00	00
T	30	100%

Table 69: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

The majority of the students found the correct answer (a) –the past continuous. Only 13.33% ticked (b) –the past simple and 6.67% ticked (c) –the present perfect simple. Nobody opted for (d) –the past perfect simple. It seems that the students are no longer facing many difficulties in the use of the past continuous.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made c. had made
b. made d. has been making

O2	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	23	76.67
c	5	16.67
d	00	00
T	30	100%

Table 70: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

In the post-test, the large majority of the students had the ability to use the past simple accurately, 76.67% chose option (b) –the past simple. The minority of the students did not master the use of the past simple, 6.67% opted for (a) –the present perfect simple, 16.67% opted for (c) –the past perfect simple and no one chose (d) –the present perfect continuous.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

O3	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	18	60
c	3	10
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 71: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

There was an improvement in this sentence from 40% in the pre-test to 60% in the post-test by ticking the correct answer (b) –the past perfect simple. 26.67% of the students picked the wrong answer (a) –the past simple, 10% of the students picked (c) –the present perfect simple and 3.33% picked (d) –the past continuous.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking
- b. was cooking
- c. had been cooking

O4	N	%
a	19	63.33
b	8	26.67
c	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 72: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

An observable improvement was seen in this sentence from 43.33% in the pre-test to 63.33% in the post-test. Therefore, 63.33% of the students found the correct answer (a) – the present perfect simple, 26.67% opted for (b) –the past continuous and 10% of the students chose (c) –the past perfect continuous.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working c. was working
b. had been working. d. worked

O5	N	%
a	6	20
b	2	6.67
c	17	56.67
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 73: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

56.67% of the students managed to point out to the convenient tense, which is the past continuous. 20% of the students still confuse between the present perfect continuous and the past continuous as they opted for the present perfect continuous. Only 6.67% chose (b) –the past perfect continuous and 16.67% chose (d) –the past simple.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

a. left

c. had left

b. has left

d. had been leaving

O6	N	%
a	12	40
b	9	30
c	6	20
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 74: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

In this sentence, the number of the students who answered correctly increased from 26.67% in the pre-test to 40% in the post-test by choosing (a) –the past simple. However, 30% of the students are still influenced by the use of “just” since they opted for the wrong answer (b) –the present perfect simple. 20% of the students chose (c) –the past perfect simple and 10% of the students chose (d) –the past perfect continuous.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

a. had eaten

c. have eaten

b. have been eating

d. had been eating

O7	N	%
a	3	10
b	4	13.33
c	6	20
d	17	56.67
T	30	100%

Table 75: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

56.67% of the students found the suitable answer (d) –the past perfect continuous.

The students’ correct answers augmented from 40% in the pre-test to 56.67% in the post-test. Still many students ignore the right use of the past perfect continuous.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

- a. finished b. have finished c. had finished

O8	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	5	16.67
c	20	66.67
T	30	100%

Table 76: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

A large number of the students improved in the post-test since 66.67% ticked the right answer (c) –the past perfect simple. Ten students among thirty still ignore the use of past perfect simple because 16.67% ticked (a) –the past simple and 16.67% ticked (b) –the present perfect simple.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

- a. never visited c. Have never visited
b. Have never been visiting d. had never visited

O9	N	%
a	9	30
b	3	10
c	16	53.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 77: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

As we clearly see on table (77), 53.33% of the students agreed on (c) –the present perfect simple as a correct answer may be because it was used with the adverb “never”. 30% of the students still misuse the present perfect simple because they gave the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. We think that the mother tongue interference is the cause of difficulties in the acquisition of the present perfect simple.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- b. watched
- c. was watching
- d. had been watching

O10	N	%
a	19	63.33
b	5	16.67
c	4	13.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 78: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

63.33% recognized that the present perfect continuous is the suitable tense by opting for (a) –the present perfect continuous. The rest of the students failed in finding the correct answer.16.67% of the students chose (b) –the past simple, 13.33% chose (c) –the past continuous and 6.67% chose (d) –the past perfect continuous.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

- a. did not eat
- b. had not eaten
- c. have not eaten

O11	N	%
a	12	40
b	6	20
c	12	40
T	30	100%

Table 79: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in s. 11

The results clarify that the past simple and the present perfect simple are still confused by the students. Although there is an improvement in the post-test in comparison with the pre-test, only 40% of the students decided on the appropriate answer (c) –the present perfect simple and 40% of the students decided on the wrong answer (a) –the past simple. 20% of the students picked answer (b) –the past perfect simple.

12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since December.

- a. was studying
- b. had been studying
- c. have been studying
- d. studied

O12	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	2	6.67
c	19	63.33
d	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 80: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12

In this sentence, students progressed from 30% in the pre-test to 63.33% in the post-test. Therefore 63.33% of the students found the exact answer (c) –the present perfect continuous. The other students have not yet mastered the present perfect continuous,

6.67% ticked (a) –the past continuous, 6.67% ticked (b) –the past perfect continuous and 23.33% ticked (d) –the past simple.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having
- b. were having
- c. had been having
- d. had had

O13	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	18	60
c	5	16.67
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 81: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

It is clear from the table above that 60% of the students found the right answer (b) – the past continuous. However, some students still confuse it with tenses like the present perfect continuous, the past perfect continuous. 13.33% chose (a) –the present perfect continuous, 16.67% chose (c) –the past perfect continuous and 10% of the students opted for (d) –the past simple.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

- a. have known
- b. had known
- c. knew
- d. have been knowing

O14	N	%
a	2	6.67
b	23	76.67
c	00	00
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 82: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

It seems that the majority of the students grasped the use of the past perfect simple, 76.67% of the students selected option (b) –the past perfect simple. A small number of the students did not provide the correct answer. 6.67% ticked (a) –the present perfect simple, 16.67% ticked (d) –the present perfect continuous, and no person ticked (c) –the past simple.

15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.

Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.

a. lost

b. have lost

c. had lost

O15	N	%
a	16	53.33
b	4	13.33
c	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 83: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

The table shows that 53.33% of the students pointed to the right answer (a) –the past simple. The improvement in the use of the past simple in this sentence jumped from 33.33% in the pre-test to 53.33% in the post-test. 13.33% of the students chose (b) –the present perfect simple. 33.33% ticked the past perfect simple believing that there are two actions; one occurred before the other one.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

a. lost

b. has lost

c. had lost

O16	N	%
a	6	20
b	17	56.67
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 84: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S.16

As clearly seen on table (84), 56.67% of the students decided on the correct answer (b) –the present perfect simple. The improvement in this sentence shifted from 40% in the pre-test to 56.67% in the post-test. A number of students still confuse between the present perfect simple, the past simple and the past perfect simple. 20% of the students ticked (a) – the past simple and 23.33% of the students ticked (c) –the past perfect simple.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

a. did not see

b. have not seen

c. had not seen

O17	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	15	50
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 85: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

Half of the students answered correctly by selecting (b) –the present perfect simple. The rest of the students still struggle with the correct use of the present perfect simple. 33.33% opted for (a) –the past simple and 16.67% chose (c) –the past perfect simple. Hence, students’ correct answer increased from 20% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

a. have just had

b. had just had

c. had just

O18	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	15	50
c	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 86: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

Half of the students provided the correct answer (b) –the past perfect simple. However, 36.33% are still influenced by the use of “just” because they opted for the wrong answer (a) –the present perfect simple. The accuracy gain in the use of the present perfect simple shifted from 20% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

a. have been working

c. worked

b. was working

d. had been working

O19	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	2	6.67
c	3	10
d	17	56.67
T	30	100%

Table 87: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

As the table indicates, 56.67% of the students offered the correct answer (d) –the past perfect continuous. 26.67% of the students still confuse the past perfect continuous with

the present perfect continuous. The general gain in this sentence increased from 43.33% in the pre-test to 56.67% in the post-test.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing
- b. played
- c. were playing
- d. have been playing

O20	N	%
a	18	60
b	5	16.67
c	4	13.33
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 88: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

As far as this sentence is concerned, the progress jumped from 36.67% in the pre-test to 60% in the post-test. 60% of the students offered the right answer (a) –the past perfect continuous. So, it seems that many students acquired the rule that governs the use of the past perfect continuous. The rest of the students did not find the correct answer, 16.67% chose (b) –the past simple, 13.33% chose (c) –the present perfect continuous and 10% of the students ticked (d) –the present perfect continuous.

4.5 Overall Analysis

The present study sought to confirm or disconfirm two main hypotheses. In answering the first hypothesis which is “grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than traditional output-based instruction in improving learners’ grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses”, a statistical test for independent samples was

applied and the first hypothesis was accepted. However, as for the data gained from the item analysis on students' grammatical accuracy, some results will be illustrated. The results obtained from the analysis of both the control group and the experimental group in grammatical accuracy will be elicited through the following tables:

Sentence	Tenses	Pre-test %	Post-test %	Gain %
1	Past continuous	50	76.67	26.67
2	Past simple	33.33	63.33	30
3	Past perfect simple	46.67	56.67	10
4	Present perfect simple	43.33	63.33	20
5	Past continuous	20	33.33	13.33
6	Past simple	33.33	43.33	10
7	Past perfect continuous	33.33	50	16.67
8	Past perfect simple	36.67	53.33	16.66
9	Present perfect simple	40	43.33	3.33
10	Present perfect continuous	40	56.67	16.67
11	Present perfect simple	26.67	43.33	16.66
12	Present perfect continuous	23.33	50	26.67
13	Past continuous	56.67	66.67	10
14	Past perfect simple	43.33	56.67	13.34
15	Past simple	46.67	60	13.33
16	Present perfect simple	53.33	60	6.67
17	Present perfect simple	33.33	36.67	3.34
18	Past perfect simple	36.67	40	3.33
19	Past perfect continuous	26.67	53.33	26.66
20	Past perfect continuous	33.33	60	26.67
Σ		756.67	1066.67	310

Table 89: The Control Group Accuracy Pre-test and Post-test Gains in Grammatical Accuracy

In terms of grammatical accuracy, the table above indicates that the control group realized improvements in all English past tenses items. In the pre-test, the control group achieved 756.67% points in total and 1066.67% points in total in the post-test. So, the gain of the control group when implementing the traditional method reached 310% points. As it is also indicated, the control group witnessed higher improvements in some items such as the past simple, the past continuous, the past perfect simple and the past perfect continuous in comparison with other tenses like the present perfect simple.

Sentence	Tenses	Pre-test %	Post-test %	Gain %
1	Past continuous	56.67	80	23.33
2	Past simple	53.33	76.67	23.34
3	Past perfect simple	43.33	60	16.67
4	Present perfect simple	43.33	63.33	20
5	Past continuous	26.67	56.67	30
6	Past simple	26.67	40	13.33
7	Past perfect continuous	40	56.67	16.67
8	Past perfect simple	46.67	66.67	20
9	Present perfect simple	46.67	53.33	6.66
10	Present perfect continuous	46.67	63.33	16.66
11	Present perfect simple	26.67	40	13.33
12	Present perfect continuous	30	63.33	33.33
13	Past continuous	36	60	24
14	Past perfect simple	40	76.67	36.67
15	Past simple	33.33	53.33	20
16	Present perfect simple	40	56.67	16.67
17	Present perfect simple	20	50	30
18	Past perfect simple	20	50	30
19	Past perfect continuous	43.33	56.67	13.34
20	Past perfect continuous	36.67	60	23.33
Σ		756.01	1183.33	427.33

Table 90: The Experimental Group Accuracy Pre-test and Post-test Gains in the Grammatical Accuracy Test

The table provides a clear indication that the experimental group made a considerable progression in all English past tenses. The results depict that the total score of the experimental group in the pre-test is 756.01% and the total score in the post-test is 1183.33% with a gain of 427.33% points. These results justify the effectiveness of input-processing instruction in eradicating the mistakes made by the students and ameliorating the students' grammatical accuracy.

Conclusion

The study investigated the effect of input-processing instruction on learners' grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses. The findings revealed that students face real difficulties in using past tenses accurately before the instruction. However, statistical analysis revealed that there is an improvement in the grammatical accuracy in the use of English past tenses when implementing input-processing instruction. This entails that focusing on the comprehension of the learners appeared beneficial for students before pushing them towards production. The input-processing instruction offered learners more time to process the input, and this resulted in better understanding of the target structures. Therefore, the hypothesis that input-processing instruction is better than traditional output-based instruction in improving learners' grammatical accuracy is confirmed.

Chapter Five

The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Learners'

Explicit Knowledge in the Use of English Past Tenses

	Page
Introduction	159
5.1 Results of the Grammatical Explicit Knowledge and the t-test	159
5.1.1 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Pre-test	161
5.1.2 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Post-test	162
5.2 Analysis of the Results	163
5.2.1 The Pre-test	163
4.2.2 The Post-test	194
5.3 Overall Analysis	227
Conclusion	230

Chapter Five

The Effect of Input-Processing Instruction on Learners’

Explicit Knowledge in the Use of English Past Tenses

Introduction

This chapter investigates the second hypothesis of the research work which entails that input-processing instruction would be more effective than traditional output-based instruction in ameliorating learners’ explicit knowledge. To check the validity of this hypothesis, the chapter depicts the experiment to investigate the results of the pre and post-test which involve the multiple-justification test. Hence, the chapter provides an analysis of the pre-test and the post-test to examine whether the experimental group would outperform the control group after the experiment implementation.

5.1 Results of the Grammatical Explicit Knowledge and the t-test

The following tables represent the students’ scores of the experimental and control groups in the multiple-choice justification explicit knowledge test. For measuring learners’ explicit knowledge, the score of each sentence is one point. This part has twenty points in total. However, it is worth mentioning that if the student provides a correct answer in the justification test in a specific sentence and provides a wrong answer in the grammatical accuracy test in the same sentence, he will then have a zero in both the grammatical accuracy and the explicit knowledge test.

Control Group			Experimental Group		
Score X_2	Frequency f	fX_2	Score X_1	Frequency f	fX_1
2	2	4	3	2	6
3	4	12	4	3	12
5	4	20	5	4	20
6	5	30	6	6	36
7	6	42	7	7	49
8	5	40	8	3	24
9	1	9	9	2	18
10	2	20	10	2	20
11	1	11	11	1	11
	$N_2=30$	$\Sigma X_2= 188$		$N_1=30$	$\Sigma X_1= 196$
	$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{188}{30} = 6.27$			$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{196}{30} = 6.53$	

Table 91: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Pre-test Scores

Concerning learners' explicit knowledge, the mean score of the control group in the pre-test was (6.27), whereas the mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test was (6.53). The difference between the means of the experimental and the control groups is marked only by (0.26) of difference before the treatment.

Control Group			Experimental Group		
Score X_2	Frequency f	fX_2	Score X_1	Frequency f	fX_1
4	1	4	6	1	10
5	3	15	7	2	16
7	6	42	8	3	36
8	5	40	9	4	60
9	6	54	10	5	66
10	4	40	11	7	36
11	2	22	12	5	39
12	2	24	14	2	28
15	1	15	15	1	30
	$N_2=30$	$\Sigma X_2= 256$		$N_1=30$	$\Sigma X_1= 310$
	$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{256}{30} = 8.53$			$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{310}{30} = 10.33$	

Table 92: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Post-test Scores

In terms of learners' explicit knowledge, the mean score of the control group in the post-test was (8.53), whereas the mean score of the experimental group was (10.33). The

difference between the means of the experimental and the control groups after the treatment is (1.80).

