COMPARING FOCUS ON FORM INSTRUCTION TO FOCUS ON FORMS AND FOCUS ON MEANING INSTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH DIRECT OBJECT CLITIC PRONOUNS

By

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by

Melanie Lynn D’Amico
This document is dedicated to my family for all of their love and support, especially my mother who made me take Spanish in the seventh grade.
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Three pedagogical approaches that have been widely discussed in foreign language teaching are the focus on forms, the focus on meaning, and the focus on form approaches. Focus on forms is a more traditional approach that focuses on the grammatical forms of the language to be learned. The focus on meaning approach, which is often referred to as the communicative approach, teaches learners to communicate effectively in the foreign language. A focus on form approach combines the communicative element from focus on meaning as well as incorporating a focus on grammatical form.

The main goal of this investigation was to determine if there is a more effective approach among focus on forms, focus on meaning, or focus on form for teaching the direct object pronouns to beginning students of Spanish. It will be beneficial to discover which of these three widely-used approaches can best help students to acquire correct pronoun use, and may aid instructors of Spanish in the teaching of these pronouns.
In order to compare these approaches, three sections of a beginning Spanish course received instruction in one of the three approaches. The participants of this study were 51 beginning level students who had had 3 years of Spanish instruction at the high school level and were native speakers of English. The study follows a pretest/immediate posttest/delayed posttest design.

Results demonstrate that form-focused instruction is more effective than meaning-focused instruction for teaching the Spanish direct object pronouns. A main implication of this study is that focus on meaning instruction is not sufficient to help beginning learners improve their production of Spanish direct object pronouns. However, the results do not clearly show which of the two form-focused approaches is more effective. Additional research comparing these two form-focused approaches is necessary.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Recent research in the effects of instruction in second language acquisition (SLA) has included numerous studies on attention to form in the language classroom. These studies have demonstrated a need for second language (L2) learners to pay attention to form in order to develop more target-like L2 grammars. How to accomplish successful attention to form within a classroom setting that provides the necessary amount of attention and the right type of attention can be difficult to determine. Many language programs seek to provide the most natural environment for learning a L2 and accomplish this through meaning-focused instruction. A popular form of meaning-focused instruction is the communicative approach, which believes in developing communicative competence through meaning-based language use. The communicative approach stems from the belief that language learners will acquire their L2 grammar by using language as a tool to complete communicative tasks as they would in a real-world setting. The debate that arises with this type of instruction, centers on whether learners’ are able to focus on form during meaningful interaction. In order to accomplish this, learners need to simultaneously focus on the meaning of the language and its linguistic form in both the input they are receiving and in the output that they are producing. Is it possible that learners can gain linguistic information and incorporate it into their L2 grammar during this interaction? Or do learners need more explicit direction to assist them in attending to linguistic form while in the context of a meaning-based task.
This study seeks to discover if L2 learners of Spanish will benefit more from form-focused instruction or meaning-based instruction when they encounter a new linguistic form. Additionally when considering the type of form-focused instruction, this study hopes to determine if learners benefit more from focus on form within meaning-based tasks, or from more traditional focus on forms requiring more explicit practice of the linguistic form. In order to carry out this comparison of approaches, the specific linguistic form used in this study is the Spanish direct object clitic pronouns. The Spanish direct object clitic pronouns have a strong connection between form and meaning, making them a useful linguistic element to compare in this study. Additionally, the direct object clitic pronouns are known to be a problematic linguistic element for L2 learners to acquire. Therefore, if it can be determined that a more effective teaching approach exists for teaching the direct object clitic pronouns, it will be advantageous to both instructors and learners.

In this introduction section, a description of each of the methodologies will first be given. This will then be followed by a brief description of the Spanish direct object pronouns and the main problems that learners encounter with these pronouns.

