

APPLYING FOCUS ON FORM IN EFL WRITING CLASSES*

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ABSTRACT

Recent SLA research has lent support to the effectiveness of “focus on form”, introduced by Long (1991) as a treatment which draws learners’ attention to linguistic features of language in primarily meaning-based contexts (Ellis, 2001). In this regard, the present study experimentally investigates which type of focus on form - Input Flood, Input+Output, or Input+Output+Feedback – is more effective in promoting the learning of English as a foreign language.

For this purpose, a pretest-posttest design was followed, and the three different focus-on-form (FonF henceforth) treatments were delivered to three experimental groups throughout six hours in a two-week period in Writing Classes. Sixty-five intermediate level learners at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages participated in the study. The targeted forms were the Present and Past Hypothetical Conditionals in English.

The statistical analysis of the data revealed that the Input Flood treatment is not effective, while Input+Output and Input+Output+Feedback treatments are significantly effective in learning the target forms. Consequently, the results provide support for the claim that output-based FonF treatment, whether complemented with corrective feedback or not, has positive effects on learning English as a foreign language.

Key Words: Focus on Form, Input Flood, Output, Feedback, and Grammar Teaching

ÖZET

Son yıllarda ikinci dil edinimi alanında yapılan çalışmalar, Long (1991) tarafından sunulan ve öncelikli olarak anlama dayalı eğitim yapılan ortamlarda öğrencilerin dikkatini dilin dilbilgisel öğelerine çeken bir dil öğretim şekli olan “yapıya odaklanma” yönteminin etkinliğini kanıtlamıştır (Ellis, 2001). Bu nedenle bu çalışma, hangi tip yapıya odaklanma öğretiminin – Girdi Akışı, Girdi+Üretim yada Girdi+Üretim+Dönüt’ün – İngilizce’nin yabancı dil olarak öğrenilmesinde daha etkili olduğunu deneysel olarak incelemektedir.

Bu amaçla, öntest-sontest uygulamasıyla, üç farklı yapıya odaklanma öğretimi, üç deneysel gruba iki hafta boyunca altı saat süreyle uygulanmıştır. Çalışmaya Anadolu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu’ndan orta düzey dil seviyesine sahip toplam 65 öğrenci katılmıştır. Hedeflenen dil yapıları şimdiki ve geçmiş zamana ait gerçeğe aykırı koşul tümceleridir.

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Elde edilen verilerin istatistiksel çözümlenmesi sonucunda Girdi Akışı öğretim tipinin etkili olmadığı, fakat Girdi+Üretim ve Girdi+Üretim+Dönüt öğretim tiplerinin, aynı etkiye sahip olduğunu ve hedef yapıların öğrenilmesinde anlamlı derecede etkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak, üretime dayalı yapıya odaklanma öğretim tipinin, düzeltici dönüt ile desteklense de desteklenmese de, İngilizce'nin yabancı dil olarak öğrenilmesinde etkili olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yapıya Odaklanma, Girdi Akışı, Üretim, Dönüt ve Dilbilgisi Öğretimi

I. Introduction

1. Background

In SLA literature, one of the most frequently debated issues has been how formal features of language should be taught. A number of SLA theorists and researchers have agreed upon and proposed that focusing learners' attention on form in primarily meaningful contexts plays an important role in language learning, an approach that was firstly introduced by Long (1991) as "focus on form" (see Ellis, 2001; Ellis, 2002; Long and Robinson, 1998; Norris and Ortega, 2000, for reviews). In this vein, various FonF techniques have been offered for teachers to draw learners' attention to form while they are dealing with a meaning-based activity. For example, some empirical studies have separately employed Grammar-consciousness tasks (Fotos, 1993; Fotos, 1994; Fotos and Ellis, 1991); some Input Processing (VanPatten and Cadierno, 1993; Van Patten and Oikkenon, 1996); some Enriched Input (Alanen, 1995; Trahey and White, 1993; White, 1998; Williams and Evans, 1998); some Corrective Feedback (Carroll and Swain, 1993; Doughty and Varela, 1998; Han, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Long, Inagaki and Ortega, 1998); some Interaction Enhancement (Muranoi, 2000); and some others Output (Adams, 2003; Izumi, 2002; Izumi and Bigelow, 2000; Swain, 1998; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). However, the potential effectiveness of the combination of any of these techniques has been somewhat neglected.

