APPLYING FORM-FOCUSED APPROACHES TO L2 VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION THROUGH VIDEO PODCASTS

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Since its inception, form-focused instruction (FFI) has been associated with grammar, with only a handful of studies examining its potential for vocabulary development (e.g., Laufer, 2006). Meanwhile, there has been an unresolved dispute between the two approaches of Focus on Form (FonF) and Focus on Forms (FonFs) in terms of their degree of efficiency. This classroom-based study sought to identify the most efficient FFI-driven approach in tapping learners' lexical as well as comprehension gains by drawing largely on the protocols provided in Ellis (2008) and Laufer (2005). Eighty-eight Iranian students in four intact classes at Allameh Tabataba'i University (two FonF, one FonFs and one meaning-focused) were presented with a series of teacher-designed mini-lessons. Their medium of exposure was video podcasts (newscasts). Students' gains were measured by active immediate and delayed vocabulary and comprehension tests. A series of between-groups multivariate analyses of variance revealed that both FonF groups outperformed the FonFs in terms of all three variables. This indicates that the tendency to analyze words in isolation, despite intensive rehearsals typical of FonFs, failed to outweigh the FonF conditions in which contextual associations are prioritized. The findings of the study could provide useful avenues for FFI-driven vocabulary learning and instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

One major criticism leveled against the strong version of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) boils down to its overriding emphasis on meaning-based instruction where target language forms are by and large sidelined or trivialized (Ellis, 2008; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Williams, 2005). There is now a strong consensus that second language (L2) instruction should also incorporate a form-focused component. One plausible rationale for this claim is that learners, especially beginner learners, have a limited capacity to process the L2 and have difficulty attending to meaning and form simultaneously. Therefore, they will prioritize meaning over form or vice versa when performing a communicative activity (VanPatten, 1990). Lightbown and Spada (2013) define form-focused instruction (FFI) as a type of "instruction that draws attention to the forms and structures of the language within the context of communicative interaction. This may be done by giving metalinguistic information, simply highlighting the form, or by providing corrective feedback" (p. 218).

Long (1997) considers FFI to be an umbrella term referring to any pedagogical technique, proactive or reactive, implicit or explicit, that draws students' attention to language form. He has famously

distinguished between *focus on form* (FonF) and *focus on forms* (FonFs) procedures claiming that the former involves briefly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements in context as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication. Long suggests that FonF occurs when learners participate in interactions in which communication problems arise, leading to attempts to negotiate for meaning (Ellis et al., 2001). From this standpoint, the role of the learner is that of a language user and language is viewed as a tool for communication. We can draw learners' attention to form during a communicative activity through FonF by requiring them to briefly and perhaps simultaneously attend to form, meaning, and use during one cognitive event (Ellis, 2008).

FonFs, however, is characterized by teaching discrete linguistic structures in separate lessons in a sequence determined by syllabus writers. Students view themselves as learners of a language and the language as the object of study (Laufer, 2006). It builds on explicit rule provision and practice exercises of various types (Ellis, 2012), and is said to be theoretically rooted in *skills-learning* approach; that is, classroom L2 or foreign language learning derives from general cognitive processes and thus entails the learning of a skill (Sheen, 2002). It rests on the assumption that L2 language acquisition, particularly of adult learners resembles the acquisition of other cognitive skills. Hence rules underlying grammatical structures ought to be explained, and frequent opportunities should be provided for practicing these structures in communicative and non- communicative activities. Sheen (2003) enumerated techniques such as grammatical explanations, deductive presentations of the subject matter, translation, the use of the native language, and contrastive analysis as hallmarks of FonFs.

A glance at second language acquisition (SLA) literature shows that there is an ongoing debate as to which camp (FonF or FonFs) is more beneficial. FonFs is roundly lambasted by most advocates of FonF as being ineffective, outmoded, synthetic, simplistic, and even Neanderthal (Laufer, 2005). Long (1997) opined that FonFs tends to produce boring lessons, does not match learning processes, and consequently impinges on learner motivation. Similarly, Ellis (2008) highlighted the growing evidence suggesting that FonF instruction would facilitate acquisition. In contrast, proponents of FonFs argue that when it comes to empirical evidence, FonF falls short of credibility. Sheen (2003), who is favorably disposed towards FonFs, made a strong case for the validity and superiority of this approach over FonF, calling the latter "a myth in the making" (p. 225). He noted that given the great difficulty of learning the grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language, these cannot be learned effectively as a by-product of communicative activity, or simply by carrying out problem-solving activities. Poole (2005) warns that the enthusiasm for FonF as a *miracle method* needs to be curbed on the grounds that such studies present a mixed picture of the ability to promote L2 grammatical acquisition.

Laufer's (2005, 2006) vocabulary-oriented account of FFI might be considered a rarity as most studies in this domain tend to equate *form* with grammatical features. In a similar vein, the study at hand seeks to do away from this juxtaposition and bring to the fore the FFI of lexical items. Furthermore, although the FonF versus FonFs debate in grammar instruction has gone on for over two decades, their application and extension to the lexical domain may invigorate insights into the vocabulary instructional methods.

It can be deduced from the literature that the superiority controversy between FonF and FonFs is for the most part theoretically-driven. According to Sheen (2003), such advocacies can only be justified if extended trialing provides reliable and supportive empirical evidence. Similarly, we believe more classroom-based investigations are required to reap the benefits of FFI. Here, we intend to do just that by carrying out a series of classroom experiments in which the FonF and FonFs instructional protocols are initially defined, and later empirically compared in order to cast new light on their pedagogical merits in getting learners to recall lexical features following L2 exposure.

Another attribute of this study that might be considered an innovation concerns learners' medium of exposure. Whereas vocabulary instruction is widely researched through the platform of reading passages (e.g., Paribakht & Wesche, 1996; Webb, 2005), video podcasts (newscasts) were used here as the medium

of exposure during the instructional sessions.