5.1.1 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Pre-test

The Control Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_2 &= 6.27 & \bar{X}_2^2 &= 39.27 \\ \Sigma X_2 &= 188 & \Sigma X_2^2 &= 1340 \\ S_2^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2 = \frac{1340}{30} - 39.27 = 5.40 \\ S_2 &= \sqrt{S_2^2} = \sqrt{5.40} = 2.32\end{aligned}$$

The Experimental Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_1 &= 6.53 & \bar{X}_1^2 &= 42.68 \\ \Sigma X_1 &= 196 & \Sigma X_1^2 &= 1400 \\ S_1^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{1400}{30} - 42.68 = 3.98 \\ S_1 &= \sqrt{S_1^2} = \sqrt{3.98} = 2\end{aligned}$$

The t value

$$\begin{aligned}t_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} &= \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} = \frac{(6.53 - 6.27)\sqrt{(30 + 30 - 2)30 \times 30}}{\sqrt{(30 \times 3.98 + 30 \times 5.40)(30 + 30)}} \\ &= \frac{60.93}{503.19} = 0.12\end{aligned}$$

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

Groups	N	Mean (\bar{X})	df	SD	t_N
Control	30	6.27	58	2.32	0.12
Experimental	30	6.53	58	2	

Table 93: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Pre-test Scores

As Table (93) displays, the t-value (0.12) is less than the t value on the table (2.000). The difference between the two means was found to be nonsignificant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. The statistical results indicate that there is no significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group before the experiment.

5.1.2 The t-test Computation for the Learners' Explicit Knowledge Post-test

The Control Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_2 &= 8.53 & \bar{X}_2^2 &= 72.82 \\ \Sigma X_2 &= 256 & \Sigma X_2^2 &= 2725 \\ S_2^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2 = \frac{2725}{30} - 72.82 = 18.02 \\ S_2 &= \sqrt{S_2^2} = \sqrt{18.02} = 4.24\end{aligned}$$

The Experimental Group

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X}_1 &= 10.33 & \bar{X}_1^2 &= 106.77 \\ \Sigma X_1 &= 310 & \Sigma X_1^2 &= 3334 \\ S_1^2 &= \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{3334}{30} - 106.77 = 4.36 \\ S_1 &= \sqrt{S_1^2} = \sqrt{4.36} = 2.09\end{aligned}$$

The T Value

$$\begin{aligned}t_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} &= \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2) N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2) (N_1 + N_2)}} = \frac{(10.33 - 8.53) \sqrt{(30 + 30 - 2) 30 \times 30}}{\sqrt{(30 \times 4.36 + 30 \times 18.02) (30 + 30)}} = \\ &= \frac{411.25}{200.67} = 2.05\end{aligned}$$

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

Groups	N	Mean (\bar{X})	df	SD	t_N
Control	30	8.53	58	4.24	2.05
Experimental	30	10.33	58	2.09	

Table 94: Grammatical Explicit Knowledge Post-test Scores

It is clear from Table (94) that the t- value (2.05) is superior to the t value on the table (2.000). The difference between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group is significant at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

According to the statistical results above, there is a significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group after implementing the new method of teaching which is “input-processing instruction”. Therefore, the second research hypothesis is confirmed.

5.2 Analysis of the Results

In the explicit knowledge test, the researcher gave the participants the same twenty sentences which were administered in the grammatical accuracy test and asked them to select the appropriate rule that governs each sentence from three or four options. Through this method, students' mistakes and problems are going to be investigated individually.

5.2.1 The Pre-test

The Control Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
- b. had
- c. have had
- d. had had

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place.
- c. The action had finished in the past before another one took place.
- d. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O1	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	13	43.33
c	6	20
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 95: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

As the table clarifies, 43.33% of the students justified correctly by choosing option (b) –the action was taking place in the past when another one took place. However, it is

worth reminding that 50% of the students chose the right tense but not the same number of the students gave the right explanation. The students who provided the right explanation of the sentence understood that there are two actions: the first one was taking place when it was interrupted by the second action. Moreover, the use of certain words such as “when” and “while” help students to opt for the past continuous and to provide the right explanation.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
- b. made
- c. had made
- d. has been making

- a. The action has taken place recently.
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O2	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	10	33.33
c	9	30
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 96: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

In this sentence, 33.33% of the students chose the right tense –the past simple. 33.33% of the students provided the correct justification. The majority of the students failed in presenting the right answer. The students who provided the right explanation knew that the specific reference used in the sentence “when she was 20” is used with the

past simple to show that the time is over. The results also indicate that many students ignore the rule that governs the past simple in the explicit knowledge pre-test.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

- a. The action took place and finished at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.
- c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- d. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

O3	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	11	36.67
c	9	30
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 97: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

46.67% of the students offered the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy test. However, only 36.67% managed in giving the appropriate justification. This indicates that only this number of the students demonstrated their comprehension. There is a probability that students induced the correct justification in this context because both the grammatical accuracy test and the justification test illustrates that the past perfect simple has two past events. This shows that only this number of students has the ability to process the input correctly. The other students demonstrated their focus on production rather than comprehension.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

c. The action had been taking place before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O4	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	13	43.33
c	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 98: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

Only 36.67% of the students provided the correct justification for the present perfect continuous among 43.33% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy test. However, the majority of the students did not provide correct answers. The rule which governs the present perfect continuous was clear in this context because the length of the action “all the morning” was given to help students find the correct tense. Yet, the results revealed the concentration on immediate production without comprehension.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working c. was working

- b. had been working. d. worked

a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.

- b. The action had been taking place in the past before a precise moment in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past and progress at the present.

O5	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	8	26.67
c	6	20
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 99: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

Only 20% of the students chose the past continuous, and only 20% of the students provided the exact explanation. The table indicates that the students ignore the rule which governs the past continuous since they were only distributing their selection.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- b. has left
- c. had left
- d. had been leaving

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past with a connection to the present.
- c. The action had taken place earlier in the past before another action took place in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O6	N	%
a	9	30
b	14	46.67
c	5	16.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 100: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

30% of the students chose the right justification by choosing option (a), and 33.33% chose the right tense the past simple. The majority of the students failed to justify accurately, 46.67% chose (b) –the justification for the present perfect simple. 16.67% chose (c), and 6.67% chose option (d). Students did not opt for the correct justification because they did not process the meaning of the sentence properly.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

- a. The action has taken place in the past without a specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has been taking place in the past with a focus on the length of the action. (began in the past and continuous to the present).
- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one occurred with an emphasis on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O7	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	6	20
c	9	30
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 101: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

33.33% of the students opted for the right tense in the grammatical accuracy test, and 30% of the students offered the right justification by choosing option (c) –the action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past with an emphasis on the length of the action. The rest of the students were not capable of choosing neither the right tense nor the right justification.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

- a. finished
- b. have finished
- c. had finished

- a. The action took place at a specific time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another action took place in the past.
- c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O8	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	10	33.33
c	15	50
T	30	100%

Table 102: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

As it is clearly seen on the table, 33.33% of the students picked the correct choice (b) –the action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past. It is worth mentioning that 36.67% of the students provided the right answer in the grammatical

accuracy pre-test. This shows that the majority of the students do not know the use of this tense.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

- a. never visited
- b. Have never been visiting
- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past
- c. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O9	N	%
a	3	10
b	8	26.67
c	14	46.67
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 103: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

26.67% of the students who opted for the correct tense in the grammatical accuracy pre-test provided the right justification for the use of the present perfect simple. The other students opted for the wrong tense and the wrong justification: 10% of the students chose (a), 46.67% of the students ticked option (c) and 16.67% opted for (d).

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- c. was watching

b. watched

d. had been watching

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action (the action started in the past and is still in progress).

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action before another one took place.

O10	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	7	23.33
c	9	30
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 104: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

Only 33.33% of the students provided the exact explicit explanation among 40% of the students who opted for the correct tense in the accuracy test. The other students were distributing their answers on the other options: 23.33% opted for (b), 30% of the students chose (c), and 13.33% ticked option (d).

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

a. did not eat

b. had not eaten

c. have not eaten

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past and continues up to the present

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O11	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	6	20
c	13	43.33
T	30	100%

Table 105: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11

20% of the students found the correct justification (b) out of 26.67% who found the correct tense in the use of the grammatical accuracy pre-test. 80% of the students showed their inability to know the use of the present perfect in this context.

12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since December.

a. was studying

c. have been studying

b. had been studying

d. studied

a. The action was taking place in the past before another one took place.

b. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O12	N	%
a	6	20
b	8	26.67
c	9	30
d	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 106: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12

23.33% of the students who opted for the correct tense in the grammatical accuracy pre-test rendered the correct justification. These results justify that most students do not know how to use the present perfect continuous accurately and do not comprehend when to use this tense.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having
- b. were having
- c. had been having
- d. had had

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place before a precise moment in the past.

O13	N	%
a	9	30
b	14	46.67
c	2	6.67
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 107: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

46.67% of the students provided the correct justification (b) out of 56.67% who ticked the appropriate tense in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. The past continuous seems somehow accessible for the students.

- b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before precise moment in the past.

O15	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	14	46.67
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 109: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

46.67% of students decided on the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test by choosing the past simple; however only 36.67% of the students justified correctly. It seems that the students were misled by the second part of the sentence. The students illustrated their lack of comprehension in the justification of the tenses.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

- a. lost
- b. has lost
- c. had lost

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past and the result of the action is still valid in the present.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before a precise moment in the past.

O16	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	13	43.33
c	12	40
T	30	100%

Table 110: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

It seems that the present perfect simple is rather easy in this context because 53.33% of the students answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test and 43.33% justified correctly in the explicit knowledge pre-test by opting for option (b).

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

- a. did not see b. have not seen c. had not seen

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
 b. The action has taken place in the past and continues up to the present.
 c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

O17	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	8	26.67
c	9	30
T	30	100%

Table 111: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

26.67% of the students supplied the correct justification among 33.33% who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. The present perfect simple seems troublesome for the students in this context.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

- a. have just had b. had just had c. had just

- a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
 b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
 c. The action took place in the past at a specific time in the past.

O18	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	10	33.33
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 112: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

The table shows that 33.33% of the students gave the right answer (b) –the action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past. The majority of the students were unable to point to the right justification. The ignorance of the rule is thought to be the main reason behind the mistakes of the students. It is worth noting that 36.67% of the students answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

a. have been working c. worked

b. was working d. had been working

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the middle of it.
- c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O19	N	%
a	6	20
b	4	13.33
c	13	43.33
d	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 113: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

The past perfect continuous also seems troublesome for the students because only 23.33% provided the right justification by ticking (d) –the action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action. 36.67% of the students offered the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing
- b. played
- c. were playing
- d. have been playing

- a. The action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O20	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	12	40
c	8	26.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 114: The Control Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

Out of 33.33% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test, 26.67% of the students provided the correct justification (a) –the action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action. This indicates that only 26.67% confessed their comprehension either in the grammatical accuracy test or the explicit knowledge test.

The Experimental Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
b. had
- c. have had
d. had had

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action was taking place when another one took place.
- c. The action had finished in the past before another one took place.
- d. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O1	N	%
a	9	30
b	15	50
c	5	16.67
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 115: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

50% of the students justified the use of the past continuous correctly out of 56.67% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. It seems that the rule which governs the use of the past continuous in this context is somehow easy for the students to master.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
b. made
- c. had made
d. has been making

- a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O2	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	13	43.33
c	6	20
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 116: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

43.33% of the students opted for the right justification (b) –the action took place in the past with specific reference to the past. 53.33% of the students found the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. Therefore, only 43.33% proved their understanding and comprehension in the use of the past simple.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

- a. The action took place and finished at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.
- c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- d. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

O3	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	9	30
c	7	23.33
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 117: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

30% of the students ticked the correct justification (b) –the action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past. 43.33% of the students gave the appropriate answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
c. The action had been taking place before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O4	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	12	40
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 118: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

43.33% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test found the right justification (a) –the justification for the use of the present perfect continuous. These results show that the number of these students were not only ticking since they proved their comprehension on both tests.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working
- b. had been working.
- c. was working
- d. worked

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had been taking place in the past before a precise moment in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past and progress at the present.

O5	N	%
a	6	20
b	7	23.33
c	8	26.67
d	9	30
T	30	100%

Table 119: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

What is also observed in this case is that the number of the students who ticked the correct option in the grammatical accuracy pre-test ticked the correct justification in the explicit knowledge test. Therefore, 26.67% of the students provided the correct explicit knowledge of the past continuous.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- b. has left
- c. had left
- d. had been leaving

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

- b. The action has taken place in the past with a connection to the present.
- c. The action had taken place earlier in the past before another action took place in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O6	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	15	50
c	6	20
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 120: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

23.33% of students provided the right justification (a) out of 26.67% who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. It seems that the students were misled by the use of “just”, which pushed the majority to opt for the present perfect simple.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

- a. The action has taken place in the past without a specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has been taking place in the past with a focus on the length of the action. (began in the past and continuous to the present).
- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one occurred with an emphasis on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

- a. never visited
 - b. Have never been visiting
 - c. Have never visited
 - d. had never visited
- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past
- c. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O9	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	10	33.33
c	7	23.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 123: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

33.33% of the students supplied the correct justification answer by ticking option (b) –the justification for the use of the present perfect simple. 46.67% supplied the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. So, only 33.33% demonstrated their comprehension in the use of the present perfect simple in this sentence.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
 - b. watched
 - c. was watching
 - d. had been watching
- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action (the action started in the past and is still in progress).

- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action before another one took place.

O10	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	4	13.33
c	10	33.33
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 124: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

Always, less than half of the students do not fail to give the right answer in grammatical explicit knowledge test. Thus only 36.67% decided on the right answer in pointing to option (a) –the justification for the use of the present perfect continuous. However, it is useful to mention that 46.67% answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

- a. did not eat
- b. had not eaten
- c. have not eaten

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place before a precise moment in the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

Only 26.67% of the students selected the appropriate answer (d) –the justification for the use of the present perfect continuous. In processing the right meaning of this tense, the students may be mistaken by the verb “started”. This led them to opt for the justification of the past simple and the past perfect continuous. 30% of the students select the right answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having
 - b. were having
 - c. had been having
 - d. had had
- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 - b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
 - c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 - d. The action had taken place before a precise moment in the past.

O13	N	%
a	9	30
b	10	33.33
c	5	16.67
d	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 127: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

33.33% of the students supplied the correct answer in the grammatical explicit knowledge test, and 36% of the students supplied the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy pre-test. The appropriate answer in the explicit knowledge test is option (b) –the

action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past. The majority of the students were not able to indicate the appropriate answer.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

- a. have known
- b. had known
- c. knew
- d. have been knowing

- a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
- c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O14	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	10	33.33
c	9	30
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 128: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

In this case, 33.33% of the students managed to choose the right option (b) –the justification for the use of the past perfect simple. Generally, the mistakes in the use of the past tenses were due to the ignorance of the rules. The students who opted for the correct tense in the grammatical accuracy pre-test were 40%.

- b. The action has taken place in the past and the result of the action is still valid in the present.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before a precise moment in the past.

O16	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	10	33.33
c	12	40
T	30	100%

Table 130: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

In this context, the students confronted difficulties in understanding the meaning of the sentence and processing the meaning of the right tense because the majority of the students did not find the right answer. Only 33.33% of the students who provided the correct justification (b) out of 40% of the students who answered correctly in grammatical accuracy pre-test.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

- a. did not see
- b. have not seen
- c. had not seen

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

O17	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	6	20
c	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 131: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

b. was working

d. had been working

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the middle of it.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O19	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	4	13.33
c	2	6.67
d	13	43.33
T	30	100%

Table 133: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

The table depicts that 43.33% of the students who opted for the right tense in the grammatical accuracy pre-test found the right explicit justification for the past perfect continuous. The rest of the students distributed their answers on the other options.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

a. had been playing

c. were playing

b. played

d. have been playing

a. The action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O20	N	%
a	9	30
b	3	10
c	14	46.67
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 134: The Experimental Group Pre-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

This table clarifies that out of 36.67% of the students who found the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy test, only 30% of the students succeeded to justify the right answer for the use of the past perfect continuous. The majority of the students seem to ignore the rule that governs this tense.