Therefore, this paper seeks to investigate probable effects of incorporated FonF techniques, Input Flood, Output, and Corrective Feedback, on learning English as a foreign language. First, these three FonF techniques are discussed. Next, the research questions are presented. Then, the study, treatment procedure, and testing instruments are explained. Lastly, presenting the results, the paper discusses the data obtained.

2. Input Flood in FonF

Ellis (2001) presents two options for enriching input in terms of the target structure: input enhancement and input flood. While the former refers to highlighting the form typographically such as by italicizing or underlining (White, 1998), input flood refers to "input that has been enriched by including plentiful exemplars of the target feature without any device to draw attention to the feature" (Ellis, 2001: 20). In other words, only the number of the form to be targeted is increased in a text so that the learners can be confronted with the target form many times. This type of text adjustment is seen as the most "unobtrusive" way of focusing on form by Doughty and Williams (1998: 258).

The rationale behind the application of this kind of input modification is in line with both Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1986, in Brown, 1994: 281) and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990:129), which claims "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake." Schmidt further claims, "that target language forms will not be acquired unless they are noticed and that one important way that instruction works is by increasing the salience of target language forms in input so that they are more likely to be noticed by learners" (1994 in Harley, 1998: 157). Thus, providing learners with input flood seems one important way of helping learners to notice the target form and leading them to acquire it without interrupting the flow of communication (Ellis, 1999).

3. Output in FonF

This FonF technique involves the application of focused communicative tasks, which have all the characteristics of communicative tasks (see Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996, for communicative tasks). However, focused communicative tasks are designed to encourage learners to produce a specific form with the purpose of communication (Ellis, 2001). The theoretical basis for the application of such tasks in FonF contexts is Swain's Output Hypothesis, which claims that output production induces learners to pay attention to the form in three ways (1998). According to Swain, output (a) promotes noticing, (b) enables learners to test their hypotheses, and (c) enables learners to reflect on their own language by means of its metalinguistic function.

Swain and Lapkin (1995) examined whether producing an L2 output enabled learners to become aware of the gaps in their linguistic knowledge, and, if so, how they dealt with these gaps. The results showed that the learners became aware of the gaps through either internal or external feedback and used various strategies to reach a solution for their problems in their output. Based on these findings, Swain and Lapkin (1995: 386) asserted, "what goes on between the first output and the second ... is part of the process of second language learning."

In another study, Swain (1998) sought to investigate if involving learners in collaborative language production tasks (dictogloss, in this case) promoted L2 learning. She drew these conclusions from the study: (a) the collaborative production tasks are pedagogically beneficial in promoting output and L2 acquisition; (b) the tasks must be carefully designed so that they can ensure metatalk; (c) learners' familiarity with the task procedures is crucial; and (d) the teacher's provision of feedback to the final product is of vital importance.

Similarly, Izumi and Bigelow (2000) set out to see if output promotes the noticing of a linguistic feature in subsequent input and if output-input activities lead to a more accurate production of the target form. As an outcome of the study, they proposed the provision of: (a) awareness-raising activities, (b) texts including enhanced input, (c) text reconstruction tasks, (d) feedback on the learners' production in terms of content and grammar for instruction to be effective.

4. Corrective Feedback in FonF

This FonF technique involves the provision of corrective feedback on learners' grammatical errors in production and termed as "reactive focus-on-form" by Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2002: 423). A number of recent classroom studies suggest

that giving corrective feedback in the context of communicative activities promotes interlanguage development (see, for example, Carroll and Swain, 1993; Doughty and Varela, 1998; Han, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Long, Inagaki and Ortega, 1998).

In order to provide empirical data on the effectiveness of recasts, a form of corrective feedback, Doughty and Varela (1998) integrated recasts as a technique of FonF in one of the two intact content-based classes, which were studying science. The study showed that the participants who were in the feedback group improved significantly in their use of the forms in focus on the oral and written immediate posttests and maintained the ability they gained over time. On the contrary, the comparison group who carried on the regular science classes without receiving feedback did not have the same gains as the FonF group did.

Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998) reported the outcomes of two studies they carried out to assess the use of models and recasts in L2 Spanish and Japanese. Both of the studies proved that implicit corrective feedback is more beneficial than preemptive positive input (i.e., models) for learners to achieve short-term gains on a previously unknown L2 structure.

The theories discussed and the FonF studies examined in this section lend clear support to the fact that learners learning in any one of these three FonF techniques, input flood, output, and corrective feedback, can integrate form and meaning, and thus attain higher learning of the target language. Therefore, one can expect that combinations of these FonF techniques should be more effective in language learning.

II. The Present Study

1. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Based on recent SLA theories and the findings of FonF studies, the main purpose of this study is to investigate which type of FonF treatment has greater effects on the EFL students' language learning. More specifically, the study intends to investigate the effects of three different types of FonF treatment, Input Flood, Input Flood plus Output, and Input Flood plus Output complemented with Corrective Feedback on the learning of Present and Past Hypothetical Conditionals in English. To this aim, the following research questions were asked.

- 1) Do learners who receive the three FonF treatment types (i.e., Input Flood, Input+Output, and Input+Output+Feedback) show improvement in learning the target form?
- 2) Do learners who receive Input+Output treatment outperform those who receive Input Flood treatment?
- 3) Do learners who receive Input+Output+Feedback treatment outperform those who receive Input Flood treatment and those who receive Input+Output treatment?

2. Setting and Participants

The study was carried out in three intact Intermediate level EFL classes in Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages, Turkey. The school offers students a full-year intensive English preparation program throughout their first year at the university. In total, 65 (37 males and 28 females) students, who were also nearly at the same age

bracket that ranged from 18 to 23 (mean age 19.7), participated in the study. 97 % of the students involved in the study spoke Turkish as their native language. 2 students were from Turkic States, one from Kyrgyzstan and one from Uzbekistan.

3. Treatment

In order to compare the effects of the three types of FonF instruction on the learning of the present and past hypothetical conditionals (e.g., *If I were not busy now, I would help you with your homework* and *If I had seen him yesterday, I would have talked to him*), were chosen as the target structure of the study, and each of the groups received a different type of treatment (see Figure 1). To put it clearly, the first group (IG) received only Input Flood treatment, the second group (IOG) received Input Flood and Output treatment, and the third group (IOFG) received Input Flood, Output, and Corrective Feedback treatment. The treatment spanned six hours in a two-week period. In addition, during the treatment, the teacher (researcher as well) did not explicitly tell the groups that they were studying on the present and past hypothetical conditionals in order not to cause the participants to focus primarily on the form.

The treatment phase was conducted in the Writing classes. This is because, in Writing classes, the students' primary aim is to learn how to express themselves in a meaningful and organized way, and thus, the students' primary focus remains mostly on meaning, rather than form (see, for example, Williams and Evans, 1998). Moreover, FonF, as Long (1991) stipulates, should be integrated into contexts where the learners' primary focus is on meaning, not on form. Therefore, Writing classes seem to be an optimum context in which FonF can be incorporated. During the treatment phase, the writing content, that is paragraph organization and narration, was studied primarily; therefore, the FonF treatment remained peripheral.

IG (n=23)	IOG (n=22)	IOFG (n=20)
Pretest	Pretest	Pretest
<u>Treatment: 6 Hours</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input Flood • Unfocused Productive Tasks • Feedback - only on content & organization 	<u>Treatment: 6 Hours</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input Flood • Focused Productive Tasks • Feedback - only on content & organization 	<u>Treatment: 6 Hours</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input Flood • Focused Productive Tasks • Feedback - on content & organization - corrective feedback on grammatical inaccuracies in written products
Posttest	Posttest	Posttest

Figure 1 Treatment Design for the Study

Two different instructional packages were prepared for the treatment; one for the IG and one for both the IOG and the IOFG. The instructional difference between the IOG and the IOFG lies in the teacher's approach to the learners' errors in their products. While the IOG participants received no corrective feedback on their errors, the IOFG participants received corrective feedback when they erred during their productions. The content of the treatment packages was based on the suggestions of Izumi (2002), Long and Robinson (1998), Norris and Ortega (1999), and Swain (1998).