**Pedagogical Approaches**

**Focus on Meaning Approach**

As discussed by Long and Robinson (1998), in a meaning-based or communicative approach, learners acquire the L2 from experience with comprehensible input and from using the L2 as means of communication rather than viewing the L2 as an object of study. Omaggio Hadley (2001) furthers this explanation with three main principles for the communicative approach: First, meaning is central and the contextualization of the grammatical elements is essential when presenting foreign language grammar to learners.
Second, language learning happens with communication and negotiation of meaning, therefore learners must communicate with the language from the beginning of instruction. Third, the goal of this approach is communicative competence focusing primarily on fluency and the ability to use the language to express learners’ own ideas and thoughts. Based on these explanations, a main emphasis of a communicative approach is on providing a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input to allow learners to see what is possible in the L2. In addition to this comprehensible input, a communicative approach offers the opportunity to practice speaking and writing in the L2 as means of communication, not simply as pronunciation practice or grammar skill practice (Howatt, 1987). This communication practice is achieved by the realization of real-world situation tasks that require competent communication in order to be resolved. The idea that students are learning a foreign language to actually use the language in the future is a fundamental reason for developing these types of communication skills (Johnson, 1987). An example of a meaningful real-world activity would be a role-playing activity where one student takes on the role of a shop clerk and the other student is a customer at that shop. The customer student has a list of things that she must buy and the clerk student must help her decide on the best purchases (Rossner, 1987). In these types of activities the students must be able to make themselves understood as well as being creative in the foreign language (i.e. not just repeating stock phrases). Because the meaning of the communication is the most important part of these tasks the grammar elements are not the focus in these types of classroom activities (Brumfit, 1987).

In the communicative approach the tolerance for errors in the language classroom is considerably high when compared to other more traditional approaches. In a
traditional grammar-focused approach, errors were avoided at all costs and the idea that through intense grammar drills errors could be eliminated was a constant belief (Johnson, 1987). However, in the communicative approach errors are seen not only as natural occurrences but as a part of learning. Johnson discusses the importance of “risk-taking skills” in the communicative approach, whereby it is important for learners not to be afraid to try new things in the foreign language when attempting to express themselves. If learners are forced to use only phrases and language chunks that they know to be correct it will be very difficult for them to communicate in the real environment. Learners should be challenged to go beyond what they know in order to help them acquire more of the foreign language and to be able to “see the gaps” in their own language abilities (Gass 1997). Gass explains that when learners encounter problems when communicating, these problems can act as triggers for the learners to force them to reevaluate their L2 grammar. During this reevaluation, learners may perceive that some element is lacking in their L2; i.e., there is a gap in their system. It is likely that when learners are aware of these gaps, they will seek to find the missing information. The challenge to go beyond what is known is likely to be encountered in real-world language use and students should be prepared to handle this by developing risk-taking skills. It is also important to realize that in these challenges it is inevitable that learners will make errors but these errors should not become a focus of the activity. (Johnson, 1987)