5.2.2 The Post-test

The Control Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
- b. had
- c. have had
- d. had had

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action was taking place when another one took place.
- c. The action had finished in the past before another one took place.
- d. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O1	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	19	63.33
c	4	13.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 135: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

As it is clearly indicated, 63.33% of the students found the grammatical explicit rule of this tense, which is the past continuous out of 76.67% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The explicit rule which governs this tense seems easy for the students since the majority opted for the correct answer either in the grammatical accuracy test or the explicit knowledge test. The increase jumped from 43.33% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 63.33% in the post-test.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
- b. made
- c. had made
- d. has been making

- a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O2	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	18	60
c	3	10
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 136: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

In the second item, 60% of the students who gave the appropriate answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test provided the right justification in the grammatical explicit knowledge test. The rest of the students did not master the use of the past simple in this context. The improvement in terms of explicit knowledge changed from 33.33% in the pre-test to 60% in the post-test.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate
- b. had eaten
- c. have eaten
- d. were eating

- a. The action took place and finished at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.
- c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
- d. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

O3	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	14	46.67
c	4	13.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 137: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

In the use of the past perfect simple, 46.67% of the students supplied the correct justification (b) –the action had taken place in the past before another one took place. 56.67% of the students supplied the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. Half of the students could not find the appropriate answer. The number of the students

who supplied the correct justification increased from 36.67% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 46.67% in the post-test.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

c. The action had been taking place before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O4	N	%
a	17	56.67
b	9	30
c	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 138: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

As the table clarifies, 56.67% of the students ticked the correct justification for the use of the present perfect continuous out of 63.33% of the students who ticked the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The rest of the students confused the present perfect continuous with the past continuous and the past perfect continuous. The number of the students who provided the right justification shifted from 36.67% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 56.67% in the explicit knowledge post-test.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working c. was working

- b. had been working. d. worked
- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had been taking place in the past before a precise moment in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past and progress at the present.

O5	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	9	30
c	9	30
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 139: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

30% of the students who rendered the suitable answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test rendered the right justification in the grammatical explicit knowledge post-test by ticking option (c) –the action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past. The majority of the students still confuse the past continuous with the past simple, the past perfect continuous and the present perfect continuous, which is justified by the fact that the explicit rule which governs the use of the past continuous rather difficult than other rules. The improvement increased from 20% in the pre-test to 30% in the post-test.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left c. had left
- b. has left d. had been leaving
- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

- b. The action has taken place in the past with a connection to the present.
- c. The action had taken place earlier in the past before another action took place in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O6	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	14	46.67
c	3	10
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 140: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

This sentence creates difficulties for most of the students and this is caused by the use of “just” and the specific reference “a few minutes ago” in the same sentence which led the students to confuse between the use of the present perfect simple and the past simple. Only 36.67% of the students supplied the correct justification in the explicit knowledge post-test from 43.33% who gave the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The number of the students who provided the right answer improved from 30% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 36.67% in the explicit knowledge post-test.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

- a. The action has taken place in the past without a specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has been taking place in the past with a focus on the length of the action. (began in the past and continuous to the present).

- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one occurred with an emphasis on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O7	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	6	20
c	12	40
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 141: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

40% of the students managed to find the correct justification (c) out of 50% of the students who opted for the correct tense in the grammatical accuracy post-test. More than half of the students did not answer correctly; however, the number of the students who improved in the explicit knowledge test reached 40% in the explicit knowledge post-test after it was 30% in the explicit knowledge pre-test.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

- a. finished
- b. have finished
- c. had finished

- a. The action took place at a specific time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another action took place in the past.
- c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O8	N	%
a	12	40
b	13	43.33
c	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 142: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 8

As the table clarifies, less than half of the students opted for the right explicit rule that governs the use of the past perfect simple. 43.33% of the students offered the correct justification in the explicit knowledge post-test out of 53.33% of the students who offered the right answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The gain of the grammatical explicit knowledge jumps from 33.33% in the pre-test to 43.33% in the post-test.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

- a. never visited
 - b. Have never been visiting
 - c. Have never visited
 - d. had never visited
- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past
- c. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O9	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	9	30
c	12	40
d	5	16.67
T	30	100%

Table 143: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 9

Only 30% of the students succeeded to present the right justification (b) out of 43.33% who ticked the appropriate answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. Despite the fact that the explicit rule which governs the use of the present perfect simple in this context is clear; the majority of the students were incapable of providing the correct

justification. The gain in the grammatical explicit knowledge shifted from 26.67% in the pre-test to 30% in the post-test.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- b. watched
- c. was watching
- d. had been watching

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action (the action started in the past and is still in progress).
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action before another one took place.

O10	N	%
a	15	50
b	10	33.33
c	2	6.67
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 144: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

The number of the students who supplied the correct answer in the justification test was 50% out of 63.33% of the students who supplied the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The present perfect continuous is also still confused with other past tenses. The students' improvement increased from 33.33% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

- c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O12	N	%
a	6	20
b	9	30
c	4	13.33
d	11	36.67
T	30	100%

Table 146: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 12

Only 36.67% of the students from 50% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy post-test found the correct justification (d) in the explicit knowledge test. The majority of the students did not process the meaning of this sentence in the right way. This led them to misinterpret the meaning of the past perfect continuous and they mostly confuse it with the past perfect continuous. The number of the students who supplied the correct answer in the explicit knowledge test jumped from 23.33% in the pre-test to 36.67% in the post-test.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

- a. have been having
 - b. were having
 - c. had been having
 - d. had had
- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 - b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
 - c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 - d. The action had taken place before a precise moment in the past.

O13	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	14	46.67
c	2	6.67
d	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 147: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

Only 46.67% of the students ticked the correct justification (b) in the explicit knowledge post-test, whereas 66.67% of the students ticked the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. In this item, the past continuous was still confused with the present perfect continuous and the past continuous. The gain in this sentence remained as it was in the pre-test.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

a. have known

c. knew

b. had known

d. have been knowing

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O14	N	%
a	6	20
b	12	40
c	4	13.33
d	8	26.67
T	30	100%

Table 148: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

the grammatical accuracy post-test. Students were misled by the use of “just” and may be with the auxiliary “were” in the first part which led them to confuse the past perfect simple with the present perfect simple and the past simple.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

- a. have been working
 - b. was working
 - c. worked
 - d. had been working
- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 - b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the middle of it.
 - c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
 - d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O19	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	3	10
c	6	20
d	11	36.67
T	30	100%

Table 153: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

According to this table, less than half of the students provided the suitable justification (d) –the justification for the use of past perfect continuous out of 53.33% of the students who gave the appropriate answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The students’ improvement in the explicit knowledge test increased from 23.33% in the pre-test to 36.67% in the post-test.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing
- b. played
- c. were playing
- d. have been playing

- a. The action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O20	N	%
a	12	40
b	4	13.33
c	8	26.67
d	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 154: The Control Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

40% of the students ticked the correct justification (a) –for the use of the past perfect continuous. The largest number of the students did not find the explicit rule that governs the use of the past perfect continuous. It is appropriate to mention that the number of the students who chose the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test was 60%. The increase in the grammatical explicit knowledge shifted from 26.67% in the pre-test to 40% in the post-test.

The Experimental Group

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

- a. were having
- b. had
- c. have had
- d. had had

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action was taking place when another one took place.
- c. The action had finished in the past before another one took place.
- d. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

O1	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	22	73.33
c	3	10
d	1	3.33
T	30	100%

Table 155: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 1

It is clear from the table above that 73.33% of the students provided the correct justification (b) out of 80% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The results indicate that the majority of the students acquired the explicit rule that governs the past continuous. The increase in the improvement of the students shifted from 56.67% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 80% in the explicit knowledge post-test.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

- a. has made
- c. had made

b. made

d. has been making

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O2	N	%
a	5	16.67
b	21	70
c	4	13.33
d	00	00
T	30	100%

Table 156: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 2

70% of the students gave the correct justification (b) –for the use of the past simple. The number of the students who gave the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test was 76,67% whereas the increase in the explicit knowledge test was 43.33% in the pre-test and 70% in the post-test. We can say that the experimental group noticed a great improvement in the use of the past simple.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

a. ate

c. have eaten

b. had eaten

d. were eating

a. The action took place and finished at a definite time in the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

d. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

O3	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	16	53.33
c	4	13.33
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 157: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 3

The table shows that 53.33% of the students mentioned the appropriate justification (b) out of 60% of the students who ticked the appropriate answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The past perfect simple is still considered a difficult tense for many other students. The number of the students who witnessed an improvement in the explicit knowledge test increases from 30% in the pre-test to 53.33% in the post-test.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
 b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
 c. The action had been taking place before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O4	N	%
a	18	60
b	8	26.67
c	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 158: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 4

As the table indicates, 60% of the students afforded the exact justification (a) that the action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action. The number of the students who supplied the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test was 63.33%. The improvement augmented from 43.33% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 60% in the post-test.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working
- b. had been working.
- c. was working
- d. worked

- a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.
- b. The action had been taking place in the past before a precise moment in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.
- d. The action has been taking place in the past and progress at the present.

O5	N	%
a	7	23.33
b	3	10
c	14	46.67
d	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 159: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 5

Less than half of the students 46.67% supplied the correct justification (c) –the justification for the use of the past continuous out of 56.67% who provided the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The number of the students in the explicit

knowledge shifted from 26.67% in the pre-test to 46.67% in the post-test. The explicit rule that governs the past continuous in this item is still troublesome for many students.

6. Jane.....just a few minutes ago.

- a. left
- b. has left
- c. had left
- d. had been leaving

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past with a connection to the present.
- c. The action had taken place earlier in the past before another action took place in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

O6	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	14	46.67
c	5	16.67
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 160: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 6

It seems that the students are still misled by the use of “just”, and this led the majority to opt for the justification (b). Only 26% of the students chose the correct justification (a) –for the use of the past simple out of 40% of the students who chose the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The improvement changed from 23.33% in the pre-test to 26.67% in the post-test. This is considered as a very poor improvement.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

- a. had eaten
- b. have been eating
- c. have eaten
- d. had been eating

- a. The action has taken place in the past without a specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has been taking place in the past with a focus on the length of the action. (began in the past and continuous to the present).
- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one occurred with an emphasis on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O7	N	%
a	4	13.33
b	7	23.33
c	15	50
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 161: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 7

Half of the students managed to find the appropriate justification (c) –for the use of the past perfect continuous out of 56.67% who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The gain in the grammatical explicit knowledge jumped from 36.67% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

- a. finished
- b. have finished
- c. had finished

- a. The action took place at a specific time in the past.
- b. The action had taken place in the past before another action took place in the past.

46.67% of the students afforded the right justification (b) –for the use of the present perfect simple out of 53.33% of the students who ticked the right answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The rest of the students did not provide the correct answer, they opted for the past simple, the past perfect simple and the past simple. The number of the students who improved in this item jumped from 33.33% in the pre-test to 46.67% in the post-test.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

- a. has been watching
- b. watched
- c. was watching
- d. had been watching

- a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action (the action started in the past and is still in progress).
- b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- c. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
- d. The action had been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action before another one took place.

O10	N	%
a	17	56.67
b	6	20
c	3	10
d	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 164: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 10

56.67% of the students supplied the suitable answer (a) –for the use of the present perfect continuous out of 63.33% of the students who gave the correct answer in the

grammatical accuracy post-test. The rest of the students still face difficulties in acquiring the explicit rule that governs the use of the present perfect continuous. The gain in this sentence moves from 36.67% in the pre-test to 56.67% in the post-test.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

- a. did not eat b. had not eaten c. have not eaten

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
 b. The action has taken place before a precise moment in the past.
 c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

O11	N	%
a	10	33.33
b	10	33.33
c	10	33.33
T	30	100%

Table 165: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 11

In this sentence, only 33.33% of the students proved their understanding through choosing option “b” –for the use of the present perfect simple out of 40% of the students who chose the right answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The increase gain in the explicit knowledge test moves from 23.33% in the pre-test to 33.33% in the post-test. This sentence seems difficult for the students to comprehend and process correctly.

12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since December.

- a. was studying c. have been studying

- b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.
- c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
- d. The action had taken place before a precise moment in the past.

O13	N	%
a	6	20
b	17	56.67
c	5	16.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 167: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 13

The table shows that 56.67% of the students chose the right justification (b) –the justification for the use of the past continuous out of 60% of the students who chose the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The increase gain moved from 33.33% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 56.67% in the explicit knowledge post-test.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

- a. have known
 - b. had known
 - c. knew
 - d. have been knowing
- a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
 - b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.
 - c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
 - d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O14	N	%
a	3	10
b	18	60
c	6	20
d	3	10
T	30	100%

Table 168: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 14

More than half of the students chose the right option (b) –for the use of the past perfect simple out of 76.67% of the students who answered correctly in the grammatical accuracy post-test. This sentence seems easy for the students to answer and comprehend because the majority answered correctly. The improvement in this sentence augmented from 33.33% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 60% in the post-test.

15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.

Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.

- a. lost b. have lost c. had lost

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.
c. The action had taken place in the past before precise moment in the past.

O15	N	%
a	14	46.67
b	5	16.67
c	11	36.67
T	30	100%

Table 169: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 15

Only 46.67% of the students rendered correct justification (a) –for the use of the past simple out of 53.33% of the students who rendered correct answer in the grammatical

accuracy post-test. It seems that the students were confused by the second part of the sentence which pushes the majority to choose the wrong option. The number of the students who improved in the grammatical explicit knowledge test was 46.67% in the post-test after it was 30% in the pre-test.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

- a. lost b. has lost c. had lost

- a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
- b. The action has taken place in the past and the result of the action is still valid in the present.
- c. The action had taken place in the past before a precise moment in the past.

O16	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	15	50
c	4	13.33
T	30	100%

Table 170: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 16

Half of the students supplied the appropriate answer (b) –for the use of the present perfect simple from 56.67% of the students who opted for the right answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. In this sentence the students mostly confused between the present perfect simple and the past simple. The increase gain moves from 33.33% in the explicit knowledge pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

- a. did not see b. have not seen c. had not seen

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

O17	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	12	40
c	7	23.33
T	30	100%

Table 171: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 17

Only 40% of the students show their understanding and comprehension of the present perfect simple in this item when they opted for option (b). It is useful to restate that 50% of the students found the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The increase gain in this sentence improved from 20% in the pre-test to 40% in the post-test.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

- a. have just had b. had just had c. had just

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

c. The action took place in the past at a specific time in the past.

O18	N	%
a	11	36.67
b	13	43.33
c	6	20
T	30	100%

Table 172: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 18

Only 43.33% of the students afforded the right justification (b) –for the use of the past perfect simple out of 50% of the students who afforded the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. In processing the correct form of the past perfect simple, the students were misled by the use of “just”, which pushes 36.67% of the students to choose the present perfect simple. The number of the students who found the correct answer in the grammatical explicit knowledge increased from 20% in the pre-test to 43.33% in the post-test.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

a. have been working c. worked

b. was working d. had been working

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the middle of it.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O19	N	%
a	8	26.67
b	2	6.67
c	5	16.67
d	15	50
T	30	100%

Table 173: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 19

Half of the students chose the correct justification (d) –the justification for the use of the past perfect continuous out of 46.67% of the students who chose the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The rest of the students could not process the meaning of this tense correctly. The improvement in the explicit knowledge jumps from 43.33% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

- a. had been playing c. were playing
b. played d. have been playing

- a. The action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.
b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.
c. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the past.
d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

O20	N	%
a	16	53.33
b	7	23.33
c	5	16.67
d	2	6.67
T	30	100%

Table 174: The Experimental Group Post-test Choice of the Past Tense in S. 20

As it is clearly illustrated on table (174), 53.33% of the students succeeded to choose the correct justification (a) –for the use of the past perfect continuous. 60% of the students chose the correct answer in the grammatical accuracy post-test. The number of the students who opted for the correct answer moves from 30% in the pre-test to 53.33% in the post-test.