a. Treatment for the IG

The IG participants, throughout the treatment, were exposed to six contextualized one-paragraph-length texts, which were seeded with a number of exemplars of the target structures of the study. Thus, the texts served as input flood for the IG participants. Three of the texts were seeded with the present hypothetical conditional while the other three were with the past hypothetical conditional. During the exposure of the flooded texts, the IG participants were expected to comprehend the meaning conveyed through the target structures in the texts, and this was checked through various follow-up activities, such as comprehension questions or fill-in-the-blanks activities. However, the activities that the IG participants were dealt with were designed in a way that they did not induce them to produce the target forms, but in a way that they required them to comprehend the meaning the target forms conveyed in order to be able to accomplish the activities.

b. Treatment for the IOG

The same texts given to the IG participants were designed in a way to have the IOG participants produce the target forms. Therefore, these texts served as focused production tasks. Moreover, the participants were encouraged to work in pairs on each of the production tasks to promote collaboration between the students, as suggested by Kowal and Swain (1994 in Muraoni, 2000). In order to guarantee the production of the forms in focus by the subjects, the texts were used as "dictogloss activities" (see Swain, 1998) and "text reconstruction tasks" (see Izumi 2002; Izumi and Bigelow 2000). In short, throughout the treatment, the participants in the IOG produced the target structures through focused production tasks without receiving any corrective feedback on their grammatical inaccuracies. The feedback was only on content and organization.

c. Treatment for the IOFG

The IOFG participants were engaged in the same focused production tasks as the IOG participants were. However, the IOFG differed from the IOG in terms of the teacher's error treatment style. In this group, the teacher provided both oral corrective feedback while the learners were writing their own paragraphs and written feedback by editing their final products with regard to grammar and content. In addition, the teacher provided feedback by enabling the students to return to the original texts in dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks. Thus, the students were able to make interlanguage - targetlanguage comparisons and to notice the gap between what they actually produced and what they were supposed to produce (Izumi, 2002: 551). Moreover, the corrective feedback specifically focused on the grammatical inaccuracies in the use of the target forms of the study.

4. Testing Instruments

In order to measure the effects of the three FonF treatment types on the learning of present and past hypothetical conditionals, a pretest-posttest design was conducted (see Appendix A for the sample test items). The pretest was administered to the groups just before the commencement of the instructional treatment, and the posttest immediately after the end of the treatment. The pretest and the posttest were the same test developed by the researcher. The test had passed through a series of pilot studies before it reached the final form. In light of the conclusions drawn from these pilot studies, necessary corrections, omissions, and additions were made on the test. The final version of the test was piloted once again, and the obtained reliability coefficient for the test was 0.89. This figure indicated that the test was reliable to employ in the actual study. The allocated time for the tests was 40 minutes, which was set depending on the results obtained from the pilot tests.

Hulstijn (1997) warns that measuring the participants' language performance by means of tests that include only one type of task may be a threat to the validity of the study. He urges that tests used in language research should include more than one type of task to measure the language gains thoroughly. In the same vein, Ellis (2001: 33) states that "acquisition has been measured in terms of grammaticality judgments, comprehension, and production" and that different testing instruments have revealed different results. Considering these, the tests in this study were made up of the combination of four different subtests: a production test, a grammaticality judgment test, a multiple-choice recognition test, and a comprehension test.

a. Production Test

The Production Test was designed to see if the participants were able to produce the target structures in the written form accurately. The Production Test consisted of two separate contextualized paragraphs: one eliciting present hypothetical conditionals and the other eliciting past hypothetical conditionals. In each paragraph, four sentences were omitted, and the participants were expected to complete the blanks with the help of the context-clues given in the paragraph. That is, there were totally 8 items in the production test. In order to guarantee the use of the conditional sentences, the beginnings of the sentences were given (e.g., *So, he usually daydreams saying, "If I ...* see Appendix A).

b. Multiple-Choice Recognition Test

The Multiple-Choice Recognition test was adapted from Izumi and Bigelow (2000) and consisted of 4 items: two of them focused on the present hypothetical conditional, and the other two on the past hypothetical conditional. Since there are two clauses (i.e., a main clause and an if-clause) in English conditional sentences, a separate blank for each clause was given. In order for the participants to decide whether the sentences referred to present or past, each sentence contained a time adverbial (e.g., *yesterday, right now*).

