

Immediate and Long-term Effects of Form-Focused Instruction in the Acquisition of English Relative Clauses: Evidence from Turkish EFL Learners

Idylle Fridman and Belma Haznedar

Abstract

This article examines immediate and long-term effects of explicit formal instruction in the learning of relative clauses in English by Turkish native speakers. Forty-five 9-graders (aged 15-17) participated in the study. Data were collected by means of three different sentence combination tests and two different grammaticality judgment tests. Subjects were pretested prior to instruction on relative clauses, post-tested two days after, follow-up tested 6 weeks later and finally they were given a long-term test 6 months after instruction. Although the subjects' performance seemed to improve considerably on their posttests, these results appeared to be only short term. Our findings support the view that though the immediate effects of form-focused instruction are positive, they do not appear to be long-lasting.

Keywords: Form-focused instruction, explicit teaching, Turkish EFL learners, relative clauses, long-term effects of explicit teaching

Introduction

This paper examines immediate and long-term effects of explicit formal instruction in the learning of relative clauses by Turkish learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Our aim is two-fold: (i) to investigate the reasons of difficulty Turkish EFL learners experience during the acquisition of relative clauses in English; (ii) to examine effects of explicit form-focussed instruction in ELF classroom settings.

Relative clauses have been of great interest to many second language (L2) researchers, as they offer insights into issues in linguistic theory and universal grammar, in particular regarding the analysis of linguistic principles and language learning processes, such as the role of first language (L1) on second language learning, processing difficulties etc. One other significant factor that makes relative clauses worth studying is that these structures are commonly used by learners of all languages. While their frequency of use changes according to the medium, they are more common in writing than in conversation (e.g. Jacobs, 1995) and are given great importance in all grammar and textbooks, as well as in the EFL classroom due to their key functions. It should be noted, however, that despite the fact that almost all languages have relative clauses in them, they differ a great deal in terms of the formation and distribution of these structures. In English, traditionally, relative clauses are classified into two types (i) restrictive relative clauses (RRC), and (ii) nonrestrictive clauses. A restrictive

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relative clause (RRC) is a clause that modifies a head noun in a noun phrase in the main clause, as in (1).

- (1) The birds which are white have nests in that tree

In (1), the main clause refers to ‘the birds have nests in that tree’, and the relative clause ‘which are white’ modifies and restricts the head noun “birds” in the main clause. Nonrestrictive relative clauses, on the other hand, do not aid in the identification of the referent of its head noun, but simply provide additional information, as in (2).

- (2) The birds, which are white, have nests in that tree

This example which implies that all birds under discussion are white gives the sentence a totally different meaning than the one presented in (1), where the relative clause is embedded in the main clause. In this case the relative clause “which are white” just adds further information about the noun “birds”.³ Unlike English, however, Turkish relative clauses precede their head noun, due to Turkish being a head-final language, as in (3).

- (3) Dün tanıştığım kız sınavını geçmiş
The girl who/m I met yesterday passed her exam

Besides the head noun being in the head final position, one further difference between a relative clause in English and Turkish is the absence of relative pronouns in Turkish. All types of RCs in the Accessibility Hierarchy can be realized by participles in Turkish, as shown in (4).

- (4) Deniz’in Ezgi’ye ver-diğ-i kitabı okudum
Deniz-Gen Ezgi-Dat give-Participle-Acc read-Past-1sg
‘I read the book Deniz gave to Ezgi’

Although the verb in the clause ‘verdiği’ is non-finite and has a nominalizing suffix (-dİK), it serves the same function as an English relative clause. It modifies the head noun kitabı, restricting it to the one given by Deniz to Ezgi. In sum, while subordination is carried out by means of a finite clause in English, this is done with non-finite constructions in Turkish.

The acquisition of relative clauses has long been known to present challenges to L2 learners (Ellis, 1994). One important problem has to do with the position of the head noun relative to the clause. That is, L2 learners need to know whether the relative clause precedes or follows the head they modify. In the case of English, the grammatical functions of the relative pronoun are also very important because even though languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Turkish have forms like wh-phrases in English, these are

³ As this paper focusses on RRCs, for a thorough analysis of nonrestrictive relative clauses the reader is referred to Fabb (1990) and Borsley (1992).

used in questions, not in relative clauses. Thus, since speakers of these languages lack counterparts to English *wh*-forms and complementizers in RCs, they mostly tend to omit the *wh*-forms and the complementizer ‘*that*’ when learning English as a second language (Jacobs, 1995).