5.3 Overall Analysis

In examining whether input-processing instruction leads to the improvement of learners' explicit knowledge, we are going to discuss and compare the results obtained after implementing two types of instruction. Therefore, in answering the second hypothesis which is “grammar input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction in enhancing learners' explicit knowledge about English past tenses”, the results gained from the item analysis on students' grammatical explicit knowledge will be discussed and analyzed. The following (N^o: 175) table will present the results of the control group pre and post-test.

Sentence	Tenses	Pre-test %	Post-test %	Gain %
1	Past continuous	43.33	63.33	20
2	Past simple	33.33	60	26.67
3	Past perfect simple	36.67	46.67	10
4	Present perfect simple	36.67	56.67	20
5	Past continuous	20	30	10
6	Past simple	30	36.67	6.67
7	Past perfect continuous	30	40	10
8	Past perfect simple	33.33	43.33	10
9	Present perfect simple	26.67	30	3.33
10	Present perfect continuous	33.33	50	16.67
11	Present perfect simple	20	30	10
12	Present perfect continuous	23.33	36.67	13.33
13	Past continuous	46.67	46.67	00
14	Past perfect simple	23.33	40	16.67
15	Past simple	36.67	50	13.33
16	Present perfect simple	43.33	53	10
17	Present perfect simple	26.67	30	3.33
18	Past perfect simple	33.33	33.33	00
19	Past perfect continuous	23.33	36.67	13.33
20	Past perfect continuous	26.67	40	13.33
Σ		626.66	853.33	226.67

Table 175: The Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Explicit Knowledge

It is apparent from table (175), that the control group improved in all English past tense items except for two items: item number (13) and item number (18) in the use of the past perfect simple and the present perfect simple. There was no improvement in item (13) in the post-test. There was also no high improvement in some items such as item (9) and item (17). The control group reached 626.66% in the explicit knowledge pre-test and 853.33% in the post-test with a total gain of 226.67%.

Sentence	Tenses	Pre-test %	Post-test %	Gain %
1	Past continuous	50	73.33	23.33
2	Past simple	43.33	70	26.67
3	Past perfect simple	30	53.33	23.33
4	Present perfect simple	43.33	60	16.67
5	Past continuous	26.67	46.67	20
6	Past simple	23.33	26.67	3.34
7	Past perfect continuous	36.67	50	13.33
8	Past perfect simple	36.67	60	23.33
9	Present perfect simple	33.33	46.67	13.34
10	Present perfect continuous	36.67	56.67	20
11	Present perfect simple	23.33	33.33	10
12	Present perfect continuous	26.67	56.67	30
13	Past continuous	33.33	56.67	23.34
14	Past perfect simple	33.33	60	26.67
15	Past simple	30	46.67	16.67
16	Present perfect simple	33.33	50	16.67
17	Present perfect simple	20	40	20
18	Past perfect simple	20	43.33	23.33
19	Past perfect continuous	43.33	50	6.67
20	Past perfect continuous	30	53.33	23.33
Σ		653.32	1033.3	380.02

Table 176: The Experimental Group Pre-test and Post-test Explicit Knowledge

Based on the results of pre and post-test of the experimental group, it is observed that the experimental group improved in all the English past tense items without any exception. However, there was not much improvement in some specific items such as item number (6) where the gain was only 3.43% and item (19) where the gain was only 6.67%. The experimental group reached 653.32% in the pre-test and 1033.3% in the post-test with a total gain of 380.02%. So, in comparing the gain of “output-based instruction” with the gain of “input-processing instruction”, it is found that the gain of the new method is higher than the gain of the traditional method (380.02% > 296.69%).

Conclusion

The collected data proved that the participants generally have the ability to use the past tenses accurately, but they do not have the ability to provide the right justification. However, in the light of the statistical analysis and the findings of the study, input-processing instruction was found to be more effective than traditional output-based instruction in promoting learners' explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses. Through input-processing instruction, students came across a new way for approaching and learning the English past tenses. The impact of input-processing instruction is perceived by the fact that learners are given much more time to comprehend and process the input correctly. This led to more comprehension and richer intake.

Chapter Six

Students' Attitudes towards Input-Processing Instruction

	Page
Introduction	232
6.1 Administration of the Students' Questionnaire	232
6.2 Description of the Students' Questionnaire	233
6.3 Analysis of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire	235
6.4 Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire	255
Conclusion	257

Chapter Six

Students' Attitudes towards Input-Processing Instruction

Introduction

This chapter will investigate students' opinions and attitudes towards input-processing instruction through a full analysis of the students' questionnaire. The questionnaire is the suitable tool for gathering data and eliciting opinions. Therefore, we opted for this research instrument to explore and investigate students' views on learning grammar in general and input-processing instruction in particular. The students' questions seek to find out whether the students prefer to be taught under comprehension-based instruction or production-based instruction. The questions also aim at demonstrating the students' obstacles in learning grammar and tenses. Hence, the questionnaire serves in getting insights from students' answers.

6.1 Administration of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to two groups including the experimental and the control group. However, the control group was not required to answer all the sections in the questionnaire because the last section, which is about input-processing instruction was exclusively administered to the experimental group since it was the group which received the treatment. The groups consisted of 60 first-year LMD students who have been taken randomly from the Department of English University of Constantine 1 during the academic year 2012–2013. The questions were handed in after the instruction took place. The researcher was present when the questionnaire was given to ensure that students answer the questionnaire individually and faithfully.

6.2 Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is made up of twenty nine (29) items. The questionnaire consists of close-ended and open-ended questions. The participants have been asked to answer the questions by ticking the appropriate box and making a full statement whenever necessary. The questionnaire consists of four sections. Section one (Q1 – Q2) deals with general information. Section two (Q3 – Q14) highlights learning grammar. Section three (Q15 – Q22) examines learning tenses. Section four (Q23 – Q29) investigates grammar methodology.

Section One: General Information (Q1 – Q2)

This section is composed of two questions which seek to collect general information about the informants concerning the number of years they have spent studying English and whether studying this subject was their desire.

Section Two: Learning Grammar (Q3 – Q14)

The purpose of this section is to elicit students' views towards grammar. This section consists of twelve (12) questions starting with inquiring about the time allocation to learning grammar and whether the students find it enough or not. Some questions required the students to precise their feelings towards grammar, whether they like it or not, as they were also required to demonstrate the importance of grammar. The students also through other questions were asked to illustrate the extent in comprehending grammar aspects and whether they confront more difficulties in some aspects rather than others. The purpose of some questions was to identify students' preferences in learning whether they prefer the deductive or the inductive one.

Section Three: Learning Tenses (Q15 – Q22)

This section is designed to collect information about English tenses. The first question seeks to know if tenses are difficult or easy to learn, and the students were requested to explain their choice. The second question aims to determine which tense is more difficult than the other (the present, the past or the future). In (Q19), the students were asked to clarify the best way for learning tenses either by explanation, practice or both. Question (20 and 21) were held to explore the students strategies in learning tenses whether they rely on context or time markers and what strategies they follow when they do not comprehend a certain rule. The last question seeks to show which method the students prefer in practicing tenses.

Section Four: Grammar Methodology (Q23 – Q29)

This section deals with the new method, which concerns only the experimental group since it was the group who undertaken the treatment. The purpose of this section is to evaluate “input-processing instruction” through students’ responses. Before the treatment took place, the students were familiarized with the new method using simplified words such as “comprehension-based instruction”. Hence, the students were asked to clarify their stance by expressing their opinions and evaluating “comprehension-based instruction”. In the first question, the students were required to show which method they prefer in learning, if it is the new method “comprehension-based instruction” or the traditional one “production-based instruction”. The second question was designed to know to what extent “comprehension-based instruction improves the students’ grammatical correctness. Questions (25 and 26) were designed to elicit information on practising tenses, whether students raise their consciousness and awareness after receiving comprehension-based activities. The next question was given to see the effect of “comprehension-based

instruction” on spontaneous production. The last question seeks information on the source of errors that students usually make, whether they are due to lack of comprehension or practice.

6.3 Analysis of the Results of the Students’ Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Q1. How many years have you been studying English?

O1	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
6 years	3	10	5	16.67
7 years	5	16.67	6	20
8 years	21	70	18	60
9 years	1	3.33	1	3.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 177: Number of Years in Studying English

It appears that the majority of the students have been studying English for eight years. In the experimental group, the number of the students who have been studying English for eight years was 70% whereas the number of the students in the control group was 60%. In this case, there is no much difference that exists between the two groups in terms of the number of years in studying English.

Q2. Was studying English at university your desire?

a. Yes

b. No

O2	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	27	90	26	86.67
b	3	10	4	13.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 178: Students' Desire in Studying English

The results indicate that 90% of the participants in the experimental group and 86.67% of the participants in the control group chose English by their desire. However, only 10% of the participants in the experimental group and 13.33% of the participants in the control group acknowledged that studying English at university was not their desire. Generally, the majority of the students admitted that studying English at university was their own choice. This is a helping factor to increase students' motivation and push them to work hard.

Section Two: Learning Grammar

Q3. Do you think that the time allocated to learning grammar is enough?

- a. Yes
- b. No

O3	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	10	33.33	8	26.67
b	20	66.67	22	73.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 179: Students' Views on the Time Allocation to Learning Grammar

In this question, the majority of the students in both groups consider that the time allocation in learning grammar is not enough. Concerning the experimental group, the number of the students who see that the time allocation to learning this module is not

enough reached 73.33%, whereas the number of the students in the control group who also believe that the time allocation is not enough reached 60%. Therefore, there is a large agreement between students for the need of having extra time in learning grammar. The students' answers also suggest that there is a relationship between providing the required time and the best comprehension.

Q4. If “No”, please, explain why?

The students in the experimental and the control group who assert that the time allocation in learning grammar was not enough provided the following arguments:

- Students' level in grammar will be improved if they have given much time than usual.
- The usual time does not permit to cover all the grammar aspects that students need to master the language.
- The students will lack comprehension if they have not given much time.
- The students announce that they need more time for practice.
- Grammar is an important module and it is the basis of language.
- They need grammar for the other skills.

Q5. Do you like to learn English grammar?

a. Yes

b. No

O5	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	29	96.67	24	80
b	1	3.33	6	20
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 180: Rate of the Students who Like Grammar

The results on table (180) show that almost all the students like grammar. In the experimental group, only one student confessed that he does not like grammar, whereas a limited number in the control group also acknowledged that they hate grammar. So, in the experimental group, the percentage is 96.67%, whereas the percentage in the control group is 80%. This can be considered as a vital factor which leads to increase students' motivation.

Q6. Is Grammar important?

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly Disagree

O6	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	22	73.33	20	66.67
b	8	26.67	9	30
c	0	00	0	00
d	0	00	1	3.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 181: The Importance of Grammar

The question was about the importance of grammar, where students were required to show agreement or disagreement. The reason behind this question is to see whether

grammar is necessary or just an optional module programmed for the students. Approximately, most of the informants 73.33% in the experimental group and 66.67% in the control group strongly agree that grammar is important. 26.67% of the informants in the experimental group and 30% of the informants in the control group show agreement on the importance of grammar. Only one student strongly disagrees that grammar is important. These results prove that the students consider grammar as a basic module in language acquisition. These rates also reflect the need and desire of the students to study grammar and indicate a positive effect on raising students' motivation in class.

Q7. Does learning grammar help you to

- a. Learn L2 morphology
- b. Learn L2 syntax
- c. Write effectively
- d. Speak fluently

O7	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	3	10	2	6.67
b	3	10	2	6.67
c	4	13.33	3	10
d	1	3.33	2	6.67
b+c	4	13.33	5	16.67
c+d	15	50	16	53.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 182: The Role of Grammar

In this item, the subjects were asked about the role of grammar since the majority agree that grammar is important. The purpose of this question is to determine the students' awareness about the value of grammar. 50% of the respondents in the experimental group

and 53.33% of the respondents in the control group chose option (c+d) –writing effectively and speaking fluently. Then, 13.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 16.67% of the respondents in the control group opted for (b+c) –learning L2 syntax and speaking fluently. The next selection shows that 6.67% of the respondents in the experimental group and the 3,33% of the respondents in the control group chose option (a) –learning L2 morphology. The final results involve the following results: 13.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 10% in the control group picked option (c) – writing effectively. Respondents’ choices reflect the need for grammar in mastering the other skills.

Q8. Do you think your level in grammar is

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor

Q8	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	1	3.33	0	00
b	5	16.67	8	26.67
c	22	73.33	20	66.67
d	2	6.67	2	6.67
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 183: Students’ Level in Grammar

The majority of the surveyed students in both groups consider that their level in grammar is average. A percentage of 73.33% which constitutes the majority of the students in the experimental group, and a percentage of 66.67% which also constitutes the majority

in the control group represent the students with an average level. The results indicate that there is a balance between the two groups in terms of the level of the students.

Q9. Are English grammar rules difficult to understand?

a. Yes

b. No

O9	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	16	53.33	11	36.67
b	14	46.67	19	63.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 184: The Difficulty of Grammar Rules

As it is clarified on the table, nearly half of the students in the experimental group admitted that grammar rules are found difficult to be understood. However only 36.67% of the surveyed students in the control group claim that grammar rules are found difficult to be understood. Less than half of the students in the experimental group claim that grammar rules are not difficult to understand, whereas more than half of the students in the control group also claim that grammar rules are not difficult to understand. These variations between the responses of the two groups do not entirely indicate that the control group is better than the experimental group.

Q10. If yes, to what extent?

a. A lot

b. Average

c. A Little

O10	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	1	3.33	4	13.33
B	19	63.33	10	33.33
C	4	13.33	4	13.33
No answer	6	20	12	40
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 185: The Extent of the Difficulties

This question has a relation with the preceding one. Here, the participants were asked to indicate the degree of difficulties in understanding the grammatical rules. Concerning the experimental group, more than half of the students opted for “average”, whereas only 33.33% of the students in the control group opted for the same choice. Only one student in the experimental group ticked the first option (a lot) and only 13.13% of the students in the control also opted for the first option. 13.33% of the students in the experimental group and the control group asserted that they have a few difficulties in understanding grammar rules. Henceforth, the majority of the students claim that understanding the grammatical rules are not very problematic.

Q11. How do you estimate your comprehension of grammar aspects?

- a. High
- b. Average
- c. Weak

O11	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	1	3.33	3	10
B	28	93.33	27	90
C	1	3.33	0	00
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 186: The Comprehension of Grammar Aspects

93.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 90% of the respondents in the control group claimed that their comprehension of grammar aspects is average. Only 3.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 10% of the respondents in the control group mentioned that their comprehension of grammar aspects is high.

Q12. Do you meet more difficulties in learning some grammar points than others?

a. Yes

b. No

O12	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	26	86.67	24	80
B	4	13.33	6	20
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 187: The Difficulties in Learning Grammar Aspects

86.67% of the surveyed students in the experimental group and 80% of the surveyed students in the control group admitted that they face difficulties in learning some grammar points than others.