Therefore, the purpose of this comparative experiment was threefold. First, it examined whether FFI is essentially more efficient than meaning-focused (MF) instruction in the lexical domain. Second, it sought to investigate which type of FFI (FonF or FonFs) works best for the immediate and delayed recall of vocabulary. The final objective of the study was to measure the comprehension gains of the instructional conditions in order to identify the protocol that leads to the least amount of hindrance to learners' content comprehension when FFI is on the agenda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the focus will be on studies that have sought to explore the applications of FFI to vocabulary instruction in one way or another. Later, FFI taxonomy, its methodological dimensions and the way it is operationalized in the classroom will be discussed. Finally, video podcasts which serve as the platform of instruction in this study will be introduced.

Vocabulary and Form-focused Instruction

Although a large body of FFI research is informed by grammar instruction, it is by no means confined to this category alone by definition. In fact, *form* has been predominantly used in SLA research to represent grammar or grammatical form; however, some scholars have rejected this reductionism. Ellis (2001, p.1) for instance, defined FonF as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form". The term *form* he adds, is intended to include phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmalinguistic aspects of language (see Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis et al., 2001).

FFI has, nevertheless, not received much attention in vocabulary research to date. As a trailblazer, Laufer (2005) explored the relevance of FonF and FonFs approaches to L2 vocabulary learning and dismissed the claim that words are best acquired from input, particularly from reading or through purely MF instruction (e.g., DeKeyser, 1998; Krashen, 1985). In another study, Laufer (2006) empirically compared the two approaches in learning new L2 words. The FonF group read a text containing the target words, discussed it in small groups, and answered comprehension questions. Meanwhile, the FonFs group studied the target words as discrete items with their meanings and examples of usage. The ultimate assessment revealed slightly greater gains among learners in the FonFs group. Of course, in her study comparing text comprehension gains was not considered as a variable of analysis.

De la Fuente (2006) explored the effects of three vocabulary lessons (one traditional and two task-based) on the acquisition of basic meanings, forms, and morphological aspects of Spanish words. The findings suggested the significance of a proactive form-focused approach to task-based L2 vocabulary learning. The analysis also showed that a task-based lesson with an explicit FonFs component—rather than without—proved more effective in promoting the acquisition of word morphological aspects.

Acknowledging the merits of FonF approach, Rott, Williams, and Cameron (2002) observed the effectiveness of various types of instructional interventions in lexical acquisition. As they concluded, the goal of intervention was to improve both the extent and speed of lexical acquisition as well as reading comprehension. Yet, they added the caution that instructional interventions are often an effort to draw learner attention briefly away from the primary task of reading and toward the form and meaning of the new words. This drawing attention to form would potentially decrease the cognitive resources needed for text comprehension or, at the very least, briefly interrupt the reading process.

It is our contention that a crucial issue in FFI-driven vocabulary teaching is to design the instructional intervention in a way that would lead to optimal word acquisition while causing minimum or no distraction from text comprehension on the part of the learners. Highlighting the significance of measuring comprehension in FonF research, Williams (2005) has argued that many studies of this type

report only its effect on the noticing or use of form, without controlling for an effect on comprehension, which would make it difficult to determine the overall impact of FonF.

FFI Subcategories and Methodological Procedures

While FonF procedures are associated with several subcategories and pedagogical options in SLA literature, FonFs in contrast, has remained relatively unexpanded. Perhaps the only available bifurcation has been dubbed by Laufer (2005) as pure and task-related FonFs. Based on her analysis, in vocabulary instruction, *task-related FonFs* is characterized by the following parameters:

- Words are the object of learning. However, they are related to, though not embedded in, a meaning-based task which is central in a lesson. An example of such an activity is an exercise which requires learners to match new words from a text with their synonyms, and which is performed after a reading comprehension task.
- Learners are presented with *bilingual word lists*. Further explanations or any additional information requested by the learners about the target words are provided by the teacher in the L2.
- *Rich instruction* is encouraged. The term, according to Nation (as cited in Laufer, 2005), entails focusing on a word as the object of learning and giving elaborate attention to it: going beyond the immediate demands of a particular context of occurrence. It is also assumed that rich instruction compensates for lack of massive exposure and use which occur in L1, and speeds up the incremental process of expanding and consolidating word knowledge. Exercises that require learners to distinguish between words like historic and historical, lunch and launch, economic and economical, and so forth are exercises in FonFs and can be considered as part of rich instruction.
- Effective *contrastive analysis* is performed. Problematic sets or pairs of words that are lexicalized differently in the two languages have to be periodically practiced. Such explanation and practice are not parts of a communicative task.
- *Fluency* can be developed through practicing words in isolation or in sentences which are communicatively unrelated.

Pure FonFs activities on the other hand, require learners to work with isolated words that are not related to any meaning-based task whatsoever. An example is a crossword puzzle exercise that serves to rehearse already familiar words.

With regard to classroom practices and pedagogic considerations, FonF has turned out to have a number of subcategories, although there is no broad consensus on how to implement these instructional procedures in classroom. Inevitably, several questions still remain unresolved including the one highlighted by Ellis (e.g., 2001, 2008): Do some types of FFI work better than others?