A second significant problem that L2 learners experience is to establish the link between the relative pronoun and its trace. Thus, in the following sentence, learners need to find the extraction site of the relative pronoun ‘*who*’ to produce a similar sentence.

(5) That is the man who John [VP saw_____]

In (5), ‘*who*’ is extracted from the verb phrase (VP) and leaves a gap in the relative clause. The gap might be at different levels of embeddedness of a syntactic structure. The gap might occur inside a prepositional phrase (PP) in a VP, as in (6).

(6) That is the man who John [VP thought [PP about_____]]

The gap may even be inside a PP in an NP in a VP, as shown in (7).

(7) That is the man who John [VP read [NP a book [PP about_____]]]

The gap in (7) is more deeply embedded than the one in (6), as it requires an extraction from a PP in an NP in a VP, while (6) requires an extraction from a PP in a VP. Similarly the gap in (6) is more deeply embedded than the one in (5), where only an extraction from a VP is required. Thus, the more deeply the gap is embedded, the higher the chance discontinuity will occur in the phrases.

Crucially related to the discussion on the nature and distribution of relative clauses concerns how they are handled in EFL class settings. Our aim in this paper is to examine immediate and long term effects of form-focussed instruction in the learning of relative clauses by Turkish EFL learners. Before turning to the specifics of this study, we first review various approaches to the acquisition of relative clauses in the L2 acquisition research.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section presents an overview of the properties of various approaches that predict an order of difficulty for the acquisition of relative clauses, focusing in particular on the Accessibility Hierarchy Hypothesis (AHH), the Parallel Function Hypothesis (PFH) and the Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (PDH). The second section summarizes prior L2 research on form-focussed instruction, with special reference to work conducted in the generative framework. Section three presents information about the participants and the tasks utilized in the study. After outlining the experimental design and scoring procedures, we turn to the results. Finally, we summarize the major findings and close with a discussion of how these findings bear on previous form-focussed research in L2 acquisition.

Formal Approaches to Relative Clauses

Accessibility hierarchy hypothesis

Keenan and Comrie's (1977) work on language universals suggests that there is an accessibility hierarchy of six types of relative clauses. Based on the study of a range of languages, these types are arranged in order of difficulty, with the first being the easiest.⁴

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|--|
| Type 1:
(8) | SS | The subject of the main clause is identical to the subject of the RC
The man who left was Bill |
| Type 2:
(9) | OS | The object of the main clause is identical to the subject of the RC.
I know the boy who speaks Italian |
| Type 3:
(10) | SO | The subject of the main clause is identical to the object of the RC.
The man who(m) you met is my teacher. |
| Type 4:
(11) | OO | The object of the main clause is the object of the relative clause.
I know the place that you mentioned. |

In regard to the question of difficulty, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) examine the position of the head noun, with a focus on whether it is in the subject or the object of the sentence and whether the relative pronoun replaces the subject or object of the relative clause. They discuss figures from Stauble (1978) to show how often native speakers use relative clause. The following order is presented: (OS type relative clauses: 55%, OO type relative clauses: 25%, SS type relative clauses 12%, SO type relative clauses: 7%). While these figures are not compatible with Keenan and Comrie's Accessibility Hierarchy hypothesis, the frequency with which native speakers use certain types of relative clauses as well as complexity might provide an explanation for the order of acquisition by L2 learners, an issue we review in the following section.

Parallel Function Hypothesis

The Parallel Function Hypothesis (hereafter PFH), which was originally formulated to account for first language relativization, proposed a relationship between the function of the head noun in the sentence and the function of the coreferential relative pronoun (RP) in the embedded relative clause. According to this approach, in a complex sentence difficulty is predicted where the grammatical function of the head noun is not equal to that of the RP, ease of acquisition is predicted where there is a parallel function of the head noun and its coreferential RP. Sheldon (1974) explained

⁴ Cook (1991) points out that some relative clause types such as 'The man than whom I taller is John' although possible in English does not sound natural. Similarly, following Rutherford's (1987) suggestion for combining indirect object clauses 'the person that he gave the book was Mary' and object of preposition clauses 'The person to whom he gave the book was Mary', our discussion in this section concerns 4 major types of relative clauses.

that the PFH predicts “a strategy of interpreting the grammatical function of the relative pronoun to be the same as its antecedent.” (p.274). To be precise, the difficulty order predicted by the PFH is that the subject-subject (SS) and object-object (OO) sentences are learned before subject-object (SO) and object-subject (OS) sentences, exemplified in (8-11).