**Focus on Form Approach**

The concept of a focus on form approach (Long 1988, 1991; Long & Crookes, 1992) stems from Long’s (1983, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis. This hypothesis states that during interaction, negotiation of meaning will frequently occur and will elicit negative feedback. Negotiation of meaning occurs when there is breakdown in
communication and the speakers must discuss what was said to determine the intended meaning of the problematic utterance. In many instances during this discussion, the speaker that produced the problematic utterance receives negative feedback from the other speaker that lets them know an error was made. This negative feedback causes the learner to pay more attention to the divergence between the input that they have received and the output that they have produced, in other words, this feedback directs the learner to focus on the form of their output. A focus on form teaching approach, as outlined by Long and Robinson (1998) “often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production.” (p. 23) In other words, in a focus on form approach, the instructor can actively provide this negative feedback during interaction and in many cases as an observer to the interaction, to help redirect student attention to linguistic form. As Long (1991) defines focus on form, it should not be a planned activity, but rather occurs spontaneously during communicative activities. Long and Robinson offer suggestions for implementation of focus on form both during activities and through implicit negative feedback. During an activity, learners work together to solve a problem, where the focus is on meaning and resolving the issue at hand. Although the learners are not asked to use a specific form, the task encourages the use of a form and increases the probability of the form being noticed and integrated into speech and writing. As learners work, the instructor circulates among them and interrupts in order to focus attention to linguistic problems for the specific form being targeted. In other words, if direct object pronouns are is the form being targeted, the instructor will only address errors that occur with direct object pronouns. As defined by Long, the
instructor offers recasts of a learner’s utterance as implicit negative feedback. These recasts do not distract from the predominant focus on meaning but allow for learners to focus on grammatical elements as well. Long and Robinson state that adult learners appear to be more sensitive to recasts than younger learners and therefore may be more likely to notice the difference between their utterance and the instructor’s recast. Another form of implicit feedback can come in the form of prompts, where the instructor or other interlocutor indicates that there is a linguistic problem but does not provide the correct form for the learner. Long and Robinson consider that both types of feedback offer learners an opportunity to focus on grammatical form and to notice potential problems in their knowledge of the L2.

When making these types of corrections, it may be necessary to use explicit rather than implicit corrections. It may even be beneficial to pause the activity for a brief moment to do so. This type of separation to redirect the learners’ attention occurs at the exact moment where the learners have made the error and it allows them to see a direct correlation between what the intended meaning was and how it should be best conveyed (Lightbown, 1998). Although Lightbown is a proponent of continuous focus on form, she does believe that there can be brief grammar lessons that will provide learners with clarifications of more challenging linguistic elements incorporated into the overall class lesson. If learners have this prior knowledge of the element, their focus can be more easily and quickly directed back to the form during a communicative activity.

Another type of focus on form has been called “proactive” by Doughty and Williams (1998) and is described as being more feasible in a language classroom than the more reactive approach prescribed by Long (1991). With proactive lessons, not only is
there a higher opportunity for learners to use a particular form, but in addition instructors

\hspace{1.1em} can be more sensitive to possible learner errors of that form and can maintain their own

\hspace{1.1em} focus to correct only those errors which occur in the form at hand. (Doughty and

\hspace{1.1em} Williams, 1998) As stated by both Lightbown (1998) and Doughty and Williams, these

\hspace{1.1em} activities do not need to be unnatural or contrived to use a specific form. It is still

\hspace{1.1em} possible to create real-world situational communicative activities and maintain a focus on

\hspace{1.1em} form. Lightbown upholds that “teachers are not ‘traitors’ to the cause of communicative

\hspace{1.1em} language teaching if they plan activities in which they know that learners will almost

\hspace{1.1em} inevitably need to use specific linguistic features.” (p.195)

\hspace{1.1em} Others believe that it is possible to plan lessons that promote focus on form through

\hspace{1.1em} separating focus on form and communicative activities. Lightbown (1998) discusses this

\hspace{1.1em} separation as evolving from instructors’ concern that if during a meaning-based activity

\hspace{1.1em} learners’ attention is refocused to the form they are using to convey their meaning they

\hspace{1.1em} may have negative reactions toward this redirection or correction. However, Lightbown

\hspace{1.1em} does not believe this to be entirely true, and she cautions that there is a possibility that in

\hspace{1.1em} separating activities learners will consider language use apart from language instruction.