Despite the existence of a number of experimental studies surrounding FFI, scant attention has been paid to creating pedagogical frameworks for it. An exception to that was accomplished by Ellis (2008) where he presented his own four macro-options as:

1. Input-based options
2. Output-based (production) options
3. Explicit options
4. Corrective feedback options

Out of these four frameworks, two highly credible FonF manifestations that have received considerable attention in SLA research (e.g., Izumi, 2002) are *enhanced input* and *production* conditions. However, this widespread reference largely belongs to the realm of grammar and as far as vocabulary is concerned, this might be considered a relatively fresh territory. That said, this study focuses on the following two

pedagogical protocols:

a) *Input enhancement* is a pedagogical model initially used by Sharwood Smith (1993) to refer to the deliberate manipulation of the input learners are exposed to in order to promote learning and increase learner awareness. It is carried out by manipulating aspects of the input so that those desired teacher-induced features become salient to the learners. Techniques such as typographical enhancement (i.e., color coding, boldfacing, underlining, capitalizing, or highlighting selected input forms, see Izumi, 2002), use of gestures, special stress, and intonation and nonlinguistic signals are among the actions that can accentuate language input so that learners are induced to pay attention to them.

b) *Output-based FonF* refers to instruction directed at enabling or inducing learners to produce utterances containing the target structure. In this approach, the learner's otherwise elusive attention is directed towards selected aspects in the input through production processes. According to Ellis (2008), most production practice is aimed at enabling learners to produce the correct target language (TL) forms by avoiding errors. Swain and Lapkin (2001) underscored that if learners are left to their own devices when solving immediate production difficulties, they may engage in various thought processes that can consolidate existing knowledge or perhaps generate some new knowledge on the basis of their current knowledge. The act of producing language is believed to increase the likelihood of learners becoming sensitive to what they can and cannot say in the TL, which eventually makes learners reassess their interlanguage capabilities. Having observed the merits of output-provoking classroom activities, Izumi and Bigelow (2000) concluded that a text-reconstruction task significantly promotes noticing the gap when a specific form is targeted since these tasks maximize the similarities between the learner's production and the TL model. However, they warn that the learners' processing capacity should not be overloaded during output and input processing in order to allow for the adequate allocation of attentional resources to forms. In particular, collaborative output tasks (Swain & Lapkin, 2001), which require learners to produce the TL cooperatively (e.g., dictogloss), have been observed to improve learner accuracy in using the target form. Swain and Lapkin argue that through talk in collaborative tasks in which learners work in pairs or small groups, they notice linguistic problems and through their dialogue in those tasks, the learners engage in making meaning clearer when debating language forms.

Video Podcasts

"Podcasts are digital audio and visual recordings that can be created and *downloaded*, that is, moved from the Internet to an individual computer" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 213). Nowadays many broadcast media websites, for instance, post their recorded newscasts for online users. Overall, podcasts encompass a whole range of topics from news stories and lectures to talk shows and many other themes. Interestingly, these clips could be used and shared for pedagogical purposes as well. The tendency to use this apparatus is gradually picking up steam as its potential benefits are only beginning to unfold for several SLA-related themes (see Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Lomicka & Lord, 2011; Rosell-Aguilar, 2013; Young, 2007). Perhaps along with the advancement of technology, video podcasts could be a worthwhile candidate to replace or complement paper-based texts or textual materials currently at the core of researchers' and L2 teachers' choices (e.g., Nation, 2013; Paribakht & Wesche, 1996).

Research Questions

The overall aim of this study was to draw a comparison between four methodological approaches (three form-focused and one meaning-focused) using newscasts in order to measure EFL learners' vocabulary development as well as their concurrent comprehension gains. These four approaches are:

- FonF 1 (input-enhancement)
- FonF 2 (production)
- FonFs (task-related)
- MF (control)

In light of the four protocols provided above and the three dependent variables of (a) immediate vocabulary recall, (b) delayed vocabulary recall, and (c) text comprehension, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Which instructional approach (FonF 1, FonF 2, or FonFs) will lead to the optimum result in terms of immediate active vocabulary recall?

2. Which instructional approach will lead to the optimum result in terms of vocabulary retention (delayed active recall)?

3. Which instructional approach will provide the least amount of distraction from text comprehension?

METHOD

In this section, we will focus on the methodological aspects of this quantitative study and the details of how it was operationalized. To address the research questions, a quasi-experimental design was used drawing on the models and guidelines presented in Ellis (2008) and Laufer (2005, 2006).

Participants

The sample consisted of 88 male and female Iranian EFL undergraduates aged between 19 and 22 at Allameh Tabataba'i University where students above the intermediate level of proficiency are essentially in the majority. Nevertheless, a paper-based TOEFL test was administered for more accurate grading, and in order to encompass an adequate subject pool, all those scoring within one standard deviation above and below the mean in four intact classes were initially nominated for the study ($M = 541$, $SD = 18.32$). Further lexical knowledge screening was also carried out via a Vocabulary Levels Test. The 5000-word level test (Nation, 2001) was administered whereby, in a 30-item test, all those scoring above 24 qualified (one point was allocated to each item). High proficiency subjects were selected to be able to cope with the highly sophisticated language of the newscasts. Eventually, two FonF (*input enhancement*, $n = 13$ and *production*, $n = 21$), one FonFs (*task-related*, $n = 28$), and one MF (*control*, $n = 26$) groups qualified in the tests to go through distinct treatment sessions over a span of about one month. The learners were all students of English language and literature in four intact classes. By courtesy of their respective professors who dismissed the classes a few minutes early for the sake of our experiment, the teacher (one of the authors of this paper) managed to implement the intended instructional protocols. The learners too, fully cooperated, given that the novelty of experiencing newscasts spurred them to stay on for some extra minutes beyond their class timeline.

Design

Unlike conventional experiments where the language input normally comprises the reading text or written input, this study enjoyed an audiovisual medium; video podcasts in the form of news episodes adopted from the American program *NBC Nightly News* were used with the aid of a classroom video projector and a set of speakers connected to the teacher's laptop computer. The episodes had been carefully viewed by the instructor before being played for the learners and those with potentially more difficult vocabulary items were opted (for the contents of a sample episode, see Appendix A). Those low frequency vocabulary items unlikely to be familiar to the subjects were then extracted and administered through a pilot test to 20 students of similar English proficiency who had not been part of the experiment. They were then requested to put a checkmark against the words whose meanings were known to them. The 20 items with the fewest checks were designated for classroom practice across all the groups. Of the 20 words, five which were totally unchecked by all pilot test-takers became the final target words for our experiment, appearing on the post-test at the end of each session. Similar word screening was carried out three times to come up with the required vocabulary items for the three sessions across all four groups (out of a total of 60 words for classroom practice, 15 target words were ultimately chosen for the post-

tests). Overall, 12 sessions of treatment went into the current work. Each treatment session lasted for the better part of three quarters of an hour.