Sheldon (1974) examined children learning English as a first language and found out that children could better understand sentences in which the head noun and the RP served the same function in their respective clauses. These findings, however, were challenged by other researchers (e.g. Prideaux and Baker, 1986). Even Sheldon (1977) herself found counter evidence regarding her earlier findings, where the OS type was found to be easier than both the SS and OO types that have parallel functions. In another study of L2 relativization Gass & Ard (1980) argued for the view that the difficulty order of the different positions in first and second language acquisition was different.

Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis

Another commonly cited approach to explain difficulties L2 learners face during the acquisition of relative clauses is the Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis (hereafter PDH), according to which human short-term memory functions as a constraint in the process of embedding. Kuno (1974) proposed that center-embedding, in which the relative clause interrupts the matrix sentence, is perceptually the most difficult kind of embedding. On the other hand, right and left-embedding where the relative clause is processed before or after the main clause does not interrupt the matrix sentence, and hence is much easier to interpret. Thus, for the proponents of the PDH, OS and OO type clauses are much easier to learn than SS and SO types, as shown in the examples below:

Right and left-embedding:

- (12) a. OS: The doctor treated the patient that complemented Sam.
b. OO: The doctor treated the patient that Sam complemented.

Center-embedding:

- (13) a. SS: The doctor that complemented Sam treated the patient.
b. SO: The doctor that Sam complemented treated the patient.

Mixed results have characterized the PDH. Several studies examining relative clause acquisition by both native and nonnative speakers (Cook, 1973; Ioup & Kruse, 1977; Prideaux & Baker, 1986) showed that sentences involving center-embedding are more difficult than sentences with right and left-embedding.

As this paper deals with the acquisition of RCs in instructed EFL settings, with a particular focus on immediate and long term effects of form-focussed instruction, in what follows we briefly review previous work on form-focussed teaching.

Form-focussed Instruction

The role of “form-focused instruction”, which is referred to as the use of instructional strategies to draw students’ attention to focus on form and/or structure in the second/foreign language classroom (Lightbown and Spada, 1990, 1993; Terrell), has changed radically for the past several decades. This is the result of the most popular methodology’s being shifted from traditional to audiolingual, then from audiolingual to cognitive, and lastly from cognitive to communicative approaches.

The grammar-translation approach which focused on the ability to use grammatical terminology to describe various morphological and syntactic principles of the target language was replaced by audiolingualism (at the end of the 1950s), a structured approach that concentrated on techniques of mimicry and memorization designed to develop the ability for oral communication. This method regarded learning as habit formation and the foreign language learner as an organism capable of mastering language as acquiring a set of appropriate language stimulus-response chains (Richards & Rogers, 1986).

The theoretical attack on audiolingualism came from Chomsky (1959) who claimed that language learning could not be explained in terms of the memorization of a fixed set of patterns. In addition, he argued that human language was not imitated behavior but was created anew from an underlying knowledge of abstracted rules. The role of grammar as the organizing principle in the classroom began to be questioned as the communicative approach gained increasing popularity in classroom settings. According to this approach, the teaching of grammar was regarded as an aid to the L2 learner to help them make sense of the input and as a “meaning-form focuser” to help establish meaning-form relationships.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of studies focussed on the issue of whether instruction influences the process of acquisition. For some researchers, there are constraints on the effects of formal instruction in L2 acquisition (e.g. Schumann, 1978; Lightbown et al, 1980). For others, instruction can improve accuracy in careful, planned speech production, but this improvement may disappear overtime in the long run. According to Pienemann’s teachability hypothesis (Pienemann, 1984), instruction cannot beat the natural order of developmental features. Pienemann (1984) predicts "that a given linguistic structure cannot be added through instruction to the learner's interlanguage at any desired point in time in his/her acquisitional career" (p.198) since formal instruction is constrained by speech processing prerequisites that have to be acquired sequentially. However if the learner is developmentally ready to acquire a particular construction, then it can facilitate the acquisition process in three ways by (i) increasing the speed of acquisition, (ii) increasing frequency in rule application and, (iii) applying the rule in a wider range of linguistic contexts (Pienemann, 1985, 1987).

Although most classroom-based research on the effects of grammar instruction have been carried out in primarily form-focused contexts, few studies have dealt with the effects of formal instruction in programs that are primarily communicative (e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 1990; 1993). The findings of the two studies conducted by Lightbown and Spada suggest that accuracy, fluency and overall communicative skills are best developed through instruction that is primarily meaning-based, but in which guidance is provided through form-focused activities and correction in context. Overall, it can be argued that grammar instruction provided within the context of communicative interaction can contribute positively to L2 development both in the short and long term.