c. Grammaticality Judgment Test

The Grammaticality Judgment Test was administered to see if the participants gained an ability to differentiate between the accurate use of the target structures and the

inaccurate ones. The Grammaticality Judgment Test comprised 8 items in total. Of the eight items, four items referred to present hypothetical conditionals, and the other four items were past hypothetical conditionals. Of the four present hypothetical conditional sentences, two were grammatically correct, and the other two were grammatically incorrect. This was the same for the other four sentences including past hypothetical conditional.

The participants were asked to decide whether each item was correct or incorrect in terms of grammar. If they decided that the sentence was correct, they were to check the CORRECT box. On the other hand, if they decided that the sentence included a grammatical mistake, they were to check the INCORRECT box, and then write the grammatically correct form of the sentence in the given space.

d. Comprehension Test

The Comprehension Test was given to see if the participants were able to understand the hidden meaning in present and past hypothetical conditionals. The eight-item Comprehension Test consisted of two separate contextualized reading passages, one including the present conditionals and the other the past conditionals. Below each paragraph, four statements, related with the information presented in the conditional sentences, were given, and the participants were asked to identify whether the statements were TRUE or FALSE.

5. Data Analysis Procedure

The mean scores of each group were calculated for the composite pretest and posttest scores. In order to see the statistical effectiveness of the treatment types on the learning of the target forms, within-group comparisons were conducted between the pretest and posttest mean scores through correlated t-test. The results showed if participants made statistically significant improvement. Next, between-group comparisons were conducted as regard to mean scores that each group obtained from the complete posttest. To this aim, one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) and a *post hoc* Tukey test were administered. The between-group comparison of the posttest mean scores revealed statistical differences among the effects of the treatment types on the learning of the target forms.

III. Results

Before examining the effects of the three types of FonF treatment on the participants' gains, the pretest scores of the three groups were submitted to one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) in order to see if the subjects' prior knowledge of present and past hypothetical conditionals was statistically equivalent. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the three groups prior to the treatment ($p < .810$). Thus, the possible development can be attributed to the effects of the treatments conducted.

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the test scores that three groups obtained from the pretest and posttest.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the Test Scores

Groups		Pretest	Posttest
IG (23)	Mean	25,3	31,5
	Std. Deviation	18,5	17,2
	Std. Error	3,9	3,6
IOG (22)	Mean	25,9	52,7
	Std. Deviation	14,7	24,4
	Std. Error	3,1	5,2
IOFG (20)	Mean	28,4	57,5
	Std. Deviation	16,0	20,1
	Std. Error	3,6	4,5

Note: The scores are out of 100.

1. Within-group Comparisons

Table 2 presents the within-comparisons of each group's pretest and posttest scores obtained through correlated t-test. For the IG, the table indicates no significant difference between the pretest and the posttest scores ($p < .072$). As for the IOG, the pretest-posttest comparison yields a significant difference ($p < .000$). Similar results to those of the IOG were obtained for the IOFG. The table shows that the pretest and posttest scores of the IOFG are significantly different from each other ($p < .000$).

Table 2 Results of Correlated t-test for the Three Groups' Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test Comparison			Mean Diff.	Std. Error	t	df	P
IG	Pretest	Posttest	-6,2609	2,770	-2.54	22	,072
IOG	Pretest	Posttest	-26,8182	3,245	-7.1	21	,000*
IOFG	Pretest	Posttest	-29,10	4,463	-7.11	19	,000*

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

2. Between-group Comparisons

One-way ANOVA was performed on the posttest mean scores of each group to see the differential effects of the treatment types on learning. As reported in Table 3, a significant difference is observable among the posttest scores ($p < .000$) of the three groups.

Table 3 Results of One-way ANOVA for the Three Groups' Posttest Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	8418,704	2	4209,352	9,776	,000*
Within Groups	26695,512	62	430,573		
Total	35114,215	64			

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

When the *post hoc* Tukey test was run on the same data, the contrasts among the groups were revealed. As illustrated in Table 4, IG-IOG and IG-IOFG comparisons yield statistically significant difference between the posttest scores ($p < .003$ and $p < .000$, respectively). However, there is no significant difference between the posttest scores of the IOG the IOFG ($p < .734$).