Instruments

Since this study intended to gauge learners' immediate and delayed active recall of words plus their ability to comprehend the text in which those new words appeared, six five-point tests (three vocabulary and three comprehension) were designed across the four treatment conditions who underwent a total of three independent treatment sessions that included teacher-designed mini-lessons. The classes met once a week each and all four groups went through different classroom instruction but identical vocabulary and comprehension post-tests (a total of three newscast episodes, 15 vocabulary test items, and 15 comprehension test items). At the end of each session, one immediate vocabulary recall together with a comprehension check quiz, designed by the teacher, were given to the students followed by a delayed vocabulary post-test, administered a week later. The comprehension check questions consisted of true-false items based on the newscast content (for a sample, see Appendix B). Regarding the construction of test items, since the experiment entailed *achievement* tests of active lexical knowledge, a series of five-item active recall vocabulary tests (for a sample, see Appendix C) were supplied by the teacher based on tests by Laufer, Elder, Hill, and Congdon (2004). Reliability of the instruments was checked using mean inter-item correlations suggested by Pallant (2013) for tests with fewer than 10 items. The means for both comprehension and vocabulary tests were well above the suggested criteria (.20 to .40) by Briggs and Cheek (1986). All the inter-item correlations were either .60 or .70. The only exception was the mean for comprehension test 1, which was .50. We employed expert judgment to ensure the validity of the comprehension and vocabulary tests. All the four judges were lecturers at the same university, where the data were collected, for at least five years.

As outlined in Nation and Chung (2009), active recall of vocabulary is measured by supplying a form for a given meaning or definition; thus the first letter of the intended word is given to prevent the learners from supplying non-target words as in the following example:

An improvement in relations between two countries: t_____ (thaw)

With respect to scoring, each correct answer received one point, a wrong or no response received zero, and half a point was allocated to a misspelled or approximate response. In order to ensure their accuracy and authenticity, the stem sentences in all tasks were obtained from exemplars in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2009).

Procedure

The two FonF groups (input enhancement and production), one FonFs group (task-related), and one MF (control) group were supplied with the following instructional procedures for three weeks running:

Group 1

Input-enhancement FonF: During each of the three treatment sessions, 20 vocabulary items were presented in a list in which the words (printed in boldface) along with example sentences were reviewed by the learners (see Appendix D for a sample lesson). The teacher made every attempt to accentuate the words in a meaning-oriented ambience. Students were allowed to use their dictionaries (English-English) and ask further questions regarding the uses of the new words. English was the dominant language used by the teacher and the learners throughout the period. Overall, words were treated as tools for communication rather than object of study. Upon examining the lexical items, the newscast was played twice for two reasons: contextualizing and focusing on the reviewed vocabulary as well as consolidating their comprehension. Meanwhile, students were told to simultaneously take notice of the words in question and attend to the subject-matter of the news stories. As another measure of input enhancement, upon encountering the target words during the second run, the video was briefly paused by the teacher in

order to induce further consciousness-raising. After the treatment, all learners were unexpectedly tested both immediately and one week later on the active recall of the target words. The immediate test was preceded by a true-false comprehension test.

Group 2

Output-based FonF: Complying with FonF instructions, the learners in this group were provided with the vocabulary items in a list along with some example sentences (same examples as in Group 1). They had to look words up in their dictionaries and consult their meanings in pairs. In this group, students were required to carry out a vocabulary *reconstruction task* (Izumi, 2002) whereby during the screening of the newscast (two times), they were asked to pay close attention to its content and make quick notes of all the sentences that contained the target vocabulary items. This was done through collaboration. It was emphasized that precise wordings were not required and all they had to do was to pick up a good approximation of the target sentences within their comprehension means. Once the broadcast was over, the students were given a short time to check their answers in pairs. In the meantime, they provided one another with corrective feedback as a result of peer consultation. Then, the teacher checked the correct answers with students by randomly asking them to read out their sentences. In fact, the sentences that were originally used in the clip were reiterated by individuals in the class. This way, they were pushed to correctly reproduce the intended TL forms. Later, the two post-tests (comprehension followed by immediate vocabulary recall) were administered accordingly, with the delayed vocabulary post-test coming a week later.

Group 3

Task-related FonFs: A sustained effort was made on the part of the teacher in this group to comply with FonFs requirements (see Laufer, 2005) and to segregate vocabulary instruction from a context-embedded setting. The target items were presented to the students in a word-matching task where they had to match the 20 target words of each session with their English synonyms or definitions (see Appendix E for a sample). Students felt free to ask about the L1 (Farsi) equivalents of words and the teacher supplied any additional explanation they needed, including contrastive analysis of the words along L1 and L2. Sometimes other parts of speech regarding the target words were discussed; for instance, *convict* (verb), *conviction* (noun), *convict* (noun). Problematic words that have no straightforward L1 equivalent (e.g., *déjà vu*) were also explicitly defined and elaborated by the teacher. All examples appeared in isolation without much communicative relevance. Overall, words were treated as the object of learning all along. Following an essential FonFs (task-related) principle, which postulates that words should be related to, though not embedded in, a meaning-based task, the newscast was shown twice similar to other conditions. However, the teacher proceeded with caution as not to lay too much emphasis on the uses of the words in their meaningful contexts, but lead students to infer the meanings from context. Lastly, the post-tests were handed out.

Group 4

MF: Finally, in the fourth condition which also served as the control group, students were provided with no particular instruction. Since no attention to form was permissible, learners were asked to fully concentrate on the content of the newscast clip for both times each session. Some students did not feel at ease in the face of what they were going to watch and what they had to do. But the teacher did his utmost to relieve their concerns by asking them to focus on the comprehension questions and to look out for the gist of the stories during its broadcast. The teacher made no mention of the target vocabulary items throughout the period. The clip was played twice before the learners took the respective comprehension and vocabulary post-tests.