More recent studies conducted within the framework of generative grammar have also dealt with the role of formal instruction and negative evidence in L2 acquisition. The aim is to find an answer to the question of whether this kind of instruction can lead to grammatical competence in the target language (White 1990, 1991a,b; Izumi and Lakshmanan, 1998). White (1990) investigated the effects of instruction on parameter resetting in the L2, where the first and second language (French and English, respectively) differed in terms of the settings they adopted for verb movement. The main difference between the two languages is that while in French, an adverb may appear between the verb and its direct object (SVAO), in English it may not. However, in English an adverb may appear between the subject and the verb (SAV) while this is not possible in French. This is shown in the following examples.

- (14) a. Pierre parle souvent anglais
'Pierre speaks often English'
b. Peter often speaks English

The results of the study showed that formal instruction lead to successful parameter resetting, as only the L2 learners who had received instruction came to know that SVAO is ungrammatical in English, at least in the short term. White (1991a, 1991b) also compared the short and long-term effects of instruction and concluded that while structured classroom input is beneficial in the short term, it did not result in significant changes in the L2 learners' underlying competence in the long term.

On similar grounds, another study by Izumi & Lakshmanan (1998), which investigated the effects of formal instruction on the acquisition of the English passive by Japanese L2 learners of English, gave support to the idea that instruction facilitates L2 acquisition. The difference between Japanese and English is that while Japanese permits both the 'direct and indirect passive', English permits only the 'direct passive'. The results of the study indicated that while the experimental group – the group which received grammar instruction on the English passive – neither produced nor accepted indirect passives in English, the subjects in the control group continued to assume that the indirect passive was possible in English. These results suggest that formal instruction and negative evidence are needed in order for these native speakers of Japanese to arrive at the correct L2 grammar.

Despite the support provided by these findings, the effectiveness of explicit instruction and negative evidence in SLA has also received criticism by various researchers (Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak, 1992; Schwartz, 1993). These researchers suggest that as the effects of instruction and negative feedback (NE) did not appear to be long term in nature, this implies that NE did not lead to the restructuring of the L2 learners' underlying grammar. Thus, it cannot be regarded as input to construct the whole interlanguage grammar.

In response to the arguments made by Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak (1992) White (1992) states that by excluding the possibility that NE causes parameter resetting, they have disposed of the problem of UG being driven by negative data as well as the empirical problem that this data was unnatural and shortlasting. However, another

problem is how to account for learners who in spite of taking note of positive L2 evidence, do not seem to use this data to pre-empt the L1 parameter settings.

An important question left unanswered by White's work was whether providing a flood of naturalistic positive evidence to L2 learners would be sufficient to trigger parameter resetting. If primary linguistic data (PLD) is sufficient for the attainment of grammatical competence in the L2, then exposure to PLD on a grammatical structure should lead to the mastery of that structure. To this end, Trahey and White (1993) attempt to answer the question of whether an ample supply of PLD on adverb positions in English would be sufficient to cause L2 learners to learn the rules of adverb placement, in particular that SVAO is ungrammatical in English. The results of the study showed that an input flood on adverbs caused L2 learners to learn that SAV is grammatical in English. They did not, however, learn that SVAO is not possible in English. In another study, Trahey (1996) investigated the long term effects of PLD in the L2 in order to establish whether the increase in the use of SAV immediately following the period of exposure would endure or whether there would be some sort of delayed reaction to the intensive input (decrease in the use of SVAO). The findings of the study indicated that while the input flood was effective in teaching the learners that SAV is possible in English, it did little for their knowledge of what is impossible in English (SVAO is ungrammatical), as a year later the same results held true. Thus, it can be said that positive evidence alone is not sufficient to trigger in the L2 learners' competence what was ungrammatical in the second language.

As can be seen from the discussion so far, few studies have investigated the long-term effects of grammar instruction (White 1991a; 1991b; Spada & Lightbown, 1993). Our aim in this study is to investigate the immediate and long-term effects of form-focused instruction in the learning of English relative clauses by Turkish subjects. In what follows, we first present the specific research questions explored in the study and then provide information about the subjects and the test instruments used.

- 1) Does form-focused instruction have an immediate effect in helping Turkish L2 learners of English master restrictive relative clauses? That is, do they make learners comprehend and produce the structure correctly and accurately?
- 2) Do the immediate effects of instruction continue 6 weeks after the learners have been provided explicit grammar teaching on relative clauses?
- 3) What are the effects of form-focused instruction in the long-term, that is 6 months after instruction?