Table 4 Results of Tukey for All the Groups' Posttest Scores

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	P
Group Comparison				
IG	IOG	-21,1601	6,188	,003*
IG	IOFG	-25,9783	6,344	,000*
IOG	IOFG	-4,8182	6,411	,734

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

3. Summary of Results

The first research question was asked to investigate if the learners would improve through the FonF treatment types conducted in the study. The analysis of the test scores showed that the IG learners did not make any significant improvement after the treatment. Thus, Input Flood treatment did not lead to learning of the target forms. On the other hand, the analysis of test scores revealed that both the IOG and the IOFG learners exhibited a statistically significant improvement after the treatment (see Table2). Overall, it can be claimed that Input Flood treatment is not an effective way of focusing on form, whereas Input+Output and Input+Output+Feedback treatment types are effective in the learning of present and past hypothetical conditionals in English.

The second and the third research questions were asked to investigate which FonF treatment type(s) is superior to one another in the learning of the target forms. The answer to the second question is positive. In other words, the learners in the IOG significantly outperformed those in the IG. That is, Input+Output treatment is more effective than the Input Flood treatment in the learning of the target forms.

The answer to the third question is partly positive. To put it more clearly, the learners in the IOFG significantly outperformed those in the IG; on the contrary, the learners in the IOFG did not outperform those in the IOG. These findings indicate that the Input+Output+Feedback treatment is more effective than the Input Flood treatment, and that the Input+Output treatment and the Input + Output +Feedback treatment have similar effects on the learning of the target forms. Thus, teacher's providing learners with corrective feedback on the errors in their products does not have any additional effect on the learning which is induced by output production.

IV. Data Discussion

The insertion of the Input Flood treatment into the study was based on the two SLA theories, which were Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1986, in Brown, 1994: 281) and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990). Input Hypothesis claimed that provision of a sufficient amount of 'comprehensible input' in meaningful contexts is enough for acquisition to take place. In the same vein, Schmidt (1990) claimed that learners must first notice the target form in the input in order to acquire that form. Thus, considering

'noticing' as a prerequisite for acquisition, he maintained that if the target forms are made salient for learners by either artificially increasing the number of the incidence in the input or typographically highlighting the target forms, it will be easier for learners to notice, and thus to acquire these forms. On the other hand, in opposition to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, Sharwood Smith (1993) warned that external manipulation of input (i.e. through typographical enhancement or seeding the input with the target structure) does not always guarantee the learners' noticing of the structure in focus. The present study came up with contradictory findings with what Krashen and Schmidt offer because the learners in the Input group did not show any statistically significant improvement by means of the Input Flood treatment. As a result, Sharwood Smith appears to be right as the findings of this study reveal that input flood does not induce any significant learning.

Moreover, this finding of the study is parallel to the research findings in the SLA literature. For example, Alanen (1995) and Williams and Evans (1998) examined the effects of input flood treatment. Both of these studies found that input flood is not effective in drawing learners' attention to formal features of the language. Therefore, they suggested that more explicit treatment types could be more beneficial in inducing the acquisition of the target language. That is, the findings of the present study do also agree with those of Alanen and Williams and Evans.

As Ellis (1999) discusses in his review article, the reason for the ineffectiveness of the enriched input treatment in the recent input-based studies might be that the input provided was not enough in terms of quantity to induce noticing. The reason for the failure of the Input Flood treatment in this study might be the same as what Ellis discusses. Therefore, it can be suggested that learners should be exposed to a larger amount of input flood throughout a longer time-period for this kind of treatment to be successful. Moreover, in the study the subjects were only exposed to texts which were only seeded with the target form. However, this type of treatment did not seem to induce noticing on the part of students. Thus, it can be again suggested that learners should be exposed to input in which the target forms are typographically highlighted in order to make these forms more salient, as Schmidt (1990) offers.