RESULTS

Primarily, the sum total of the learners' scores on the three immediate vocabulary tests were averaged to come up with a single representative score. This process was also done for the delayed vocabulary and the comprehension tests separately.

Table 1. *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*

Dependent Variable	F	df1	df2	p
Word recall	1.911	3	84	.119
Word retention	1.826	3	84	.140
Comprehension	1.776	3	84	.158

Table 1 indicates no significant difference among the group variances in terms of word recall (immediate), word retention (delayed recall) and text comprehension, and consequently the assumptions regarding the equality of variances have been met ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2. *Tests of Between-subjects Effects*

Source	Dependent Variable	F	p	Partial η^2
Method	Word recall	184.74	.000	.868
	Word retention	39.84	.000	.587
	Comprehension	6.96	.000	.199

The results depicted in Table 2 demonstrate that at a 95% confidence interval, all three dependent variables of word recall, word retention and text comprehension were significantly affected by the instructional procedures in general. Thus, the group means must have been significantly different in at least two of the methods. The effect size indices indicate that in general, the instructional procedures had an 86.8% impact on the active recall of the words and a 58.7% impact on their delayed production. Meanwhile, they have had a minimum effect of 19.9% on learners' comprehension as a whole.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for Immediate Recall*

Method	Mean	SD	N
Input-based FonF	4.63	0.54	13
Output-based FonF	4.71	0.46	21
Task-related FonFs	3.96	0.89	28
MF (control)	0.77	0.57	26
Total			88

Considering the first research question, Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics on how different instructional approaches affected our subjects' immediate recall of the vocabulary items. It should be noted that the values under the *Mean* column on all tables (immediate recall, delayed recall, and comprehension) reflect the learners' obtained test scores ranging from 0 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) based on the number of questions answered correctly.

The data were then submitted to a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to test for differences

in the four instructional conditions. The MANOVA revealed significant differences between the three form-focused approaches and the control group, $F(3, 84) = 184.74$, $p < .001$.

Table 4. *Subsets for Immediate Recall*

Method	N	Subset 1	Subset 2	Subset 3
MF (control)	26	0.77		
Task-related FonFs	28		3.96	
Input-based FonF	13			4.63
Output-based FonF	21			4.71
p		1.00	1.00	0.98

The ensuing Tukey tests (see Table 4) used for multiple comparisons of our instructional procedures found that, for one thing, learners in the FonFs (task-related) and FonF (output-based & input-based) conditions displayed significantly greater gains than the MF group in terms of their active recall of vocabulary. For another, it can be seen that the two FonF groups have consistently and significantly outdone their counterparts in the FonFs group.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for Delayed Recall*

Method	Mean	*SD*	*N*
Input-based FonF	2.31	1.13	13
Output-based FonF	3.87	1.18	21
Task-related FonFs	1.32	1.44	28
MF (control)	0.42	0.48	26
Total			88

Table 6. *Subsets for Retention (Delayed Recall)*

Method	N	Subset 1	Subset 2	Subset 3
MF (control)	26	0.42		
Task-related FonFs	28	1.32		
Input-based FonF	13		2.31	
Output-based FonF	21			3.87
p		0.06	1.00	1.00

The mean and standard deviation values of the second research question, concerning the delayed recall, are presented in Table 5. The highest mean scores here again belong to the FonF groups (production = 3.87, input-based = 2.31). The MANOVA run at this stage also found statistical differences between our instructional groups, $F(3, 84) = 39.84$, $p < .001$. Tukey post-hoc tests revealed no significant difference between the FonFs and the MF (control) groups. Since the control group went through no particular instruction during the treatment, it can be deduced that task-related FonFs is less effective in tapping

learners' long-term recall of vocabulary. There is also a difference between the two leading FonF conditions whereby the production group has outstripped the input enhancement group by a significant margin (see Table 6).

Table 7. *Descriptive Statistics for Text Comprehension*

Method	Mean	*SD*	*N*
Input-based FonF	4.33	0.61	13
Output-based FonF	4.38	0.57	21
Task-related FonFs	3.45	0.65	28
MF (control)	3.86	1.09	26
Total			88

Table 8. *Subsets for Text Comprehension*

		Subset	
Method	N	1	2
MF (control)	26	0.42	
Task-related FonFs	28	1.32	
Input-based FonF	13		2.31
Output-based FonF	21		
p		0.06	1.00

Last but not least, it is time to address the third question regarding the efficacies of the different instructional protocols on learners' comprehension (see Table 7 for descriptive statistics). The MANOVA run at this stage indicated no significant difference between the three (2 FonFs and the FonF) groups and the control group, $F(3, 84) = 6.96$, $p < .001$. Therefore, it can be stated that none of the three methods had a significant effect on learners' comprehension of the newscast content. However, the post-hoc tests (Table 8) showed that the only observable difference lies between the FonFs condition and the other FonF conditions whereby input-based and output-based FonF groups have outdone the task-related FonFs group. Figure 1 illustrates the four treatment conditions' standings.
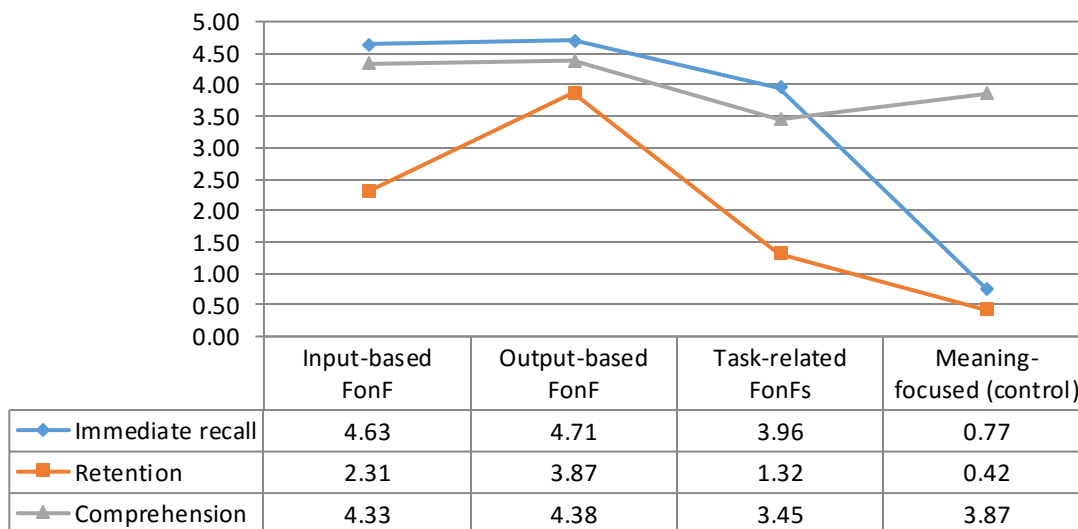
	Input-based FonF	Output-based FonF	Task-related FonFs	Meaning-focused (control)
Immediate recall	4.63	4.71	3.96	0.77
Retention	2.31	3.87	1.32	0.42
Comprehension	4.33	4.38	3.45	3.87