Method

Participants

A total of 45 Turkish L2 learners of English (aged 15–17) from a private high-school in İstanbul participated in this study. These subjects were from three classes (classes 9A, 9C and 9D), with each class consisting of fifteen students.

The background questionnaire in regard to the subjects' language learning experience revealed that they were receiving formal instruction in English since they

were 12 years old. Almost all of these learners had begun to learn English at school, having very little contact with the foreign language outside the classroom. The only native speakers of English they interacted with were their foreign teachers at school. At the time of the study, these subjects were receiving 6 hours of form-focused instruction in English a week.

Teachers

Two English language teachers working in the school under investigation also participated in this study. In general terms, both of the teachers preferred teaching grammar more traditionally, by isolating the specific grammatical structure and providing controlled practice of that target structure along with corrective feedback. They were both native speakers of Turkish, who had obtained their teaching degrees from universities in Istanbul, Turkey. They both had 3-4 years of experience in teaching. At first, although it appeared that these two teachers had different approaches to teaching the particular structure – relative clauses-, it turned out that both teachers had common views about teaching, that is even the teacher who was more in favor of teaching grammar in context was not against providing metalinguistic information and explicit grammar instruction to her students which she explicitly stated in the teachers' questionnaire.

Data Collection

Sentence Combination Tasks

Three different sentence combination tasks were used to obtain production data in this study. Although these tasks were similar in terms of style and format, they consisted of different test items. Each task consisted of twenty sentences in total. The learners had 25 minutes to complete each task. Under no circumstances were these students to work together or turn to their teacher for help during the tests. However, they were permitted to ask their teacher the vocabulary they did not know. The first combination task (see Appendix 1) was used both as a pretest to check the subjects' basic knowledge of relative clauses in English and as a follow-up to see the subjects' progress in the use of relative clauses 6 weeks after formal instruction. The second task (see Appendix 2) served as the posttest, given immediately after instruction, to test the Turkish native speakers' improvement on the production of English relative clauses. Finally, the last combination task, a long-term test (see Appendix 3), aimed to find out the effects of instruction on the subjects' use of the structure 6 months after explicit instruction.

These tasks were adopted from various researchers (Gass, 1979; White, 1991; Tezel, 1998). On each of these tasks the subjects were instructed to combine these sentences by putting them into a relative clause form. The learners were to form relative clauses beginning with sentence A and to attach sentence B to sentence A by using which, who, whom or that. They were strictly discouraged to use conjunctions such as and or but, etc.

The data collected via these tasks were scored on an interval scale in total of correct responses (Scholfield, 1995). The definite maximum score on each test was 20. The responses were scored incorrect if they did not follow the directions (Gass, 1979; Tezel, 1998); if they involved the use of a resumptive pronoun, or the use of incorrect relative markers (i.e. 'which' instead of 'who'. In addition, ungrammatical responses, incomplete or no responses, or responses which included the omission of relative markers were also counted incorrect (Tezel, 1998).

Grammaticality Judgment Tasks

Two different grammaticality judgment (GJ) tasks were used to obtain comprehension data on the relative clauses. Similar to the sentence combination tasks, these two grammaticality judgment tasks were also similar in terms of format and style but consisted of discrete test items. The subjects had 20 minutes to complete these tasks. The subjects were to work on their own and not turn to each other or their teacher for help, yet they were allowed to ask the meanings of words they did not know.

The first GJ task (see Appendix 4), given to the students both as a pretest (two days before instruction) and a follow-up (6 weeks after instruction) aimed to find out the L2 learners implicit knowledge of relative clauses prior to instruction, as well as whether they continued to show further progress in the comprehension of the structure 6 weeks after grammar teaching had occurred. The second task (see Appendix 5) was administered as a posttest (two days after instruction) to see the immediate effects of form-focussed instruction on the learners' comprehension of the structure.

The grammaticality judgment task was a 3 point scale test. The subjects were asked to judge whether each sentence was (a) correct, (b) incorrect, or (c) not sure (they were not sure whether it was correct or incorrect). Both GJ tasks consisted of twenty sentences. In the posttest, eight of the sentences, which served as distractors, were ungrammatical as they had resumptive pronouns in the place where a gap would normally be expected to occur. As for the follow-up GJ test, eleven of the sentences were ungrammatical this time, the number of incorrect items was slightly higher to avoid any effects of the posttest.

The scoring of the grammaticality judgments was done by scoring the number of correct judgments out of the total number of 20. Accuracy was defined as correct acceptances of grammatical sentences and rejections of ungrammatical ones (White, 1991). When analyzing the data, the researcher counted the "Not Sure" responses incorrect following Tezel (1998), mainly because there were very few "Not Sure" responses (around 5%), as in their data.