As for the second major finding that reveals both the Input+Output and the Input+Output+Feedback treatment types are effective on the learning of the target forms, it is consistent with the findings of other output-based studies in the SLA literature (for example, Izumi, 2002; Swain, 1998; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). The learners in the IOG and the IOFG were induced to produce the target forms through controlled paragraph writing activities and collaborative production tasks, which were dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks. The application of this output-based treatment was based on Swain's Output Hypothesis (1998). According to her, receiving only comprehensible input is not sufficient for learners to acquire the target language, as opposed to what Krashen claimed. Additionally, Swain claims that learners must be encouraged to produce the language for primarily communicative purposes in order to promote acquisition. She explains how output can enhance acquisition in three ways: a) by enabling learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language, b) by creating opportunities for learners to test their language-related hypotheses, and c) by enabling learners to reflect upon their own language through metatalk. The second finding of the present study agrees with what Swain (1998)

proposes about the effects of output on language acquisition. This is because the learners who received output-based treatment significantly outperformed those who received input-based treatment in the study.

In light of this finding, it can be asserted that output as an “internal attention-drawing device” is more effective in language learning than input, which is considered to be an “external attention-drawing device” by Izumi (2002: 543). In his study, he also found that output-based treatment led learners to focus on form, and that language production tasks enhanced acquisition, while input-based treatment failed to do these.

In that case, considering the second research finding of this study, it is possible to conclude that output-based treatment – irrespective of whether it is complemented with corrective feedback or not – is a successful way of enabling learners to attend to formal features of the language in primarily meaning-based contexts. In this way, learners can also have opportunities to make form-function-meaning connections, as Kowal and Swain (1994 in Muranoi, 2000) propose. As a result, it seems that inducing learners to produce output in meaningful contexts is a beneficial way of inducing the learning of the target language.

The last finding of this study is an interesting one. It reveals that Input+Output and Input+Output+Feedback treatment types have similar effects on the learning of the target forms. An interpretation of this finding is that providing learners with corrective feedback did not have any additional effect on the learning of the target forms. However, this finding of the study contradicts with what other feedback-based studies revealed in the recent SLA literature (Doughty and Varela, 1998; Han, 2002; Long, Inagaki, and Ortega, 1998). For example, Doughty and Varela (1998) and Han (2002) provided their subjects with corrective feedback (in the form of recasts) when the learners erred during oral or written narrative tasks. When the researchers compared the subjects who received feedback with those who did not, the results led them to conclude that provision of feedback to learners’ grammatical errors is effective in the learning of these forms, as long as this error treatment does not interrupt the communicative flow of the lesson. Similar to those of these two studies, the design of the present study also allowed the IOFG learners to get involved in productive tasks and receive corrective feedback on their both grammatical and content-related errors. However, the results of this study did not show any significant effect for the teacher’s error treatment.

The reason for the ineffectiveness of the teacher’s provision of corrective feedback in this study may be related to the four conditions that Han (2002) proposes for error correction to be beneficial in language classrooms, which are “(a) individualized attention, (b) consistent focus, (c) developmental readiness, and (d) intensity” (p. 568). Therefore, if the teacher had provided each individual learner with more intensive feedback in terms of solely the target structures, it might have been easier for the learners to attend to these structures, and thus the results related to the error treatment might have been positive.

V Conclusion

1. Pedagogical Implications

The most important pedagogical implication of this study is that the students do not need to be explicitly instructed on the grammatical features of the language, as it was

the case in traditional approaches to language teaching. Instead, based on the findings of the study, it can be suggested that providing learners with opportunities to produce the language in meaningful contexts may also be pedagogically effective in promoting the learning of the language forms, rather than teaching grammar in isolation. That is, through focused production tasks, the teachers can enable learners to focus on form in Writing classes, instead of teaching the forms explicitly in isolated Grammar classes. In so doing, the learners will possibly have opportunities to make connections between the linguistic form and the meaning it conveys. Thus, in their future outputs, the learners will be able to produce both grammatically accurate and meaningfully appropriate language.

Another pedagogical implication that can be made in this study is that language production tasks may be more beneficial if they are done collaboratively by pairs of students. This is because collaborative production tasks can lead learners to reason about the correct use of the language forms, and thus they increase learners' awareness of form-meaning connections (as also suggested by Izumi, 2002). At the same time, as Swain (1995: 127) asserts, production tasks, enabling learners to activate "their own internalized knowledge," lead them to notice the gap between what they know and what they are supposed to know. This reasoning is considered as a process of language learning by Swain and Lapkin (1995). Thus, insertion of collaborative language production tasks into the curriculum may bring about positive pedagogical results in EFL teaching.