Q13. If yes, which one among these?

a. Tenses

b. Prepositions

c. Conjunctions

d. Articles

e. Other: please, specify

O13	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	23	76.67	22	73.33
B	3	10	5	16.67
C	1	3.33	1	3.33
D	1	3.33	00	00
E	00	00	00	00
No answer	2	6.67	2	6.67
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 188: The Students' Difficult Aspect

A total agreement among students appeared in choosing tenses as the most difficult aspect in grammar with a percentage of 76.67% in the experimental group and a percentage of 73.33% in the control group. The second problematic aspect for the students consists of prepositions with a percentage of 10% in the experimental group and 16.67% in the control group, followed by the third choice, which includes conjunctions with a percentage of 33.33% in both groups.

Q14. In learning grammar, do you prefer?

a. To find the rules by yourself?

b. To be given the rules directly by the teacher?

O14	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	17	56.67	12	40
B	13	43.33	18	60
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 189: Students' Preferable Method

The aim of this question is to determine the students' preferable method in learning, whether it is the deductive or the inductive one. The results reveal that more than half of the participants in the experimental group prefer the inductive method with a percentage of 56.67%, whereas less than half of the participants in the control group prefer the inductive

method with a percentage of 40%. Whereas, 43.33% of the respondents in the experimental group said that the preferable method for them is the deductive one and 60% of the respondents in the control group said that the preferable method for them is the deductive method. Thus, the majority of the participants in the experimental group prefer the inductive method and the majority of the participants in the control group prefer the deductive method. The experimental group then is said to like struggling challenging situations, whereas the control group is said to like easy and simple situations.

Section Three: Learning Tenses

Q15. Do you consider learning tenses?

a. Difficult

b. Easy

O15	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	27	90	20	66.67
B	3	10	10	33.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 190: The Difficulty in Learning Tenses

A percentage of 90% in the experimental group declared that learning tenses is difficult and more than half of the students in the control group with a percentage of 66.67% also declared that learning tenses is difficult. Yet only 10% of the students in the experimental group claimed that learning tenses is easy and 33.33% in the control group claimed that learning tenses is easy. Students' responses ensured that tenses are the most problematic and challenging aspects in grammar.

Q16. Please: say why?

The students in both groups who admitted that learning tenses is difficult provided the following justifications:

- The rules that govern the use of tenses are confusing.
- Many tenses are used in English unlike Arabic.
- English tenses are complex.
- They ignore the use of the rules.

Q17. According to you, which tenses are more difficult?

a. Present tenses

b. Past tenses

c. Future tenses

O17	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	1	3.33	2	6.67
B	26	86.67	21	70
C	3	10	7	23.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 191: The Most Difficult Tense

As the table clearly indicates, 86.67% of the students in the experimental group claimed that the past tense is the most difficult tense among the other tenses and 70% of the students in the control group also claimed that the past tense is the most difficult tense. Only 3.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 6.67% of the respondents in the control group said that the present tense is the most difficult tense. However, 10% of

the respondents in the experimental group and 23.33% in the control group said that the future tense is the most difficult tense.

Q18. Please, say why?

- The past tense constitutes many tenses.
- The past tense is more complex than the other tenses.
- The nature of the verbs (regular +irregular).

Q19. Learning tenses would be better through

- a. Explanation
- b. Practice
- c. Both

O19	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	1	3.33	1	3.33
B	6	20	9	30
C	23	76.67	20	66.67
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 192: The Best Way for Learning Tenses

This question has been devised to know the best way for students to learn tenses. For this question, 76.67% of the participants in the experimental group and 66.67% of the participants in the control group reported that learning tenses would be better through explanation and practice. Only 3.33% of the participants in the experimental group and the control group stated that learning tenses would be better through explanation. A percentage of 20% of the participants in the experimental group and a percentage of 30% of the participants in the control group declared that learning tenses would be better through

practice. In general, the participants in both groups believe that tenses would be better learned through the association of explanation and practice.

Q20. In learning grammar tenses, do you rely on

- a. Context ?
- b. Time markers?
- c. Both?

O20	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	3	10	6	20
B	2	6.67	5	16.67
C	25	83.33	19	63.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 193: Students’ Strategies in Learning Tenses

It is observed from the table that 83.33% of the respondents in the experimental group and 63.33% of the respondents in the control group rely on both context and time markers in learning grammar tenses. Furthermore, the results indicate that 10% of the respondents in the experimental group and 20% of the respondents in the experimental group confessed that they rely on a context in learning grammar tenses. Yet, 6.67% of the respondents in the experimental group and 16.67% of the respondents in the control group confessed that they rely on time markers in learning tenses.

Q21. What do you do when you do not comprehend a certain rule?

- a. You avoid it.
- b. you use it in a wrong way.

c. You make a hypothesis about the right form.

O21	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	5	16.67	7	23.33
B	3	10	5	16.67
C	22	73.33	18	60.00
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 194: Students' Reactions when they do not Comprehend Rules

This question was designed to know the students' strategies adapted when they lack comprehension of a certain rule. The majority of both groups asserted that when they do not comprehend a certain rule, they make a hypothesis about the right form. Therefore, 73%, of the respondents in the experimental group and 60% of the respondents in the control group opted for option (c). 16.67% of the participants in the experimental group and 23.33% of the participants in the control group said that they avoid the rule when they do not comprehend it. Only 10% of the participants in the experimental group and 16.67% of the participants in the experimental group reported that they use the rule in a wrong way.

Q22. Which method do you prefer in practising tenses?

a. Writing paragraphs

b. Answering discrete grammar points (putting verbs between brackets in the correct tense)

O22	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	8	26.67	6	20
B	21	70	24	80
No answer	1	3.33	0	00
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 195: Students' Method in Practising Tenses

The purpose of this question is to examine the preferable method for practising tenses in order to see which method assists better the acquisition of tenses. Throughout the table, we observe that the majority of the students prefer the second method, which is “answering discrete grammar points. We suppose that students opt for this method because they believe that it is the easiest method. Thus, 70% of the participants in the experimental group and 80% of the participants in the control group prefer the second method. Only 26.67% of the participants in the experimental group and 20% of the participants in the control group prefer the first method, which is “writing paragraphs”.

Section Four: Grammar Methodology

Q23. Do you think that grammar is best learned through?

a. Comprehension based- instruction.

b. Production based- instruction.

O23	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	21	70	21	70
B	9	30	9	30
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 196: The best Method for Learning Tenses

The purpose of this question is to assess the new method of teaching “comprehension-based instruction” by the students who followed this type of instruction. The highest percentage of the students 70% think that grammar is best learned through comprehension-based instruction. The remaining students 30% responded that grammar is best learned through production-based instruction. So, the results obtained indicate that the majority of the students are satisfied with the method.

Q24. To what extent does comprehension-based instruction enhance your grammatical accuracy?

a. High extent

b. Low extent

c. some extent

O24	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
A	23	76.67	9	30
B	1	3.33	5	16.67
C	6	20	15	50
No answer	0	00	1	3.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 197: The Effect of Comprehension-Based Instruction

This question concerns the improvement of the accurate use of tenses through the new method. As represented on the table above, the great majority representing 76.67% of the participants claimed that comprehension-based instruction enhances their grammatical accuracy to high extent. Few participants representing 3.33% claimed that the new method enhances their grammatical accuracy to a low extent and 20% of the participants claimed that the new method of teaching enhances their grammatical accuracy to some extent.

Q25. In practising tenses, do you prefer to be given activities that focus on

a. The comprehension of tenses?

b. The production of tenses?

O25	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	24	80	25	83.33
b	6	20	5	16.67
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 198: Students' Preferable Method in Practice

Concerning practice, the overwhelming majority 80% of the surveyed students reported they prefer to be given activities that focus on the comprehension of tenses. The lowest percentage of the surveyed students with 20% stated that when they practise tenses, they prefer to be given activities that focus on the production of tenses. These results also support the satisfaction with the new method.

Q26. Do you think that comprehension-based instruction increases your

consciousness and awareness about grammar than production-based instruction?

a. Yes

b. No

O26	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	24	80	23	76.67
b	6	20	7	23.33
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 199: The Effect of Comprehension-Based Instruction on Production

The table shows that the great majority representing 80% of the participants think that comprehension-based instruction increases their consciousness and awareness on grammar rather than production-based instruction. However, a minority representing only 20% of the participants think that comprehension-based instruction does not increase their consciousness and awareness about grammar.

Q27. Are you in strong favour of giving learners' the opportunity to comprehend the use of tenses without a concentration on immediate production?

a. A lot

b. Average

c. A little

O27	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	22	73.33	2	6.67
b	1	3.33	23	76.67
c	4	13.33	5	16.67
No answer	3	10	0	00
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 200: The Importance of Comprehension over Production

As far as this question is concerned, 73.33% of the students find it appropriate to delay production till comprehension takes place; they opted for the first option “a lot”. Only 3.33% of the students prefer choosing the second option “average”, while 13.33% of the respondents decided on the third option “a little”. Still 10% of the respondents did not render any answer. Generally speaking, the majority of the participants agree that it is better to concentrate on comprehension without pushing them to produce the target structures early.

Q28. To what extent does comprehension ameliorates your spontaneous production?

a. High extent

b. Low extent

c. Some extent

O28	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	17	56.67	13	43.33
b	4	13.33	8	26.67
c	9	30	9	30
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 201: The Effect of Comprehension upon Production

The aim of this question is to determine the relationship between comprehension and production. It seeks to notice the effect of comprehension in improving students' free production. The table reveals that 56.67% of the subjects believe that comprehension enhances their production to high extent, 13.33% of the respondents believe that comprehension ameliorates their production to low extent, while 30% of the subjects believe that comprehension improves their spontaneous production only to some extent. These results interpret the fact that the majority of the participants are aware of receiving comprehensible input before they pushed towards production. In other words, they perceive the importance and the effect of comprehension on production.

Q29. What are the causes of the errors that you make in the use of tenses?

- a. Lack of comprehension.
- b. Lack of practice.
- c. Unconscious/Spontaneous use of tenses.

O29	E G		C G	
	N	%	N	%
a	3	10	6	20
b	21	70	19	63.33
c	6	20	5	16.67
Total	30	100	30	100

Table 202: The Source of Errors

This question seeks identification of the source of mistakes the students make. 70% of the respondents said that the main source of mistakes is the lack of practice. Only 10% of the respondents rendered the cause of mistakes to the lack of comprehension. The rest of the students confessed that they make mistakes because of the unconscious/spontaneous use of tenses. The results justify the fact that students need both comprehension and production for mastering tenses.

6.4 Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire depicts that students show positive attitudes and satisfaction with the new method "comprehension-based instruction. On the whole, most students in the experimental group in section four demonstrate that they prefer comprehension-based instruction rather than production-based instruction because it not only increases their awareness and consciousness about grammar but also enhances their grammatical accuracy. Students also claim that this new method of teaching ameliorates their free production. Indeed, more than half of the students state that it improves their writing to a high extent. Moreover, the questionnaire concludes with the requirement of the students for much practice to eradicate the errors they make in the use of tenses. This leads us to say that both comprehension and practice are interrelated.

The first section, which concerns general information, illustrates a balance between the control group and the experimental group in terms of the number of years in studying English and also a balance in terms of their desire in studying English at university. This can be considered as a motivating factor for the treatment.

The second section concerns learning grammar, where the majority of the students (66.67%) in the experimental group and (73.33%) in the control group find that the time

allocation for learning grammar is not enough arguing that the students need more time for comprehension and practice. It is also revealed through the second and third questions that students extremely like grammar and they accord great importance for studying it. Furthermore, there are different opinions about the benefit of grammar in learning. There were some students who integrate grammar learning with the L2 morphology and L2 syntax, others integrate it with the writing and the speaking skills. However, the vast majority of the students related the role of grammar to the writing and speaking skills. Students also in the experimental group (76.67%) and the control group (73.33%) affirm that tenses are the most problematic area for them. Concerning the way grammar is taught, more than half of the students in the experimental group prefer the inductive way, whereas more than half of the students in the control group prefer the deductive way.

With regard to the analysis of the third section in the questionnaire, the vast majority in the experimental group (90%) and (66.67%) of the control group assert that tenses are the most difficult aspects to learn because the rules which govern their use are confusing and complex. In addition, they admit that the past tense in particular is more difficult than the other tenses because it constitutes many tenses.

In learning tenses, students rely on different strategies such as time markers and context to find the rules as they tend to make hypotheses about the right form when they do not comprehend a certain rule. Students in both groups prefer answering discrete grammar points when they come to practise as the easiest method.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data obtained through the students' questionnaire reveals that students have positive attitudes towards learning grammar in general and particularly learning it through input-processing instruction. Students' declare that they strongly like grammar and they are aware of its importance, however, they acknowledge that there are some grammar aspects such as tenses which are not easily learned. In such a case, input-processing instruction has been adopted to overcome the confronted difficulties in learning tenses. Therefore, the interpretation of the students' attitudes towards input-processing instruction displays that this type of instruction is an acceptable and preferable method to the students. It contributes to improve students' consciousness and awareness about tenses. Indeed, there are positive effects of teaching tenses through input-processing instruction. Eventually, the obtained results serve in confirming the hypotheses that input-processing instruction ameliorates both learners' grammatical accuracy and explicit knowledge.

Chapter Seven

Pedagogical Implications

	Page
Introduction	259
7.1 Discussion of the Findings	259
7.2 Pedagogical Implications	261
7.3 Limitations of the Study	263
7.4 Recommendations for Further Research	264
Conclusion	265

Chapter Seven

Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

This chapter highlights the findings of the present research work and presents some pedagogical implications on the grammar issue. It investigates whether the results obtained support the findings of other researchers concerning input-processing instruction. It also displays the limitations of the study and provides some recommendations for further research.

7.1 Discussion of the Findings

It is illogical to expect that students can produce accurate output before comprehension. Of course, it is not meant that students should not produce language at any time, but what is meant is that students should delay production until sufficient input takes place. Several studies have been carried out to determine the superiority of input-processing over other types of instruction such as Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993) who investigate the effects of processing instruction on the acquisition of word order in Spanish including the direct object pronouns and the study of Benati (2001) who explores the effect of processing instruction and traditional instruction on the acquisition of Italian future tense verb morphology. The present study compares the efficacy of input-processing instruction and traditional output-based instruction in teaching English past tenses.

As a point of departure, the rationale of input-processing in this study is based on the fact that the acquisition of English past tenses depends on processing comprehensible input rather than producing output. Obviously, positive results have been achieved after

implementing the new pedagogy of teaching. These improvements have been resulted from the way the teacher presents the target structures for the students and the type of activities she provides them as well as the time provided for the students for processing the input correctly.

Based upon data, it was found that one cause that leads students to make mistakes and confuse tenses is time adverbials. The source of mistakes in the grammatical accuracy test is found to be caused by relying on time adverbials in a wrong way. Some items which contain time adverbials seem to be easy for students to process and use accurately such as the past simple, while other adverbials misled students in using past tenses accurately either in the pre-test or the post test with both groups. Students were unable to make form-meaning connections correctly because they did not have the capacity to analyse and understand the meaning of a particular tense in each item. Moreover, Item analysis technique reveals that certain errors due to negative transfer continue to occur despite instruction.

Likewise, in the explicit knowledge test, students obviously in both groups provided less correct answers in comparison with the grammatical accuracy test. The teacher did not count the correct answers in the explicit knowledge test when students fail to answer correctly in the grammatical accuracy test because both tests were not separated and students generally can possess the ability to use tenses accurately and naturally without having the ability to provide the right justification.

Yet, when comparing input-processing instruction with output-based instruction in this study, the experimental group made fewer mistakes than the control group after the experiment. Students in the experimental group became more aware of the default strategies which generally affect students' achievements in the use of tenses. Moreover, the

findings display that input-processing instruction increases students' awareness and comprehension more than output-based instruction because there was considerable improvement in most of the items except the present perfect simple where students still show certain weaknesses.