\hspace{1.1em} **Focus on Forms Approach**

\hspace{1.1em} It can be seen that meaning-focused instruction is beneficial to L2 learners because

\hspace{1.1em} it provides them with communication skills and realistic language practice that prepares

\hspace{1.1em} learners for native speaker environments. However, from the studies discussed above it

\hspace{1.1em} is also apparent that learners benefit from more attention to linguistic form. Many

\hspace{1.1em} language researchers consider attention to grammatical form to be an important part of

\hspace{1.1em} second language acquisition. Schmidt (1990) states that grammar reformation principally

\hspace{1.1em} transpires when learners concentrate on and notice elements in the input. As mentioned
before in the consideration of errors as part of the learning process, Gass (1997) maintains that learners must be aware of the gaps in their own interlanguage in order for the entire system to progress. In order to achieve this noticing of missing information in their L2 grammar, learners must have some focus on grammatical form, though, how much attention is paid to form can be a critical decision in developing an instructional approach. One such approach that puts major emphasis on linguistic form is the more traditional, focus on forms approach. Long (1991) emphasizes the plural forms in this approach because rather than focusing on meaning or focusing on form within meaning, a course that uses focus on forms instruction focuses on the grammatical forms themselves. Stemming from the more traditional methods of teaching foreign language, a focus on forms approach employs the use of formal grammar explanation and grammar production activities. Two main elements of this grammar production include the frequent drilling of a grammatical sequence and the intensity with which the drilling or practicing of the grammatical sequence is done. Both of these elements were described as “empirical laws” by Lado (1964) and focus heavily on repetitive practice of grammar elements. Other authors such as Chastain (1976) and Moulton (1961) discuss the importance of frequent grammar drills in this approach. It was believed that by this concentrated repetition of drills the language concept would become automatic for the learners and that they would be acquiring the language on an unconscious level (Chastain 1976). Sheen (2005), an advocate for focus on forms approaches, suggests that this approach does not need to be entirely a forms-in-isolation type of grammar teaching, but instead can be a skills-learning approach. Sheen defines focus on forms as having three phases: first, instruction presents knowledge of the L2 grammar in a variety of ways including
explanation in the L1 and distinguishing differences between the L1 and the L2; second, learners complete written and oral exercises using the forms in both non-communicative and communicative activities, and third, learners are provided with opportunities for communicative use of the grammar to promote automatic and accurate use. His definition, while encompassing more recent ideas of meaning-focused communicative activities in some parts of the instruction, is still, on the whole, a traditional approach that sees the L2 as an object of study and places the majority of focus on the grammar itself.

As mentioned previously, in a traditional focus on forms approach learner errors are not as highly tolerated as with a focus on meaning approach. Instead, the traditional approach seeks to eliminate errors from learners’ L2 grammar. To accomplish this, instructors often explicitly correct any and all errors during grammar practice activities (Long, 1991). In explicit correction, learners receive a clear response that they have made an error in their output. By correcting any and all errors, instructors may correct an error that is less relevant to the meaning of the overall message. From the viewpoint of focus on forms instruction (Sheen, 2005), errors are detrimental to learners because they are providing incorrect input to other learners. Further it is believed that if learners are consistently exposed to such errors, it may cause the errors to become fossilized, wherein the errors become a permanent fixture in learners’ L2 grammar.

While not as widely discussed in SLA theory as communicative or focus on form instruction, focus on forms instruction is still prevalent in language programs. Many of the most popular foreign language textbooks, including the textbook used in this study (Puntos de Partida, 7th Ed., Knorre, Dorwick, Pérez-Gironés, Glass, & Villarreal (2004)) still contain explicit and detailed grammar explanations. Additionally, many of the
activities in these textbooks are mechanical, drill style production activities designed to provide students with an option to practice the grammar element being taught (Nassaji, 2000). As described by Long (1991) in a focus on forms syllabus the second language is the object of study, while in a focus on form syllabus the second language is used to teach another subject, such as biology, mathematics, or the geography of the nations that speak the L2. This type of syllabus may be possible in immersion programs in elementary or secondary education, but at the university level, students enroll in languages courses primarily to learn the language, not another subject. Generally, only when moving into upper-level intermediate courses do students begin to have a syllabus that focuses on more than forms, such as a literature or a cultures course. The syllabus for the course used in this study can be classified as a focus on forms syllabus by Long’s definition since it covers a different grammar section in the text for each lesson. However, this is not to say that instructors of this style of syllabus must teach with a focus on forms approach. Again with the course from this study, instructors are advised to use a communicative approach with meaning-based activities that allow students to use the grammar they learn about in the text.