Figure 1. Comparative Results are shown for Immediate Recall, Delayed Recall (of vocabulary), and Text Comprehension across the four conditions.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at finding out what kind of formal instruction of lexical items would work best, while at the same time examining how FFI protocols would affect learners' comprehension. A quick overview of the findings indicates that the two FonF protocols have displayed higher gains. Regarding the immediate test of the target words, both FonFs and FonF approaches managed to enable students to recall the vocabulary items far better than their MF counterpart. It can be said that mere exposure to L2 without an FFI component, as seen in the MF group, would not lead to a favorable lexical development. This happens because learners are mainly engaged in deciphering the storyline in the text rather than bothering to notice the unfamiliar items of vocabulary. Even if they do notice, it is not always easy to surmise or process what the new words mean given the huge and incessant influx of input data. This seems to be in line with previous findings in the literature on comparing FFI and non-FFI tasks (Ellis & He, 1999; Laufer, 2001, 2003).

The highest gains addressed by our first research question, namely on the immediate word recall, went to the *production* and *enhanced-input* FonF protocols hailed by Ellis (2012, p. 284) as "performance-based instruction". In the output-based group, learners had to collaboratively reconstruct the sentences that encompassed or contextualized the target words in the input. This bears testimony to the efficiency of reconstruction tasks that help promote noticing the gap when a specific form is targeted (also see Izumi, 2002). Such tasks maximize the similarities between the learner's production and the TL model. It is also advised that for input to promote noticing and learning of a specific form, relevant task characteristics need to be introduced—this is just what was done in our experiment. Recent studies in L2 pedagogy encourage the use of tasks which require learners to produce output collaboratively. Swain (1995) argues that it is possible to design tasks that urge learners to produce language and then reflect upon its form. If the task is devised in a way to make learners talk about the language they are producing, their talk may serve their awareness of language form.

Moreover, input-based instruction or more precisely, the input-enhancement approach, was also found to promote noticing and aid acquisition. According to Ellis (2012), if input-based instruction makes the meaning of a target structure clear, it is as effective as explicit instruction and in some cases even more effective. It is sometimes the case that learners do not necessarily have to produce a grammatical structure

in order to acquire it. Thus, input-based instruction may hold an advantage where the aim is to teach new linguistic features.

The empirical findings also provide further support for the FonF protocol over FonFs. It was shown that both FonF conditions ($M = 4.71$ for the output group and 4.63 for the input group) significantly produced better gains than the FonFs group ($M = 3.96$) with regard to immediate use of the words. It may be the case that in FonFs, language is manipulated at the sentence level rather than the discourse level. In the latter case, meanings are taken from referents in both preceding and following sentences and not from individual sentences in isolation. The heavy emphasis on contrastive analysis and discrete context-free analysis of vocabulary seemed unable to measure up to FonF activities that typically extend past the level of isolated sentences and which utilize the meaningful context to generate learning.

As Ellis (2012) emphasizes the inclusion of delayed post-tests as the building block of ensuring the external validity of an FFI study, the second research question sought to measure the durability of the FFI treatment types. Interestingly, the same scenario also worked much the same for the delayed recollection of words, dealing a further blow to the FonFs perspective. This time around, FonFs proved significantly—and perhaps surprisingly—ineffective in augmenting the retention of words following a week's time of practice ($M = 1.32$). It seems that FonF procedures with all their meaning and context-oriented attributes have managed to induce a more elaborate processing ($M = 3.87$ for the output group and $M = 2.31$ for the input group). The output condition excelled again substantiating generative models' claim that learning and retention are improved when learners use, reformulate, or elaborate the new information. Creating opportunities for learners to plan production apparently allowed them to spontaneously focus on form and increase accuracy.

All in all, comparing the productive FonF task with input-based FonF, it could be argued that the benefits of the former seem to outweigh those of the latter, particularly in terms of the delayed recall of the new words. Literature also suggests that various productive tasks are largely deemed to be more effective than comprehension tasks (Ellis & He, 1999; Keating, 2008; Laufer, 2003; Webb, 2005).

One compelling explanation for the success of FonF over FonFs could be found in the library metaphor used by Sharwood Smith (1993). He differentiated between the two concepts of *knowledge* and *control* by arguing that one may *know* a library very well: say, for instance how many floors it has, where each section (field of study) is located, where the periodicals are, and so on. However, *control* has to do with the ability to use knowledge to perform a whole range of specific tasks such as efficiently borrowing two fiction books or a Victorian-era novel from the library. Therefore, knowing the makeup of a library is one thing, and using it swiftly and efficiently is another. The same argument, he maintains, holds true for the mental language system. Knowing a word or structure is different from knowing how to produce or understand it effectively. We believe this metaphor could by and large be extended to account for the FonF and FonFs controversy. In FonFs one might know a given word very well due to a vast array of activities from contrastive analysis to rich instruction and perhaps scrutinizing the etymology of that word, but still fall short of being able to use it in the right place and at the right time.