Finally, since most FonF research has been conducted in contexts where learners are learning their second language, the results of these studies are attributable to the issue of language teaching in ESL settings. However, this study is conducted in Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages, Turkey, where the learners are learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, the pedagogical implications of this study contribute to the issue of language teaching in EFL settings.

2. Implications for Further Research

This study has provided empirical evidence that output-based FonF treatment is effective in learning present and past hypothetical conditionals in English by intermediate level EFL learners, while input-based FonF treatment is not effective in the learning of these forms. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited to this level of learners and these linguistic forms. The need to use learners at different levels (i.e., beginner, elementary, or more advanced) and different linguistic forms (i.e., simpler forms) in order to arrive at a more general claim for the effects of FonF in EFL settings is certainly apparent. In addition, there is a need for further FonF investigation to employ learners from different age groups (i.e., young learners). Consequently, future research can be carried out to examine the effects of FonF on the learning of different linguistic forms, involving learners from different language levels and from different age groups.

Moreover, the present study has been carried out in Writing classes through written production tasks. In future research, however, one may want to examine the effects of FonF on language learning by conducting spontaneous production tasks to see if learners generalize their skills to oral production. Therefore, the issue of incorporating FonF in Speaking classes may need further investigation.

Furthermore, the present study reports only the short-term effects of the FonF treatment types on learning. Therefore, long-term effects of the treatment types need to be examined through delayed-posttest investigation. Thus, future research may want to focus on the effects of the treatment types on retainment of the learning

Lastly, the present study's aim was to investigate if drawing learners' attention to a specific form through input flood, output, and corrective feedback is effective to learn that form. Therefore, only the tests that directly measure the learners' language gains were employed. Measures of attention were not employed to examine the 'noticing' issue. Thus, future research may want to investigate the 'noticing' of the linguistic forms, and, in this way, it may be able to relate the findings regarding noticing with the learning issue.

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Appendix A

I. PRODUCTION TEST

There are two paragraphs below. Read the paragraphs and complete the paragraphs with appropriate sentences. Note that your sentences should be meaningful and grammatical.

Complete all the blanks. Don't leave anything out.

a) Dissatisfaction

Some people are often dissatisfied with what they have. People of that kind always want to have more. For example, Uncle George is living in a flat now. However, he always wants to buy a house with a swimming pool, but he cannot buy one because he doesn't have enough money. So, he usually daydreams saying, "If I _____, _____." Another....

II. MULTIPLE-CHOICE RECOGNITION TEST

First, read each sentence carefully. Then read all the choices for both parts of each sentence. Next, **circle** the letter of the correct answer that completes the sentence.

Answer all the questions. Don't leave anything out.

- A. If I _____ have to go to class today, I _____ to the cinema with you.
- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. a) don't | 2. a) would have come |
| b) didn't | b) come |
| c) wouldn't | c) can come |
| d) can't | d) would come |

III. GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TEST

There are eight sentences below. However, some of them include **grammatical mistakes**. Read each sentence carefully. First, decide whether the sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect. Then,

- **check** (✓) the box beside CORRECT or INCORRECT
- Next, if you think it is CORRECT, do not write anything. However, if you have checked INCORRECT, write the sentence out correctly.

Answer all the questions. Don't leave anything out.

1. I would have talked to Betty if I saw her yesterday.
 CORRECT
 INCORRECT

IV. COMPREHENSION TEST

a) Read the following paragraph and then answer True/False questions.

Answer all the questions. Don't leave anything out.

Malaysian Family

The very nature of the family in Malaysia is changing. According to some sociologists, this change is caused by two main factors: the economy and technology. If Malaysia had better economic conditions, women who have to bring money to their homes wouldn't have to go to work. Therefore, if women stayed at home longer, they would be able to spare more time to fulfill their domestic roles. Moreover,

Circle True or False according to the newspaper article above.

1. Malaysian women cannot spare enough time for their domestic roles.

True

False