**Direct Object Pronouns**

As discussed in several studies (for example Spada, Lightbown & While (2005), a grammatical element that has a strong link between form and meaning can be understood and acquired by learners through a focus on form approach. An example of a grammatical element in Spanish with this strong relationship is the object pronouns or clitics. The object clitics in Spanish are proclitic for verb phrases with a single verb,
creating a structure that appears to be (S)OV to learners of Spanish\(^1\). In verb phrases with two (or more) verbs (such as a conjugated verb and an infinitive) the clitic may be proclitic or enclitic. In the enclitic case, although there is now the appearance of (S)VO ordering, it still does not follow standard (S)VO in that the clitic no longer stands alone as a single word. In addition to the morphosyntactic properties of clitics, there are also strict agreement rules that must be followed. The Spanish clitics must inflect for gender, number, and in some instances, case, with respect to the antecedent. For these reasons, clitics have a high level of difficulty for second language learners not only at the beginning levels but also at advanced levels. Due to the strong link between form and meaning and the difficulty shown by beginning learners, direct object pronouns were chosen as the grammatical form to be used in this study. The researcher also believed that if this study can infer that there is a more effective approach for teaching direct object pronouns that would be beneficial in helping learners to overcome these problems.

**First Noun Strategy**

A large amount of acquisition research of the clitics has dealt with learners’ difficulty in understanding the overall meaning of sentences that contain clitics due to the word order. To explain this difficulty, the idea of First Noun Strategy has been discussed by many acquisition researchers such as VanPatten (1984, 1996), VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), Lee (2003), and Camps (2004). This strategy states that learners make the assumption that the first noun in a given sentence is the subject of that sentence, thus creating a SVO word order. Therefore when learners’ encounter a sentence that contains

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\(^1\) A more in depth syntactic and morphological evaluation would show that the deep structure is still SVO. (Haspelmath, 2002)
a preverbal clitic and a post verbal or dropped subject they often misinterpret the clitic as the subject. An example of this misinterpretation comes from VanPatten (1984):

\[
\text{Lo visita la muchacha} \\
\text{him\textsubscript{ACC} visits the girl\textsubscript{SUBJ}}
\]

The girl visits him – correct interpretation

He visits the girl – incorrect interpretation

Several studies have been conducted to study this phenomenon such as VanPatten (1984), Lee (1987), and Houston (1997), and will be discussed in the following chapter.

**Development of Processing Instruction**

In order to discourage the First Noun Strategy, VanPatten (1983) developed a form-focused teaching approach called Processing Instruction, which attempts to change the way in which learners identify and process grammatical elements in the input they receive. Stemming from input processing, the strategies L2 learners use to connect grammar and meaning, Processing Instruction (PI) is a pedagogical approach that follows six guidelines outlined in VanPatten (1993): The first guideline states that learners should only learn one grammar element at a time. The second states that meaning must be kept in focus in order for learners to maintain the connection between form and meaning. Third, learners must complete activities requiring them to process the input provided. Fourth, learners should receive output that is both oral and written. Fifth, learners should begin with more basic input in individual sentences to more complex input in a connected discourse. Finally, the sixth guideline states that psycholinguistic processing mechanisms must be kept in mind in order to keep learners attention to the form being learned. For example when teaching direct object pronouns it is not effective to have each input sentence begin with an explicit subject but rather to have a variety of
sentences including those without an explicit subject. In practice, PI generally follows a
three step procedure of correct processing strategies, incorrect processing strategies, and
activities using structure input: First, learners receive explicit explanation of the
structure. Second, learners learn about processing strategies to help them correctly
interpret input and processing strategies that cause misinterpretation of input. Third,
learners complete processing activities with structured input that follows guidelines four,
five, and six. In PI learners do not complete production activities of the grammar
element being learned. Although Processing Instruction is not an approach that was used
in this study, it is a type of form-focused approach that has been used extensively in
investigating the instruction of direct object pronouns and therefore this technique is
relevant to this discussion.