The third absolutely pivotal research question, though largely overlooked in many vocabulary studies, concerned the comprehension issue. Comparing the mean scores in the three FFI groups with the control (MF) group revealed that no remarkable impediments were created by these approaches, thus raising hopes that learners can maintain their concentration on text comprehension while being in absolute awareness and attending to new items of vocabulary. Although mean differences turned out inconsequential among the four conditions ($M = 4.38$ for the output group, 4.33 for the input group, 3.45 for the FonFs group, and 3.87 for the MF group), a significant difference was observed between the FonF groups and the FonFs group which happened to gain the lowest mean scores by a narrow margin from the control group. This provides further support for the claim that lexical FonFs, despite all the merits associated hitherto with it in L2 research, tends to take place at the expense of undercutting learners'

comprehension of the text content to a limited extent.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

One reason we opted for podcast-driven procedures for vocabulary instruction is the possibility of creating massive attention-engaging means of exposure to lexical items in a meaningful context where the learner can identify with the characters or events in the TL. This referential meaning is absent in FonFs procedure where the glue between the word and its meaning seems more likely to come off over time. Poor retention gains by the FonFs group in this study help testify to this claim. It is worthy of note that in the EFL environment, video podcasts can be doubly beneficial, since in some countries learners usually have little, if any, access to authentic L2 resources in order to see for themselves how it is naturally spoken by native speakers. Capitalizing on these handy resources can arguably open up new avenues for foreign language classrooms.

Even though readings into how FFI must be implemented in the classroom vary across scholars, one thing is for certain: More classroom research is required to streamline FFI processes and put them into action. A crucial task teachers need to consider is the significance of selecting podcasts that are of general interest to the learners and which are germane to their goals and motives.

The outcome of the study builds up more support for how FFI could apply to vocabulary instruction in the EFL setting. The time is ripe for FFI studies to have a major departure from grammar instruction to other skills including vocabulary, pronunciation, interlanguage pragmatics and so forth. It should be highlighted that generalizations are ill-advised. After all, FFI is an intricate practice and to operationalize that, various studies have gone through various instructional procedures. Nevertheless, probing FFI applications to vocabulary instruction is still in its infancy. Even prominent scholars such as Ellis (e.g., 2012) have sufficed to mention vocabulary in FFI only in passing. Therefore, there is plenty of room for innovative research to be done.

We could learn from the results that student gains from comprehension activities could well be supplemented through timely presentation of lexical items that are aligned with FonF protocols. L2 teachers need to be aware that decontextualized discrete practice of vocabulary espoused by FonFs, in spite of its short-term benefits happens to desensitize learners to the contextual clues which are otherwise a huge asset in making words remain in their memories. The results also indicate that the long-term merits of FonFs are far less considerable than FonF. This should not escape the attention of teachers and course book developers.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A major setback which impacted the arrangements of the study was the issue of time. Since time was borrowed from a number of university instructors to carry out the experiment in their classes, there was an urge to economize on task design and test construction. It would have definitely been wiser to increase the number of test items or add more varied tasks, but there were strict time constraints. Furthermore, to maintain the balance, a pure FonFs framework, as explained in Laufer (2005) had been put on the agenda for the experiment. However, since this approach to vocabulary instruction is essentially one of *decontextualized*, no video podcasts would have been permissible on the syllabus and consequently the subjects could not be assessed on their comprehension gains; thus it was excluded.

Additionally, it cannot be fully guaranteed that the 15 target words were totally unfamiliar to each and every participant of the study since it had been piloted across a different pool. But considering their low frequency and the overall feedback received by the researcher from the participants during each session, an overwhelming majority found the words highly difficult or elusive. In any case, such measures sometimes seem inevitable in vocabulary research (also see Laufer, 2006).

Another possibly less tenable part of the study concerns the issue of power. While the output-based FonF, the FonFs, and the MF groups enjoyed the participation of more than 20 students each, the input-enhancement condition contained a smaller sample size of 13. Therefore, in the interest of addressing this issue, replication studies ought to be conducted to test the generalizability of the findings.

Even though there are a number of frameworks specifying the various methodological options involved in FFI, the room for maneuver is wide open. Our suggestion is that more innovative protocols that help facilitate the simultaneous attention to form and meaning need to be devised. As recommended by Ellis (2008), such methodological frameworks are valuable because they provide a basis for describing the types of FFI available to teachers and enable SLA researchers to systematically investigate the effects of specific options on L2 acquisition.

It must be borne in mind that in the final analysis, FFI is not a substitute, but a complement, to MF instruction and that FonF and FonFs instructional approaches should complement rather than exclude one another. Without a doubt, similar and dissimilar trialing of FFI needs to be designed and executed through more innovative means.

APPENDIX A. NBC Nightly News Transcript

April 19, 2009

Leads: NBC Nightly News

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

Back home, but first, answering questions about that infamous handshake.

And what could be a new wedge between the US and Iran--the American journalist jailed for spying.

President BARACK OBAMA: Obviously, I am gravely concerned with her safety and well-being.

HOLT: Behind bars. Tonight we'll talk with her father in Iran about how Roxana Saberi is holding up.

SEA CHANGE. A big threat to the world's fish. What's being done to reel it in?

And, on the rocks. Are diamonds still a girl's best friend?

Announcer: From NBC News world headquarters in New York, this is NBC NIGHTLY NEWS with Lester Holt.

HOLT: Good evening.

Newscast: Obama answers criticisms, questions after visit to Latin America LESTER HOLT, anchor:

President Obama arrived back in this country just a short while ago from Trinidad, marking the end of his second trip abroad in less than a month. But unlike his largely well-received swing through European capitals a few weeks ago, this gathering of mostly Latin American leaders proved to be a much tougher crowd for the new president, with disagreements over Cuba and those curious exchanges with an outspoken American foe stealing the headlines. Before boarding Air Force One for the trip home, Mr. Obama faced questions about all of that, as well as another potential diplomatic flashpoint with Iran. Our chief White House correspondent Chuck Todd reports.