7.2 Pedagogical Implications

The main aim of this research work is to examine whether input-processing instruction is beneficial for the improvement of both learners' grammatical accuracy and their explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses. Therefore, it provides counterarguments to those who do not acknowledge the role of input-processing in improving certain grammatical aspects. In this respect, the current study may contribute to highlight the acquisition process, since it is based on empirical data. Based on the students' tests and the students' questionnaire, the study has figured out the necessary findings.

The findings of the study suggest some pedagogical implications and provide valuable information for grammar instruction and learning tenses. Research of the effect of input-processing instruction on the acquisition of English past tenses indicate that explicit instruction of the past tenses through processing instruction results in significant gains in terms of grammatical accuracy and learners' explicit knowledge. Furthermore, based on the students' questionnaire, it was also agreed that comprehension-based instruction is better than output-based instruction in improving both students' comprehension and production in the use of English past tenses.

The findings also demonstrate that this new model of instruction helps learners receive convenient intake and raise their perceptions about the wrong strategies which they follow in processing the input that in turn will help teachers in selecting the appropriate

teaching materials. The instruction which was directed at the experimental group familiarized the students with other efficient strategies they should follow to minimize their mistakes.

This research work makes teachers aware of the numerous problems students encounter in using tenses accurately. It helps also students conceive the causes behind their mistakes and how to cope with them through the three stages of instruction. Students are directed to develop grammatical knowledge and to solve their problems in past tenses under less pressure. Thinking before responding is a vital factor in learning, and this is what students usually lack. So, input-processing helps students to think and concentrate on the input before responding.

Given the fact that students cannot process the input on equal basis due to their different abilities, strategies, interests in learning and motivation, the teacher attempted to attribute importance to the different strategies used by the students in processing the use of English past tenses through implementing input-processing instruction which seeks to meet the students needs and to respect their abilities.

The findings show that providing learners with enough comprehensible input and appropriate ways for processing that input facilitates their understanding of past tenses. Consequently, learners should bear in mind that production should not be given a large amount of time at the expense of comprehension. Henceforth, the object of instruction should be directed first at making students process what they receive. As a result, output alone is not sufficient to guarantee better results in learning.

This study is of particular interest because it motivates students in their learning and takes into account the psychological factors. That is to say, input-processing instruction respects the students' capacities and abilities by providing them with activities which do

not force them to produce the target language. In general, the role of explicit instruction appears important for the students when using new form of instruction as opposed to explicit traditional approaches to language teaching. Therefore, given the benefits that input-processing instruction offered in the present study, teachers can incorporate this type of instruction in their programme.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

As with any study, the realization of this study has various short comings that should be taken in consideration.

One limitation of the present experiment is the duration of instruction in teaching all the past tenses which took a period of two months. A Short period of time does not help in arriving at definite conclusion about the effect of input-processing instruction.

A second limitation is the type of assessment which is a multiple-choice test. This type of tests may not guarantee accurate results because learners may not seriously fulfil the test. Students may decide at the correct answer only at random.

A third limitation is the number of the sample. As a matter of fact, the number of the subjects is small and does not allow for generalization. The number of the participants was restricted only to two groups and each group consists of thirty students. This is not really a representative sample of the whole population that consists of twenty groups. So, it is advisable to test the research hypotheses in future studies with larger groups.

The fourth limitation concerns the justification test which was given to students to assess their explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses. It was controlled by the teacher, and this may not provide the expected results objectively and reflect the accurate

gains. The students were not provided with opportunities to show their real level in the comprehension test either in the pre or the post test.

7.4 Recommendations for Further Research

On the basis of the obtained results, there are certain recommendations for the teachers, which are drawn from the current research study.

- In the light of the improvements in the students' grammatical accuracy and their explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses, teachers and instructors can use input-processing instruction in their language classes. In other words, Teachers should focus on input-processing oriented approach rather than output-production oriented approach in the teaching process.
- Teachers also should take into account the psychological factors of the learners and their working memory. They should not force students to process a huge amount of information in a short period of time.
- By adopting input-processing instruction, teachers would help the less able students to have enough time to comprehend and process the input.
- Tenses pose great difficultness for learners; therefore this aspect should take substantial care from teachers who should provide more time, effort, comprehension and practice for the students.
- The kinds of mistakes and errors in using English tenses necessitate rapid adjustments and concrete solutions in the way teachers present their lessons to the students.
- Teachers through input-processing instruction will help students develop their thinking ability by providing appropriate time in comprehending and analyzing input.
- Practising tenses through comprehension-based activities will help students grasp the use of English tenses gradually and easily.

- Teachers should maintain the motivation of the students by using new methods in teaching as opposed to boring traditional methods.

Conclusion

Improving grammar instruction suggests the adoption of a new pedagogy in teaching which is input-processing instruction. Indeed, this approach moves the focus from language output to language input and the way this input is converted successfully to intake. The majority of the students are still incapable of acquiring a wide range of English structures.

This study sought to investigate the issue of English past tenses' acquisition and how to help students confront their problems by processing input correctly and raise their comprehension. The data revealed that the experimental group has progressed over the control group after experiment implementation. Yet, what students produce either in the pre-test or the post-test reveals that students still display weaknesses and follow some processing strategies which are not useful for their interlanguage. In spite of the improvement after the experiment, both groups continue to make approximately the same types of mistakes. This fact proves that past tenses are really an area of difficulty to students which needs a long remedy.

General Conclusion

Teaching grammar has undergone significant changes and debates in second language acquisition. The debate on the role of grammar teaching has been the premise for further studies on teaching grammar. As has been stated through this research work, teaching grammar was synonymous with traditional output-based instruction. This way of instruction heavily stresses the learners' output and neglects the role of input. The drawbacks of this type of instruction did not serve in developing the teaching system. As a result, a new influential type of instruction was adopted in teaching to promote the acquisition of the target language. The new way of instruction which is input-processing instruction as introduced by Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993) is supposed to greatly improve language learning and teaching.

Most students hold wrong views believing that production is more helpful and important than comprehension. They often prefer to be given much time in practising and producing the target structure because they believe that production is more important for language acquisition. Nonetheless, an efficient grammar instruction should focus on understanding the input rather than triggering production which may lead to an incorrect processing of input. The new method then gives rise to the importance of comprehending and processing the input as an effective way for language development. Therefore, an attempt is made in this study to compare output-based instruction with input-processing instruction.

Past tenses are amongst the most challenging and difficult aspects to master in English. Hence, students must have a good command of grammar and sufficient knowledge about tenses to eradicate the mistakes and communicate effectively in the target language. Students must overcome confusion between the past tenses to express clear

ideas. They are in need for a new method to serve in improving their level in using tenses accurately. This conundrum results in recent theoretical and empirical research to improve teaching tenses and minimize students' errors.

This research work starts with providing an overview of grammar instruction through presenting a clear notion of grammar and addressing the role of formal grammar in language acquisition. As far as output-based instruction and input-processing instruction are concerned, a theoretical foundation is presented to show the differences between them. The dissertation investigates the traditional methods/approaches of teaching and demonstrates their inadequacies. It also spots some light on the advantages of input-processing instruction and displays its effectiveness in improving students' comprehension.

The central concern of this dissertation has been to explore comprehension over production. It is based on an empirical research which involves teaching English past tenses through two different instructional packets. The experimental group is taught under input-processing instruction which gives priority to comprehension through explicit presentation of English past tenses and comprehension structured-input activities. Whereas the control group is taught under output-based instruction which gives priority to production through explicit presentation of English past tenses and production activities in controlled and less controlled situations.

The study sets out to determine the effect of input-processing instruction on teaching English past tenses to first-year LMD students. It specifically focuses on the improvement of both learners' grammatical accuracy and their explicit knowledge after implementing the new method. In other words, it is hypothesized that input-processing instruction would be more effective than output-based instruction in improving students' grammatical accuracy and enhancing their explicit knowledge about English past tenses. Input-

processing instruction focuses on drawing students' attention to the wrong processing strategies while they engage in processing the input. It concentrates on pushing students to comprehend the input before moving to the output to guarantee a better understanding of past tenses.

On the basis of the data obtained from the findings of the study, the research hypotheses are confirmed. The findings of the study demonstrate that first-year LMD students' grammatical accuracy and explicit knowledge in the use of English past tenses greatly improve after receiving instruction under input-processing instruction. The results have shown that input-processing instruction better serve in reducing students' wrong strategies and grammatical mistakes. Furthermore, based on the results of the questionnaire, it is found that most students hold positive views about input-processing instruction. The analysis illustrates the satisfaction of the majority of the students in the experimental group in learning past tenses through comprehension-based instruction.

The study also presents an analysis of the data and provides answers to research questions raised through this dissertation. The questions under consideration address the role of input-processing instruction in processing the input correctly and enhancing students' grammatical accuracy and explicit knowledge about English past tenses. Furthermore, the questions in this research also examine whether input-processing instruction leads to richer intake and can be a potential alternative to output-based instruction.

The findings reveal that input-processing is not only effective for processing input correctly but for converting input to richer intake. Nevertheless, further studies are needed to investigate the effect of input-processing instruction on the improvement of students' level in other grammatical aspects as well.

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Appendix I

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students,

The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate your attitudes towards learning grammar and learning tenses in particular. I would be grateful if you answer the following questions as your answers will help us in our dissertation.

Please, tick (×) the appropriate answer or make a full statement when necessary, and accept my deepest gratitude for your contribution.

Section One: General Information

Q1. How many years have you been studying English?

.....

Q2. Was studying English at University your desire?

a. Yes

b. No

.....

Section Two: Learning Grammar

Q3. Do you think that the time allocated to learning grammar is enough?

a. Yes

b. No

Q4. If “No”, please, explain why?

.....

Q5. Do you like to learn English grammar?

a. Yes

b. No

Q6. Is Grammar important?

a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Disagree

d. Strongly Disagree

Q7. Does learning grammar help you to?

a. Learn L2 morphology

b. Learn L2 syntax

c. Write effectively

d. Speak fluently

Q8. Do you think your level in grammar is

a. Excellent

b. Good

c. Average

d. Poor

Q9. Are English grammar rules difficult to understand?

a. Yes

b. No

Q10. If yes, to what extent?

a. A lot

b. Average

c. A Little

Q11. How do you estimate your comprehension of grammar aspects?

a. High

b. Average

c. Weak

Q12. Do you meet more difficulties in learning some grammar points than others?

a. Yes

b. No

Q13. If yes, which one among these?

a. Tenses

b. Prepositions

c. Conjunctions

d. Articles

e. Other: please, specify

Q14. In learning grammar, do you prefer?

a. To find the rules by yourself?

b. To be given the rules directly by the teacher?

.....

Section Three: Learning Tenses

Q15. Do you consider learning tenses?

a. Difficult

b. Easy

Q16. Please: say why?

.....

Q17. According to you, which tenses are more difficult?

a. Present tenses

b. Past tenses

c. Future tenses

Q18. Please, say why?

.....

Q19. Learning tenses would be better through

a. Explanation

b. Practice

c. Both

Q20. In learning grammar tenses, do you rely on

a. Context ?

b. Time markers?

c. Both?

Q21. What do you do when you do not comprehend a certain rule?

a. You avoid it.

b. you use it in a wrong way.

c. You make a hypothesis about the right form.

Q22. Which method do you prefer in practising tenses?

a. Writing paragraphs

b. Answering discrete grammar points (putting verbs between brackets in the correct tense)

.....

Section Four: Grammar Methodology

Q23. Do you think that grammar is best learned through?

a. Comprehension based- instruction.

b. Production based- instruction.

**Q24. To what extent does comprehension-based instruction enhance your
grammatical accuracy?**

a. High extent

b. Low extent

c. some extent

Q25. In practising tenses, do you prefer to be given activities that focus on

a. The comprehension of tenses?

b. The production of tenses?

Q26. Do you think that comprehension-based instruction increases your

consciousness and awareness about grammar than production-based instruction?

a. Yes

b. No

Q27. Are you in strong favour of giving learners' the opportunity to comprehend the

use of tenses without a concentration on immediate production?

a. A lot

b. Average

c. A little

Q28. To what extent does comprehension ameliorates your spontaneous production?

a. High extent

b. Low extent

c. Some extent

Q29. What are the causes of the errors that you make in the use of tenses?

a. Lack of comprehension.

b. Lack of practice.

c. Unconscious/Spontaneous use of tenses.

Thank You

Appendix II

Test used as Pre and Post Test

Choose the Right Tense and Justify your Answer

1. We.....lunch when we heard the news.

a. were having b. had c. have had d. had had

a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.

b. The action was taking place when another one took place.

c. The action had finished in the past before another one took place.

d. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

2. She.....her first film when she was 20.

a. has made b. made c. had made d. has been making.

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

3. They.....everything by the time I arrived at the party.

- a. ate b. had eaten c. have eaten d. were eating

a. The action took place and finished at a definite time in the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

d. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

4. Your mother is still in the kitchen. She.....all morning.

- a. has been cooking b. was cooking c. had been cooking

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

c. The action had been taking place before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

5. This time last year I.....for two different companies.

- a. have been working b. had been working c. was working d. worked

a. The action took place at a definite time in the past.

b. The action had been taking place in the past before a precise moment in the past focusing on the length of the action.

c. The action was taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past and progress at the present.

6. Jane..... just a few minutes ago.

a. left b. has left c. had left d. had been leaving

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past with a connection to the present.

c. The action had taken place earlier in the past before another action took place in the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place focusing on the length of the action.

7. I.....for two hours before my friend arrived.

a. had eaten b. have been eating c. have eaten d. had been eating

a. The action has taken place in the past without a specific reference to the past.

b. The action has been taking place in the past with a focus on the length of the action. (began in the past and continuous to the present).

c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one occurred with an emphasis on the length of the action.

d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

8. When we.....breakfast, we went to work.

a. finished b. have finished c. had finished

a. The action took place at a specific time in the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another action took place in the past.

c. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

9. I.....anyone in hospital.

a. never visited b. have never been visiting c. have never visited

d. had never visited

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past

c. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

d. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

10. Tim is still watching television. He.....television all day.

a. has been watching b. watched c. was watching d. had been watching

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action (the action started in the past and is still in progress).

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action before another one took place.

11. I am very hungry. I.....much today.

a. did not eat b. had not eaten c. have not eaten

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past and continues up to the present.

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

**12. I am studying Spanish. I started classes in December. I.....since
December.**

a. was studying b. had been studying

c. have been studying d. studied

a. The action was taking place in the past before another one took place.

b. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past
focusing on the length of the action.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

13. It was very noisy next door. Our neighbors.....a party.

a. have been having b. were having c. had been having d. had had

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past at a certain time in the past.

c. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past
focusing on the length of the action.

d. The action had taken place before a precise moment in the past.

14. We were good friends. We.....each other for years.

a. have known b. had known c. knew d. have been knowing

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

15. I.....my key yesterday, so I could not get it into the house.

Eventually, I found it in my jacket pocket.

a. lost b. have lost c. had lost

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

c. The action had taken place in the past before precise moment in the past.

16. Tom is looking for his key. He cannot find it. He.....his key.

a. lost b. has lost c. had lost

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past and the result of the action is still valid in the present.

c. The action had taken place in the past before a precise moment in the past.

17. I saw Tom yesterday, but.....him today. (NB: it is now afternoon)

a. did not see b. have not seen c. had not seen

a. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

b. The action has taken place in the past and continues up to the present.

c. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place.

18. We were not hungry. We.....lunch.

a. have just had b. had just had c. had just

a. The action has taken place in the past without specific reference to the past.

b. The action had taken place in the past before another one took place in the past.

c. The action took place in the past at a specific time in the past.