The following chapter presents the results of a number of empirical investigations
into the effects of certain pedagogical approaches on L2 acquisition generally and,
specifically, on the L2 production of the direct object pronouns.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, previous investigations of the three approaches, focus on meaning, focus on form, and focus on forms, will be discussed. This discussion will include a presentation of comparison studies of the approaches in order to establish a background for the current study. After this, a discussion of studies of learner’s use of Spanish direct object pronouns and studies analyzing the effects of instruction of the Spanish direct object pronouns will be given.

Comparison of Pedagogical Approaches

Focus on Meaning Approach

As stated in the previous chapter, a widely-used form of meaning-focused instruction is the communicative approach, which was designed to promote learners’ development of communicative competence through meaning-based language use. During this meaning-based language use, language learners acquire their L2 by using language as a tool to complete communicative tasks as they would in a real-world setting. The focus on meaning or communicative approach has been shown to be effective in developing learners with high levels of communicative competence. Some of the most famous studies of this type of teaching are the French immersion studies completed by Harley and Swain (1984) and Swain (1985). These empirical studies were of school-aged children in Canada that received communicative language instruction for twelve years. The students were not in French language classes, but took other subject courses, such as science, that were taught in French. Therefore, in these classes French was the tool for
communication and learning but not the object of study. When analyzing the production of these students, it was found that they demonstrated a high level of fluency and were confident in their abilities when speaking French. However, when these learners’ language output was analyzed it was also shown that these students had distinct problems with certain grammatical forms, despite experience with these forms throughout the period of instruction (Swain, 1985). This problem of weaker grammar abilities has been addressed in other studies that suggest that form-focused language teaching may still have a place within communicative teaching approaches (Nassaji, 2000).

In a recent descriptive study by García Mayo (2005), L2 learners’ interaction during meaning-based tasks was observed to determine the types of modifications that occur during interaction. García Mayo hoped to discover if these modifications are attending to learners’ needs for both positive and negative input, as well as providing an opportunity for the production of modified output. Additionally, this study sought to determine if these modifications allow learners to focus on form during a meaning-based activity. One such modification that is likely to occur in learner interaction is self-repair, where an error is corrected by the same speaker who made the error. García Mayo highlights two points raised by Lyster and Ranta (1997) that self-repair is a means for learners to draw on their own L2 grammar and confront errors in ways that cause them to focus on form and possibly to reanalyze the L2; and that self-repair may provide learners with the chance to automatize the retrieval of L2 knowledge.

The study was conducted with fourteen advanced learners of English as a foreign language in the Basque Country of Spain. In addition to these learners, seven native speakers of English were also participants. All participants were adults, with ages
ranging from 19 to 33. First, learners were divided into seven pairs to complete meaning-based tasks. Second, seven learners were paired with native speakers to complete other meaning-based tasks. While completing tasks, the participants were audio-recorded in a laboratory setting at their university. Each pair completed an information gap task and a decision making task.

Results show that within the learner-learner pairs there were a total of 170 non-targetlike utterances (NTLUs), and of those NTLUs only 19% underwent modification by the speakers, leaving 81% unrepaired. In the learner-native speaker pairs there were a total of 20 NTLUs with 25% being modified, and 75% unmodified. The difference in the actual numbers corresponding to the learner-learner pairs and the learner-native speaker pairs was statistically non-significant. These results show that the majority of NTLUs are not addressed in either pairing. There was a significant difference between the number of total NTLUs that were produced by each group of pairs. Based on the lower number of NTLUs in the learner-native speaker pairs, it can be hypothesized that learners tried to be more careful in their speech when interacting with a native speaker. Of the NTLUs that were addressed, in both groups self-repair was more common than other-repair, 64%/36% in learner-learner pairs and 60%/40% in learner-native speaker pairs. Overall it can be said that when modifications occur, the learners have the opportunity to focus on form within the context of meaning. Since the majority of modifications that were made were self-repair, it can be seen that the learners are thinking about the linguistic form at that time. However, these results do not show this approach to be crucial in helping learners to focus on form because of the large amounts of errors that go unmodified and most likely unnoticed by the learners. These results
show support for the belief that more focus on form is needed within meaning-based tasks because although learners were able to show some attention to form, there is a large amount of potential attention to form that could have been addressed.