Results

The subjects' scores were analyzed by means of one-way Analysis of Variance (oneway ANOVA) and t-tests in this study. In order to find out whether the first pretest scores of the subjects belonging to three different groups (classes 9A, 9C and 9D) showed a significant difference between the classes, a set of one-way ANOVAs was conducted. The pretest1 scores of the subjects in the three 9th grade classes seemed not

to reveal a significant difference between the three classes examined above. Similarly, in order to see whether the second pretest scores of the subjects from the three different classes (9A, 9C and 9D) differed significantly from one class to another, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Once again the pretest 2 scores of the subjects in the three 9th grade classes did not show a significant difference between the three classes.

A set of t-tests were computed to compare the means of pairs of different test scores. The t-test scores showed that the mean for posttest 1 was significantly greater than the mean for pretest 1 ($t = 11,138$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$) and that the mean for posttest 2 was also significantly greater than the mean for pretest 2 ($t = 8,077$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$). These results indicated the immediate effects of instruction to be positive, causing the learners to form many more correct sentences with relative clauses in them as well as make more correct judgments.

A significant decrease in means was evident between the posttest 1 scores of the subjects and their scores on follow-up 1, which they had taken approximately 6 weeks after the 1st posttest. The mean for posttest 1 was significantly higher than the mean for follow-up 1 ($t = 8,290$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$). Similarly, the mean for posttest 2 also turned out to be significantly greater than the mean for follow-up 2 ($t = 11,372$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$), showing that formal instruction did not have lasting effects, even in the short term. No significant values were found between the remaining test pairs –pretest 1 and follow-up 1, and pretest 2 and follow-up 2. Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of the following tests completed by the Turkish EFL subjects in this study.

A further t-test was used to compare the long-term scores of the subjects in question with their scores on the remaining tests - pretest 1, pretest 2, posttest 1, posttest 2, follow-up 1 and follow-up 2 - respectively. This was done to find out the long term effects of grammar teaching in the class. The results displayed significant differences between posttest 1 and longterm scores ($t = 8,598$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$), posttest 2 and longterm scores ($t = 6,845$, $df = 44$, $p = .000$) and between follow-up 2 and the longterm scores. (see Table 1). The means for posttest 1 and posttest 2 were found to be significantly higher than the longterm test, indicating that the effects of instruction were not long lasting.

Table 1. A paired samples t-test for the means and standard deviations

			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest	1	11,1333	45	2,8889	0,4306
	PostTest	1	17,0444	45	2,558	0,3813
Pair 2	PreTest	2	11	45	3,1042	0,4628
	PostTest	2	15,0222	45	1,8524	0,2761
Pair 3	PostTest	1	17,0444	45	2,558	0,3813
	Follow-up 1	1	11,6222	45	3,4921	0,5206
Pair 4	PostTest	2	15,0222	45	1,8524	0,2761
	Follow-up 2	2	8,9333	45	2,8951	0,4316
Pair 5	Pretest	1	11,1333	45	2,8889	0,4306
	Follow-up 1	1	11,6222	45	3,4921	0,5206
Pair 6	PreTest	2	11	45	3,1042	0,4628
	Follow-up 2	2	8,9333	45	2,8951	0,4316

On the other hand, the mean for the long-term turned out to be significantly higher than follow-up 2 ($t = 3,293$, $df = 44$, $p = .002$), suggesting that they had done better on the long-term (6 months after instruction) than on the follow-up 2 (6 weeks after instruction). The means for each of these tests are demonstrated on Table 2 below.

Table 2. A paired samples t-test for the longterm test scores of the subjects

			Mean	N	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest 1		11,1333	45	2,8889	0,4306
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143
Pair 2	PreTest 2		11	45	3,1042	0,4628
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143
Pair 3	PostTest 1		17,0444	45	2,558	0,3813
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143
Pair 4	PostTest 2		15,0222	45	1,8524	0,2761
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143
Pair 5	Follow-up 1		11,6222	45	3,4921	0,5206
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143
Pair 6	Follow-up 2		8,9333	45	2,8951	0,4316
	Longterm		10,4667	45	4,1209	0,6143

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research attempted to determine the immediate, and long-term effects of form-focused instruction in the learning of relative clauses in English by Turkish native speakers. The results obtained from posttest 1 and posttest 2 in comparison with the subjects' scores on pretest 1 and pretest 2 indicated that the immediate effects of formal instruction (the tests were given 2 days after instruction) were positive (an answer to the first research question in the study), that is, the overwhelming majority of the subjects had learned to make more correct judgments and to produce sentences with relative clauses more correctly and promptly after they had been taught the particular structure explicitly. Thus, explicit grammar instruction proved to be beneficial in helping intermediate-level EFL learners improve their comprehension and production of written relative clauses.