19. I was very tired when I got home. I.....hard all day.

a. have been working b. was working c. worked d. had been working

a. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the middle of it.

c. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

d. The action had been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

20. We.....for half an hour when it started to rain.

a. had been playing b. played c. were playing d. have been playing

a. The action had been taking place when another one took place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

b. The action took place in the past with specific reference to the past.

c. The action was taking place in the past when another one took place in the past.

d. The action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

Appendix III

Instructional Packets of Output-Based Instruction

1. Past Simple (PS)

a. Form: look at the following examples, and try to induce the form of the past simple.

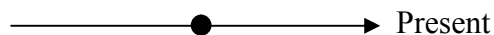
- She went to the doctor yesterday.
- She called me last night.
- I did not see her many years ago.
- Did he come to your party last week?

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the use of the past simple. Select the appropriate answer from the following options:

- An action took place at a specific time in the past with a time expression.
- An action took place at unspecified time in the past.
- An action took place at specific time in the past without a time expression.
- We use the (PS) when we refer to an action which took place in the past, with a specific reference to the past.

E.G.: I met her yesterday.

- Specific time adverbials that occur with the past simple are: yesterday, last year, two years ago, in 1985, from 1965 to 1983, few days ago, in those days, in the sixteenth-century.....
- Time adverbs that refer to the present, such as today, this morning/week/month, can also be used with the past simple.
- I wrote a letter this morning (the morning is over).
- I did not meet her at all this morning (it is now afternoon).



(PS)

Yesterday, I visited my friend

2. Past Continuous (PC)

a. Form: Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- | | |
|---|---|
| - What were you doing during your vacation? | - S+to be (was/were) +ving. |
| - The students were not listening when I was explaining the lesson. | - Question word+to be (was/were)+s+ving |
| - I was working at the computer at 9:30 this morning. | - S+to be+not+ving. |

Form: was/were+Ving.

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the two rules which govern the use of the past continuous. Select the appropriate answers from the following options:

- An action was taking place at precise moment in the past.
 - An action was taking place in the past with a result in the present.
 - An action was taking place in the past when another one took place.
 - An action was taking place in the past focusing on the duration of the action.
- We use the past continuous when we refer to an action which was taking place (was in process) in the past when another one took place or when the action was taking place at precise moment in the past.

E.G.: She was writing her lesson, when her mother came.

Activities on Past Simple and Past Continuous

Activity One: Find the second part of each sentence. Put each verb into the correct form.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Vicky (have) a beautiful dream | when she (touch) the wire. |
| - When Andrew (see) the Question | when I (find) a £10 note in it. |
| - The train (wait) | when the alarm clock (ring). |
| - I (read) a library book | the crowd (rush) in. |
| - Sarah (have) an electric shock | he (know) the answer immediately. |
| - When the doors (open), | they (see) that the sun was shining. |
| - When the campers (wake), | when we (arrive) at the station. |

From Eastwood 2006: 23.

Activity Two: Read this email and put in the correct form of each verb. Use the past simple or the past continuous.

Hi Bea

A funny thing **1** (happen) to me and my flatmates on Saturday.

On Friday night we **2** (go) to the college party. There were some new students there and we **3** (meet) someone called Lucas. We **4** (invite) him to Sunday lunch. It was a great party so we **5** (not/go) home until three o'clock.

Of course, we **6** (not/get) up early on Saturday morning. At half past twelve I **7** (watch) TV in my pyjamas, Marie **8** (have) a shower and Wendy **9** (read) a magazine. Suddenly someone **10** (ring) the doorbell. I **11** (look) out of the window to see who was there. Lucas **12** (stand) on the step. I **13** (go) to the door but I **14** didn't open/wasn't opening it. I said 'hello?' and he said 'hello, I've come for lunch.' Oh no! He'd got the wrong day!!

We **15** (get) dressed in three minutes! luckily, we **16** (have) enough food, and he seemed to enjoy it. How was your weekend? Love Annette

Adopted From Hashemi and Thomas (2006 : 26)

Activity Three:

- Step One: individual work: write a small narrative paragraph.
- Step Two: pair work: identify the different tenses.
- Step Three: class discussion.

Appendix IV

Instructional Packets of Input-Processing Instruction

There are six past tenses which describe the past: the past simple, the past continuous, the present perfect simple, the present perfect continuous, the past perfect simple and the past perfect continuous.

1. Past Simple (PS)

a. Form: look at the following examples, and match each sentence with its affirmative, negative and interrogative form.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| - She went to the doctor yesterday. | - S+stem+ed. |
| - She called me last night. | - S+ did not +to inf. |
| - I did not see her many years ago. | - S+ irregular past. |
| - Did he come to your party last week? | - Did+S+to inf. |

Form: Stem+ed or Irregular Tense.

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
He played tennis.	He did not play tennis.	Did he play tennis?	Did not he play tennis?

Table 203: The Past Simple Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the use of the past simple. Select the appropriate answer from the following options:

- An action took place at a specific time in the past with a time expression.
- An action took place at unspecified time in the past.
- An action took place at specific time in the past without a time expression.
- We use the (PS) when we refer to an action which took place in the past, with a specific reference to the past.

E.G.: I met her yesterday.

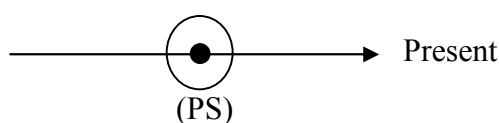
- Specific time adverbials that occur with the past simple are: yesterday, last year, two years ago, in 1985, from 1965 to 1983, few days ago, in those days, in the sixteenth-century.....
- Time adverbs that refer to the present, such as today, this morning/week/month, can also be used with the past simple.
- I wrote a letter this morning (the morning is over).
- I did not meet her at all this morning (it is now afternoon).

BE CAREFUL!

- Do not rely only on time expressions to use the past simple correctly because the past simple can refer to a definite time in the past without a time expression.

E.G.: He woke up to go to school.

- Rely on the context to learn the use of the past simple naturally. For example:
- I wrote a letter this morning (the morning is over).
- I have written a letter this morning (it is still morning).
- In order not to confuse the past simple with the present perfect simple, keep in mind that the past simple is used to refer to a particular point in time in the past and excludes the present as the following timeline shows:



Yesterday, I visited my friend

2. Past Continuous (PC)

- a. Form:** Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- What were you doing during your vacation? - S+to be (was/were) +ving.
- The students were not listening when I was explaining the lesson. - Question word+to be (was/were)+s+ving
- I was working at the computer at 9:30 this morning. - S+to be+not+ving.

Form: was/were+Ving.

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
She was playing tennis.	She was not playing tennis.	Was she playing tennis?	Was not she playing tennis?

Table 204: The Past Continuous Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the two rules which govern the use of the past continuous. Select the appropriate answers from the following options:

- An action was taking place at precise moment in the past.
- An action was taking place in the past with a result in the present.
- An action was taking place in the past when another one took place.
- An action was taking place in the past focusing on the duration of the action.
- We use the past continuous when we refer to an action which was taking place (was in process) in the past when another one took place or when the action was taking place at precise moment in the past.

E.G.: She was writing her lesson, when her mother came.

Be CAREFUL!

- Do not use the (PC) with state verbs such as: to think, to seem, to appear, to belong and to understand.
- Do not depend on time adverbs to indicate the tense.

E.G.: He just finished few minutes ago. (PS)

- He has just finished. (Pr. Perf. S)

- I was just thinking of ringing him when he walked in. (PC)
- Rely on the context in using tenses accurately. E.g.: I watched the film on TV.
- I was watching the film on TV.
- Both are possible sentences. Each is correct in a different situation. The first gives us the simple facts. It gives an overview of ‘what happened’. The second gives us the same facts, but with an extra focus on the continuing or extended process of ‘watching’. This is clear in the following situation:

a: I did not see you at the meeting last night.

b: No, I stayed at home and watched the film on TV instead.

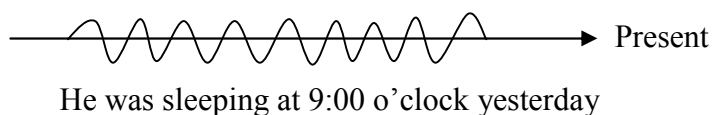
a: I tried to ring you last night.

b: Oh, I am sorry. I was watching a film on TV. I did not hear the phone.

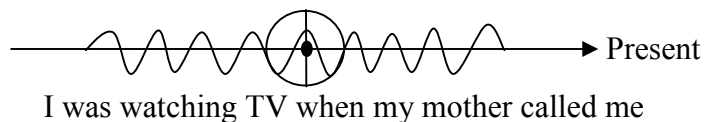
Hill *et al.* 1989: 46

- Do not confuse the past continuous with the past simple when there is a time adverb because the past continuous always stresses the ongoing action in the past and not a complete event in the past as this timeline shows:

a. An action happening at precise moment in the past.



b. An interrupted action in the past.



3. The Present Perf. S (Pr. Perf. S)

- a. **Form:** Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- I have lost my pen. - S+have/has+pp.
- She is not at home. Where has she gone? - Question word+have/has +pp.
- I have not received your email. - S+have/has not +pp.

Form: have/has+PP.

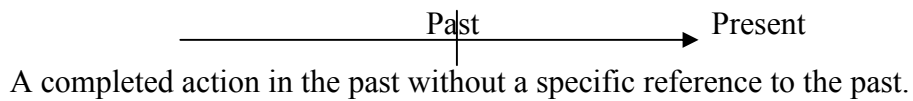
Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
He has played tennis.	He has not played tennis.	Has he played tennis?	Has not he played tennis?

Table 205: The Present Perfect Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the two rules which govern the use of the present perfect simple. Select the appropriate answers from the following options:

- A completed action in the past with a specific reference to the past.
 - A completed action in the past without a specific reference to the past.
 - A completed action in the past and the result of the action is still valid in the present.
- We use the Pr. Perf. S when we refer to an action which has taken place in the past, without a specific reference to the past or when the result of an action is still valid in the present.

E.G.: I have done my work.



- Some expressions used with the Pr. Perf. S are: so far, already, not yet, recently, just, ever, never, today (until now), in the last few years.

E.G.: she has already cleaned the room.

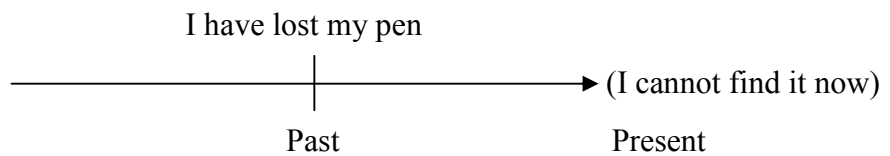
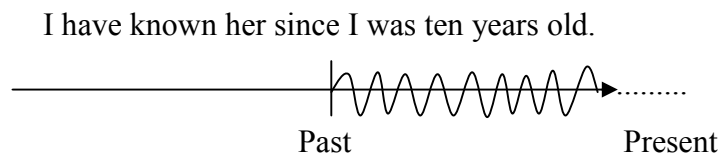
Be Careful:

- Do not use the present perfect simple with a past time expression.

E.G.: I have done my work yesterday. Wrong

- I did my work yesterday. Right

- Rely on the context to use the present perfect correctly.
- They have not seen her today. (Unfinished time)
- They did not see her today. (Finished time)
- In order not to confuse the present perfect simple with the past simple, keep in mind that the present perfect simple is usually connected in some way to the present simple.



4. Present Perfect Continuous (Pr. Perf. C)

a. Form: Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- I have not been revising my lessons for a long time. - Have +been+ving.
- I have been doing my work for one hour. - Have+ not+been+ ving.
- How long have you been teaching English? - Question word+have+S+been.

Form: have/has +been+ving.

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
She has been playing tennis.	She has not been playing tennis	Has she been playing tennis?	Hasn't she been playing tennis?

Table 206: Present Perfect Continuous Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the rule which governs the use of the present perfect continuous. Select the appropriate answers from the following options.

-An action has been taking place in the past at a precise moment in the past.

-An action has been taking place in the past focusing on the length of the action.

- An action has been taking place in the past before another one took place in the past.

- We use the Pr. Perf. C when we refer to an action which has been taking place (was in progress in the past) focusing on the length of the action.

E.G.: I have been writing a letter the whole day.

Be careful!

- Rely on the context to process the meaning of a particular tense and not on time expressions such as “since”.

E.G.1: He has lost his hair since his operation.

E.G.2: He has been losing his hair since his operation.

- In the first example, he has no hair left. He is totally bald. His hair –loss is seen as a whole. In the second example, he may still have some hair. His loss of hair process is seen as a process, taking place over time.

Hill *et al.* 1989: 66

E.G.3: I have lived here for four years.

- I have been living here for four years.

- The first example gives facts; the second example gives more emphasis to the extended period, and the on-going process of living.

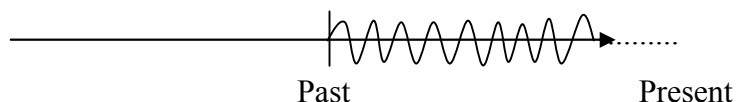
- Do not confuse the present perfect continuous with the present perfect simple because the present perfect continuous stresses the length of the action, while the present perfect simple stresses how much or how many the action has been done.

- Do not confuse the present perfect continuous with the past continuous because the past continuous stresses the ongoing action in the past and excludes the present, while the

present perfect continuous stresses the progression of the action from the past to the present and future.

- Do not use the present perfect continuous with state verbs: to love, to remember, to seem, to taste, to agree...

I have known her since I was ten years old. (Not I have been knowing her)



- Do not confuse the present perfect continuous with the present perfect simple because the present perfect continuous stresses the length of the action, while the present perfect simple stresses how much or how many the action has been done.

Past Perfect Simple

1. Past Perfect (P Perf.S)

a. Form: Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- He had finished his dinner before his mother came. - Question word+had+s+pp.
- I had not prepared dinner when my mother came. - S+had+pp.
- What had she made before the meeting started? - S+had+not+pp.

Form: had + PP.

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
She had played tennis.	She had not played.	Had she played tennis?	Hadn't she played tennis?

Table 207: The Past Perfect Simple Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the rule which governs the use of the past perfect simple. Select the appropriate answers from the following options.

- An action completed in the past before another action took place in the past.

-An action took place in the past when another action took place in the middle of it.

- An action had taken place in the past and extends to the present.

- We use the P Perf.S when we refer to an action which had taken place before another one which took place in the past.

- E.G.: I had written several letters before I finally got an answer.

Be Careful!

- Rely on the context to process the meaning of a certain tense.

E.G.1: when he stopped laughing, every one left (they left after he stopped laughing)

E.G.2: when he stopped laughing, everyone had left. (They left before he stopped laughing).

- Do not confuse the past perfect simple with the past simple because the past simple is used to describe a completed action in the past at specific time, while the past perfect simple is used to describe completed action before another completed action or event in the past.

- Do not confuse the past perfect simple with the past continuous because the past perfect simple happens before another past action, while the past continuous is interrupted by another action in the past.

6. Past Perfect Continuous

a. Form: Look at the following examples and match each sentence with its affirmative, interrogative and negative form.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| - How long had she been staying outside before it rained. | - S+had+been+ving. |
| - I had been watching TV all the morning when my friend called me. | - S+had+not+been+ving. |
| - I had not been revising my lessons for a long time when the exams started. | - Question word+had+s+ving. |

Form: had+been+Ving

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
She had been playing tennis.	She had not been playing tennis.	Had she been playing tennis?	Hadn't she been played tennis?

Table 208: The Past Perfect Continuous Forms

b. Use: The above sentences indicate the rule which governs the use of the past perfect simple. Select the appropriate answers from the following options.

- An action had been taking place in the past when another action took place.
- An action had been taking place in the past when another action took place focusing on the length of the action.
- An action an action had been in progress form the past to the present.

- We use the P Perf. C when we refer to an action which had been taking place in the past when another one took place, with a focus on the length of the action.

E.G.: I had been writing a letter for some time when they arrived.