CHUCK TODD reporting:

The president arrived back home tonight from a four-day trip focused on trying to improve America's relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean. At a closing press conference here today, the president addressed the two issues which dominated the summit: Hugo Chavez and Cuba, making light of

the Venezuelan president's surprise gift.

President BARACK OBAMA: You know, I think it's just that President Chavez is better at positioning the cameras.

TODD: But one Republican senator called the exchange irresponsible. Senator JOHN ENSIGN (Republican, Nevada): (From "State of the Union") When you're talking about the prestige of the United States and the presidency of the United States, you have to be careful who you're seen joking around with.

TODD: The president emphatically dismissed that criticism.

Pres. OBAMA: It's unlikely that as a consequence of me shaking hands or having a polite conversation with Mr. Chavez that we are endangering the strategic interests of the United States.

TODD: As for Cuba, the president said he's waiting for more than just a change in tone.

Pres. OBAMA: The test for all of us is not simply words, but also deeds.

TODD: This trip was the culmination of an eight-country, three-continent, three-week swing that brought the president face to face with some 90 world leaders. Asked how that travel is shaping the Obama foreign policy doctrine, the president outlined his guiding principle.

Pres. OBAMA: If we are practicing what we preach and if we occasionally confess to having strayed from our values and our ideals, that strengthens our hand.

TODD: On Iran, the president made his disapproval clear over the country's decision to imprison American journalist Roxana Saberi.

Pres. OBAMA: She's an Iranian-American who was interested in the country which her family came from, and it is appropriate for her to be treated as such and to be released.

TODD: Monday the president turns his attention back to domestic issues where he'll be holding his first full Cabinet meeting at the White House. Later in the week, a sense of deja vu as the president makes his first visit to Iowa since taking office. …

For more please visit: http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-216348779.html#

APPENDIX B. True or False Comprehension Check Questions for a Sample Session

1. President Obama had travelled to Europe a few weeks back.

2. Obama's handshake with President Chavez was welcomed by US Republicans.

3. Obama sent a letter to Iranian officials asking for Saberi's release.

4. Roxana Saberi was sentenced to 6 years in prison.

5. The two jailed American journalists were finally released from North Korea last month.

APPENDIX C. Sample Vocabulary Test

1. An improvement in relations between two countries:
   t_____

2. Difficulties, problems:
   r_____

3. To wind the handle on the fishing rod so that the fish caught on the line comes towards you:
   r_____

4. Agree:
   c_____

5. Force somebody to do something especially by threatening them:
   c_____

APPENDIX D. Sample Lesson for Input-enhancement Protocol

1. **Wedge** (n.)

   - The divorce has driven a <u>wedge</u> between the two families.

2. **Gravely** (adv.)

   - We are <u>gravely</u> concerned about these developments.

3. **Sea change** (n.)

   - A <u>sea change</u> in attitudes

4. **Reel something in** (phr. v.)

   - It took almost an hour to <u>reel</u> the fish <u>in</u>.

5. **Flashpoint** (n.)

   - Vukovar was one of the early <u>flashpoints</u> in the former Yugoslavia.

6. **Make light of something** (v.)

   - She tried to <u>make light of</u> the situation, but I could tell she was worried.

7. **Position** (v.)

   - If you use a mirror in this way, be careful where you <u>position</u> it.

8. **Stray** (v.)

   - I have perhaps **strayed** away from matters of industry.

9. **Déjà vu** (n.)

   - A strange sense of <u>déjà vu</u>

10. **Conviction** (n.)

    - The trial and <u>conviction</u> of Jimmy Malone took over three months.

11. **The defense** (n.)

    - Today, <u>the defense</u> makes its final presentation to the jury.

12. **Dual** (adj.)

    - He has <u>dual</u> nationality because his father was born in Pakistan and his mother is British.

13. **Coerce** (v.)

    - Officials <u>coerced</u> peasants into voting for the government candidates.

14. **Advocate** (n.)

- Clinton was seen as a strong <u>advocate</u> for a variety of educational improvements.

15. **Concur** (v.)

- The committee largely <u>concurred</u> with these views.

16. **Espionage** (n.)

- He is serving a 20-year prison sentence for <u>espionage</u>.

17. **Thaw** (n.)

- The <u>thaw</u> in East-West tensions

18. **Hint** (at something) (v.)

- The President <u>hinted at</u> the possibility of military action.

19. **Rigors** (n.)

- The stresses and <u>rigors</u> of modern life

20. **Intermediary** (n.)

- Switzerland's foreign minister served as an <u>intermediary</u> between the two countries.

APPENDIX E. Sample Lesson for FonFs Protocol

New Words	Definition
1. **Wedge** (n.)…	a. to force someone to do something
2. **Gravely** (adv.)…	b. to move away
3. **Sea change** (n.)…	c. to place something
4. **Reel something in** (phr. v.)…	d. to agree
5. **Flashpoint** (n.)…	e. an improvement in relations
6. **Make light of something** (v.) …	f. a feeling that something you see now has happened to you before
7. **Position** (v.)…	g. a deterioration in relations
8. **Stray** (v.)…	h. having two of something
9. **Déjà vu** (n.)…	i. act of spying
10. **Conviction** (n.)…	j. to wind back a fishing rod to get the caught fish
11. **The defense** (n.)…	k. a go-between
12. **Dual** (adj.)…	l. a big or drastic change
13. **Coerce** (v.)…	m. supporter; proponent
14. **Advocate** (n.)…	n. to joke about something or treat it as not being serious
15. **Concur** (v.)…	o. all the lawyers in court
16. **Espionage** (n.)…	p. seriously
17. **Thaw** (n.)…	q. to indirectly suggest something
18. **Hint** (at something) (v.)…	r. a place filled with violence

19. **Rigors** (n.)…   s. a decision in a court of law that someone is guilty

20. **Intermediary** (n.)…   t. difficulties

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