In addition, these results supported the arguments of the proponents of form-focused instruction that exposing learners to explicit information about grammar would be helpful in their mastering certain properties in English. (White, 1991a,b; 1992; Izumi & Lakshmanan, 1998; Scott, 1989; Lightbown & Spada, 1990).

On the other hand, when the results obtained from the follow-up 1 and follow-up 2 tests (completed by learners 6 weeks after instruction) were compared with posttest 1 and posttest 2 results respectively, it was evident that the positive immediate effects of grammar teaching had not lasted a month and a half later, the subjects' scores on both follow-up tests were close to their scores on their pretests, given prior to any kind of grammar instruction.

Between the follow-up and the longterm tests of all the subjects in this study, the subjects' results of the long-term tests also appeared to be very close, within the same level as their results on the follow-up tests indicating that they had made no progress from follow-up to long-term but maintained their performance on the follow-up tests.

Lastly, between the pretests and the longterm tests, the subjects' test results seemed to equal each other indicating that 6 months after instruction, these EFL learners appeared to be at the same stage of L2 development in the learning of relative clauses that they had initially started. This finding indicated that while formal instruction had positive immediate effects, it did not result in significant changes in the learners' underlying competence in the long run. These results also confirmed the findings of other studies (White 1991a,b; 1992) which showed that structured classroom input did not have lasting effects. In addition; the results also supported the view of Schwartz (1993), which states that though form-focused instruction and negative evidence might play a role in L2 acquisition, it cannot, all alone by itself, be used to construct the whole L2 grammatical system.

Two reasons could be attributed to explain the fact that explicit grammar instruction did not have long lasting effects. One reason could be that after having had a two-week (12 hours) extensive grammar teaching on the English relative clauses only, these subjects received no further instruction on this particular structure. That is, these students' exposure to instruction was for a brief time period, and the teachers did not go over relative clauses at all between the posttest and the follow-up as well as the follow-up and the long-term testing dates. Thus, formal instruction might have failed in making

learners produce more correct sentences with relative clauses in the long run because of lack of suitable follow up or subsequent emphasis on this issue. This finding supports the claims made by Lightbown and Spada (1993) for the importance of drawing the L2 learners attention to focus on form and error correction in a cyclical manner as in a communicative syllabus within the context of meaningful communicative interaction. Thus, the effects of form-focused instruction and negative feedback tend to be more lasting if there is continuous feedback (Lightbown, 1991).

Second, form-focused instruction in the classroom mainly consisted of isolated grammar-based teaching, and though it included communicative activities such as jokes, puzzles and games, this was very limited (only one teacher used it) and not organized in a way to draw the learners' attention to the use of language in creative and spontaneous ways. In addition; the teachers preferred to use a lot of metalinguistic information in explaining a grammatical structure and even referred to the students' mother tongue when they failed to understand a grammar rule. In this sense, the target language was far away from being a tool for communicative interaction in the classroom. This finding is in accordance with the hypothesis that it is the context-embedded focus on form, made available over an extended time period that leads EFL learners to successful performance on the use of the target language. (Lightbown, 1991; Lightbown and Spada, 1993) .

Although the present study yielded the short-term effects of instruction to be positive, its long-term results seemed to support the view that approaches that are primarily form-focused and metalinguistic in orientation did not cause significant changes in the L2 learners' underlying competence (White, 1990; 1991a,b; Schwartz, 1993). In contrast, a number of studies have shown that form-focused instruction given within the context of communicative interaction can lead to grammatical accuracy in L2 acquisition in the long run. (Spada and Lightbown, 1990; 1993). Thus, an issue that needs further investigation is whether the combination of form-oriented and communication-oriented teaching could have lasting effects in the acquisition of English relative clauses, or any other aspect of the L2 grammar, than form-focused instruction alone. Another issue that also deserves investigation is whether exposure to grammar instruction and negative feedback provided within the context of communicative interaction for an extended period of time can result in L2 development in the long term.