Be Careful!

- Do not confuse the past perfect continuous with the past continuous because the past perfect continuous focuses on the length of the action, while the past continuous stresses the ongoing action without saying how long the action took place.
- Do not confuse the past perfect continuous with the past perfect simple.

Activities on Past Simple and Past Continuous

Activity One: Find the Second Part of Each Sentence

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - Vicky was having a beautiful dream | when she touched the wire. |
| - When Andrew saw the Question | when I found a £10 note in it. |
| - The train was waiting | when the alarm clock rang. |
| - I was reading a library book | the crowd rushed in. |
| - Sarah had an electric shock | he knew the answer immediately. |
| - When the doors opened, | they saw that the sun was shining. |
| - When the campers woke, | when we arrived at the station. |

(Eastwood 2006: 23)

Activity Two: Listening Activity

Only one sentence in each of these pairs seems really natural and sensible. Which one? you will need to think about the meaning of sentences carefully.

- 1.a. we queued at the box office when the tickets ran out.
b. we were queuing at the box office when the tickets ran out.
- 2.a. He stole money from the firm when he lost his job.
b. He was stealing money from the firm when he lost his job.
- 3.a. He was smoking very heavily when he died.
b. He smoked very heavily when he died.
- 4.a. I began to think you had forgotten my birthday when your present arrived.
b. I was beginning to think you had forgotten my birthday when your present arrived.
- 5.a. I tried to ring him when he walked in!
b. I was trying to ring him when he walked in!
- 6.a. He worked out in the gym when he had a heart attack.
b. He was working out in the gym when he had a heart attack.
- 7.a. I looked for my pen when I realised I had left it at home.
b. I was looking for my pen when I realised I had left it at home.

(Hill and Hurst 1989: 50)

Activity Three: Read what each speaker is thinking about. Tick (×) the best sentence for the speaker to use

1. I want to know about your action after the president's death.

a) What did you do when the president died?.....

b) What were you doing when the president died?.....

2. I want to describe the situation at the party when I arrived.

a) Everyone danced....

b) Everyone was dancing.....

3. I want to tell you what you sort of person he was.

a) He talked too much.....

b) He was talking too much.....

4. I want to show that I finished my dream.

a) I dreamt about a wonderful holiday...

b) I was dreaming about a wonderful holiday.....

5. I want to show that I was interrupted.

a) I talked about her when she came into the room.....

b) I was talking about her when she came into the room.....

6. I want to describe the situation at the time I broke my arm.

a) I was carrying a big bag up some steps.....

b) I carried a big bag up some steps.....

(Nettle and Hopkins, 2003: 26)

Activity Four:

Look at these extracts from pieces of writing by learners of English. Tick (✓) the past simple or past continuous verbs if they are right, or put a cross (×) if they are wrong.

The bell rang () at one o'clock in the afternoon and the children were running () out of their classes.

It was like the bell had released a sea of students. Children were running () everywhere.

When I was working () as an executive secretary to the managing Director I was living () with my parents.

While we were chatting () two monkeys appeared and were moving () towards us.

When the police were arriving () Mr. Jones was arrested.

One day. While Mr. Pippett took () Solom out for a walk the pair met () Selom's previous owner.

(Nettle and Hopkins 2003: 26)

Activity Five: Read this email and underline the best tense for each verb

Hi Bea

A funny thing **1** happened/was happening to me and my flatmates on Saturday.

On Friday night we **2** went/were going to the college party. There were some new students there and we **3** met/were meeting someone called Lucas. We **4** invited/were inviting him to Sunday lunch. It was a great party so we **5** didn't go/weren't going home until three o'clock.

Of course, we **6** didn't get/weren't getting up early on Saturday morning. At half past twelve I **7** watched/ was watching TV in my pyjamas, Marie **8** had/was having a shower and Wendy **9** read/was reading a magazine. Suddenly someone **10** rang/was ringing the doorbell. I **11** looked/was looking out of the window to see who was there. Lucas **12** stood/was standing on the step. I **13** went/was going to the door but I **14** didn't open/wasn't opining it. I said 'hello?' and he said 'hello, I've come for lunch.' Oh no! He'd got the wrong day!!

We **15** got/were getting dressed in three minutes! Luckily we **16** had/were having enough food, and he seemed to enjoy it. How was your weekend? Love Annette

(From Hahsemi and Thomas 2006 : 26)

Present Perfect Simple and Present Perfect Continuous

Activities on the Present Perfect Simple and Present Perfect Continuous

Activity One: Read this conversation between two people in a sports club. Underline the most suitable form of the verb which fits best

Anna: Excuse me. We've waited/We've been waiting to play tennis since 10.30. It must be our turn now. How long have you played/have you been playing?

Tim: Since about 9.30. We've played/We've been playing two matches so far this morning and we haven't finished/we haven't been finishing the third yet. You'll have to wait or do something else.

Anna: But you've played/you've been playing for more than two hours and it's our turn now.

Tim: I said you'll have to wait.

Anna: We're tired of waiting and we haven't got anything to do. We've read/We've been reading the magazines we brought with us.

Tim: Why don't you do something else? Have you tried/Have you been trying the swimming pool?

Anna: We don't want to swim, we want to play tennis.

Tim: Well, I always play on a Saturday morning. Anyway, we've already started/ we've already been starting the third match.

Anna: Oh well, it looks like we've got no choice. But we've booked/ we've been booking for next Saturday so you'll be unlucky then.

(Hashemi and Thomas 2008: 21)

Activity Two: Study these pairs of sentences. After each pair there are two interpretations which comment on the meaning. Match up the sentences with the interpretations

1. She hasn't visited me.

2. She hasn't been visiting me.

a. perhaps she did a long time ago, but stopped.

b. never.

1	
2	

3. I haven't got the Times.

3	
4	

4. I haven't been getting the Times.

- a. perhaps i forgot to buy on today.
- b. I used to buy it, but no longer do.

5. I've had a lot of pain.

5	
6	

6. I've been having a lot of pain.

- a. with my injured leg.
- b. recently, and at the moment.

7. I've forgotten to put sugar in your coffee.

7	
8	

8. I've been forgetting to put sugar in your coffee.

- a. my memory is getting worse and worse.
- b. I usually remember, but today I forgot.

9. She's had her hair done.

9	
10	

10. She's been having her hair done.

- a. specially for today.
- b. that is why she's so late.

11. What has gone wrong?

11	
12	

12. What has been going wrong?

- a. on this occasion.
- b. over a period.

13. Have you seen Liz?

13	
14	

14. Have you been seeing Liz?

- a. regularly, on different occasions.
- b. perhaps, this morning.

15. The dog has died.

15	
16	

16. The dog has been dying.

- a. may not be dead yet.
- b. is dead.

17. I have learned English.

17	
18	

18. I've been learning English.

- a. I have started.
- b. I have nothing more to learn.

(Hill *et al.* 1989: 69)

Activity Three: Match each sentence (A and B) in the pairs below with its meaning

1. **A.** I've been reading the book you lent me on genetics.

B. I've read the book you lent me on genetics.

- 1. I've finished the book.
- 2. I'm still reading the book.

2. **A.** The firm gives company cars to junior managers.

B. The firm has been giving company cars to junior managers.

- 1. This is the company's usual policy. It's unlikely to change.
- 2. This isn't the company's usual policy. It may change.

3. **A.** Something has been killing the rabbits in the woods.

B. Something has killed the rabbits in the woods.

- 1. There are no rabbits left in the woods.
- 2. There are some rabbits left in the woods.

4. **A.** Monsanto has placed some adverts in the national press.

B. Monsanto has been placing adverts in the national press.

- 1. This was a one-off publicity move.
- 2. This is a continuing publicity campaign.

5. **A.** 'Hi, Fiona. What a mess! Have you been decorating?'

B. 'Hi, Fiona. This room looks great! have you decorated it?'

- 1. Fiona is in the middle of decorating.
- 2. Fiona isn't decorating any more.

6. **A.** A group of us have learnt how to play bridge.

B. A group of us have been learning how to play bridge.

- 1. We're still learning.
- 2. We can play it now.

(Foley and Hall 2003: 67)

Activity Four:

In the following situations, one sentence is more natural than the other. Which is it?

1. I am really tired
a. I have been driving for 12 hours non-stop.
b. I have driven now for 12 hours non-stop.
2. Why are there tears in your eyes?
a. I have chopped onions.
b. I have been chopping onions.
3. Why are you so sweaty and hot?
a. I have run.
b. I have been running.
4. Robert! I have not seen you for ages!
a. What have you been doing since we last met.
b. What have you done since we last met.

(Hill *et al.* 1989: 67)

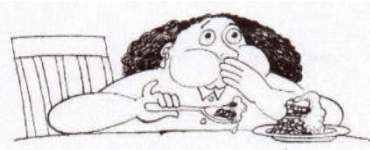
Past Perfect Simple and Past Perfect Continuous

5. **Activity One:** Underline the most suitable verb form in italics

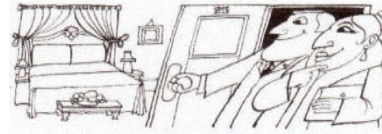
1. So I turned/had turned on my heels and walked out of the shop in disgust.
2. When we got to the station the train had just left/just left, so we missed our connection.
3. The mechanics had been taking/had taken the engine apart several times before they were able to locate the source of the mysterious rattle.
4. By 1492 the Spanish had expelled/had been expelling the moors from the mainland entirely.
5. She was surprised to find the fridge empty; the children had eaten/had been eating everything!
6. Our lead actor turned up and he was word perfect; apparently he was practicing/had been practicing his lines all day.
7. The children wanted to go to the circus but their father already booked/had already booked tickets for the ice-skating spectacular.
8. Debbie could not understand why her computer crashed; it had been working/was working perfectly for as long as she could remember.
9. My niece's riding accident was rather a setback because she hoped/ had hoped to pursue a career as a ballet dancer.
10. Mrs Lawson arrived at casualty in quite a state; she suffered/ had been suffering from severe stomach pains for hours.

(Foley and Hall 2003: 60)

Activity Four: Choose the best sentence (A or B) to illustrate each picture



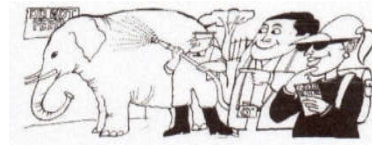
- 1. A. I felt sick when I ate the pudding.
- B. I felt sick when I'd eaten the pudding.



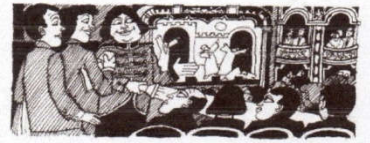
- 2. A. When we returned to our hotel room The maid made the bed.
- B. When we returned to our hotel room The maid had made the bed.



- 3. A. I explained to my host that I'd been repairing the car.
- B. I explained to my host that I was repairing the car.



- 4. A. By the time we arrived at the zoo the elephants were having their bath.
- B. By the time we arrived at the zoo the elephants had had bath.



- 5. A. The show started when we got there.
- B. The show had started when we got there.



- 6. A. I hoped to get a good result.
- B. I had hoped to get a good result.

(Foley and Hall, 2003: 59)

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف دور المعالجة الذهنية للمعلومات بغية تحسين المعرفة الجلية للطلبة وتطوير دقتهم النحوية عند استعمال أزمنة الماضي في اللغة الانجليزية. يبدو أن عجز طلبة اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قسنطينة¹ لا يكمن فقط في فهم الأزمنة بل كذلك في استعمالهم. يعتقد عادة أن سبب ضعف الطلبة في اكتساب أزمنة الماضي يعود إلى الطريقة التقليدية المستعملة المرتكزة على الاستعمال اللغوي الفوري أكثر من التركيز على الفهم. إذا يستحسن أن يتم تدريس أزمنة الماضي بالطريقة الجديدة التي تسمى المعالجة الذهنية للمعلومات والتي اقترحها فان باتن سنة 1996. وتسعى هذه الطريقة إلى إعطاء الطلبة الفرصة لفهم ومعالجة المعلومات وبالتالي استيعاب أعمق. لقد تم افتراض أن (أ) المعالجة الذهنية للمعلومات تكون فعالة أكثر من التعليم المرتكز على الاستعمال اللغوي في تحسين الدقة النحوية حول أزمنة الماضي في اللغة الانجليزية و(ب) ستكون أيضا ذات فائدة اكبر من التعليم المرتكز على الاستعمال اللغوي في تحسين المعرفة الجلية حول أزمنة الماضي في اللغة الانجليزية. أنجز العمل البحثي على مجموعتين من طلبة السنة الأولى ل م د بكلية اللغات الأجنبية، بجامعة قسنطينة¹. والبيانات المستخدمة لجمع المعلومات لهذه الدراسة تتمثل في استمارة استبيان أعطيت للطلبة من اجل معرفة آرائهم حول طريقة التدريس و الطريقة التجريبية التي تضم فوجين: فوج درس وفقا للطريقة التقليدية المتمثلة في التعليم المرتكز على الاستعمال اللغوي والفوج الآخر درس وفقا للطريقة الجديدة المتمثلة في المعالجة الذهنية للمعلومات. بينت النتائج تفوق الفوج الذي درس وفقا للطريقة الجديدة على الفوج الذي درس وفقا للطريقة التقليدية في فهم واستعمال الأزمنة. إذا لقد تم اقتراح باستعمال اكبر للطريقة الجديدة كبديل للطريقة التقليدية من اجل تحسين كلا المعرفة الجلية و الدقة النحوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : المعالجة الذهنية للمعلومات- أزمنة الماضي-الدقة النحوية-المعرفة الجديدة

Résumé

Cette étude vise à découvrir le rôle de traitement mental de l'information dans l'amélioration de la connaissance évidente des étudiants et dans le développement de leur exactitude grammaticale lors de l'utilisation de temps du passé de la langue anglaise. Il semble que le déficit des étudiants de langue anglaise de l'Université de Constantine 1 ne réside pas seulement dans la compréhension des temps, mais leur utilisation aussi pose problème. Habituellement, on considère que la faiblesse des étudiants dans l'acquisition des temps du passé est due à la méthode traditionnelle basée sur la production immédiate en dépit de la compréhension. Donc, il est recommandé d'enseigner les temps du passé en optant pour la nouvelle méthode appelée "le traitement mental de l'information" proposée par Vanpatten (1996). Elle cherche à donner aux étudiants la possibilité de comprendre et traiter l'information et donc acquérir plus profondément. J'ai supposé que (a) le traitement de l'information mentale qui peut être plus efficace que l'usage linguistique dans l'amélioration de la précision grammaticale à propos des temps du passé de l'anglais (b) qu'il serait aussi d'un grand intérêt dans l'amélioration de la connaissance évidente des temps du passé. Le travail de recherche est effectué sur deux groupes d'étudiants LMD de la première année au département des lettres et langue anglais de l'Université de Constantine 1. Les outils utilisés pour la collecte des informations pour cette étude est un questionnaire remis aux étudiants pour recueillir leur avis à propos de la méthode expérimentale. Le corpus comprend deux groupes: le premier groupe a étudiée selon la première approche et le second groupe a subi un enseignement suivant la nouvelle méthode de traitement mental de l'information. Les résultats ont montré la supériorité des étudiants qui ont poursuivis un enseignement selon la nouvelle méthode de traitement mental de l'information par rapport aux étudiants de l'ancienne méthode basée sur la compréhension et l'utilisation des temps. Je suggère d'opter pour la nouvelle méthode comme alternative à la méthode conventionnelle afin d'améliorer à la fois la connaissance évidente et l'exactitude grammaticale.

Les mot clés : Le traitement mental de l'information; les temps passé de la langue anglaise ; la connaissance évidente; la exactitude grammaticale