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İngilizce İlgi Cümlelerinin Ediniminde Form Odaklı Öğretimin Kısa ve Uzun Vadeli Etkileri: İngilizce'yi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerin Durumu

Özet

Bu çalışma, ana dili Türkçe olan ve İngilizce'yi sınıf ortamında öğrenen öğrencilerin ortaç yapılarını öğrenimi sırasında kullanılan öğretim yöntemlerinin kısa ve uzun vadeli etkilerini incelemektedir. Çalışmaya, yaşları 15-17 arasında değişen 45 9. sınıf öğrencisi katılmıştır. Veriler üç farklı cümle birleştirme testi ile dilbilgisel yargı testinden elde edilmiştir. Katılımculara, ortaç yapıları doğrudan öğretilmeden önce bir öntest verilmiş, ardından özellikle ortaç yapılarını içeren bir eğitim verilmiş ve öğretimden iki gün sonra ve 6 hafta sonra olmak üzere iki son test uygulanmıştır. Öğretimin etkilerini görebilmek amacıyla son test 6 ay sonra yeniden uygulanmıştır. Katılımcuların performansının öğretimden hemen sonra verilen son testlerde dikkat çekici biçimde artmış olduğu görülürken, bu etkinin kısa vadeli olduğu görülmüştür. Bu çalışmada elde edilen bulgular, dil öğretiminde doğrudan form öğretimine dayalı yöntemlerin ilk etkilerinin olumlu olduğu ancak bu etkilerin uzun süreli ve kalıcı olmadığı yönündeki çalışmaları desteklemektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Forma dayalı öğretim, doğrudan dilbilgisi öğretimi, Türkçe'nin yabancı dil olarak öğrenimi, ortaç yapıları, doğrudan öğretimin uzun süreli etkileri

APPENDIX 1 Examples of test items used in the sentence combination task

Make one new sentence from sentence A and sentence B in each item. Always begin with sentence A and use the words who, whom, which or that in the new sentence. Do not leave out any information and do not change the meaning. Please do not use the words and or but.

Example: I watched an adventure movie. The movie was boring.
I watched an adventure movie which was boring.

SENTENCE A

1. I saw the cat.
2. The girl answered the question.
3. I have the bracelet.
4. The killer was the engineer.
5. The woman knows the man.

SENTENCE B

1. The cat was black and white.
2. The professor asked the question.
3. The boy is reading about the bracelet.
4. I was listening to the news about him.
5. The man is wearing earrings.

APPENDIX 2

Make one new sentence from sentence A and sentence B in each item. Always begin with sentence A and use the words who, whom, which or that in the new sentence. Do not leave out any information and do not change the meaning. Please do not use the words and or but.

Example: I met Mary's teacher. She seemed very nice.
I met Mary's teacher who seemed very nice.

SENTENCE A

1. I saw the zebra.
2. The lady watched the news.
3. Bill told his phone number.
4. The children begged for a tale.
5. The child is playing with the truck.

SENTENCE B

1. The zebra had black and white stripes.
2. The speaker told the news.
3. The girl wrote down his phone number.
4. The lady read a story to the children.
5. The child is 2 years old.

APPENDIX 3

Make one new sentence from sentence A and sentence B in each item. Always begin with sentence A and use the words who, whom, which or that in the new sentence. Do not leave out any information, and do not change the meaning. Please do not use the words and or but.

Example: The bracelet is expensive. The burglar is stealing the bracelet.
The bracelet which the burglar is stealing is expensive.

SENTENCE A

1. Mary met the boy.
2. I applied for a job.
3. Jenny's boyfriend was handsome.
4. The eagle was wise.
5. Sally and Sue are twins.

SENTENCE B

1. The boy was playing football with his friends.
2. Someone had already taken it.
3. Everyone wanted to dance with him.
4. The poet is reading a poem about the eagle.
5. They always wear the same clothes.

APPENDIX 4

Please put a check (✓) in the CORRECT box on the following answer sheet if you think the sentence is grammatically correct. Put a check in the INCORRECT box if you think the sentence is grammatically incorrect. If you are not sure, then put a check in the NOT SURE box.

1. The teacher bought a silver pen that was very expensive.
2. The boy that Mary is talking to him is John.
3. I know the student who the teacher is talking to.
4. The room which I put the new furniture in is very dark.
5. I know the boy who he is working at the Bosphorus University Library in Etiler.

APPENDIX 5

Please put a check (✓) in the CORRECT box on the following answer sheet if you think the sentence is grammatically correct. Put a check in the INCORRECT box if you think the sentence is grammatically incorrect. If you are not sure, then put a check in the NOT SURE box.

1. The photographer bought a camera that was very cheap.
2. The cassette that I lost was my favourite.
3. The child that her mom is talking to her is Yeşim.
4. The room which he locked the dog in is very dark.
5. I met the woman who she is studying engineering at the Marmara University.