**Focus on Form Approach**

As discussed in the introduction chapter, the focus on form approach combines the meaning-based task element of the focus on meaning approach with an attention to grammatical form in order to assist learners in the development of target-like L2 grammars. One of the key differences that sets focus on form apart from focus on meaning is the type of feedback that occurs during instruction. In considering this feedback Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) find that there are various reactive and preemptive strategies that are employed. Reactive focus on form is a learner-generated error that is noticed by the instructor (or other learner) and causes them to respond with some type of feedback. Preemptive focus on form, on the other hand, is initiated by either the learners or the instructor and occurs before a perceived problem. In other words, the learner or instructor initiates the attention to form to avoid a potential problem that may or may not occur. If the focus on form is instructor-initiated it is unknown whether or not this information is actually lacking in the students’ metalinguistic knowledge.

The motivation behind Ellis et al. (2001) was to describe the focus on form approach in a real classroom setting and to investigate how preemptive focus on form occurred in that classroom. The participants of the study were two ESL classes, one intermediate and the other pre-intermediate. The data collected by the researchers were from meaning-focused tasks only and consisted of 12 hours of recordings. From the 12 hours of collected data, Ellis et al. (2001) found 448 focus on form episodes (FFEs), when calculating how frequently focus on form occurred in minutes it was found that
focus on form occurred at a rate of 1 per every 1.6 minutes. This data also showed there were equal amounts of reactive and preemptive FFEs. When analyzing the preemptive FFEs, the results showed that student-initiated FFEs consisted of two required moves, trigger and response, and an optional third move, uptake. As described by Ellis et al., a trigger occurs when a student poses a question about grammatical form, this is followed by the response or answer to that question by the teacher. Uptake may then occur when the student recognizes the response, tries to use the information given, or endeavors to produce the form. In teacher-initiated FFEs, there were two possible moves after the teacher’s trigger: a student could respond to the trigger showing previous knowledge of the form, or after no student would respond, the teacher would offer the response. With teacher responses, the students had the option of an uptake move. When looking at the uptake moves that occurred in the data, Ellis et al. found both successful and unsuccessful uptake. Successful uptake is defined as uptake where learners show an ability to integrate the information given or to use the form. In unsuccessful uptake there is only an acknowledgement of the response or a simple repetition. When calculating the frequency of uptake, the results show that the uptake in student-initiated FFEs was more successful than in teacher-initiated FFEs.

In discussing the results from the data collected, Ellis et al. (2001) observed that the instances of focus on form were not obtrusive to the meaning-focused activity even when occurring with high frequency. In fact, they show that most instances of attention to form happen because learners are seeking more information to learn about the language. Ellis et al. suggest that learners treat instances of focus on form as “time outs” from the communication activity to acquire additional information that will help them both to
complete the activity and to learn. This is important because it shows that students have the capacity to focus both on meaning and form within the same lesson. It may not be that students are focusing on meaning and form simultaneously, but they are able to shift back and forth between the two when working out a communicative problem.

Another important finding of the Ellis et al. (2001) study is that in preemptive focus on form, learners gain explicit rather than implicit information about form. In the preemptive FFEs, learners obtained metalinguistic instruction involving an explanation of a grammar element. In other studies cited by Ellis et al. (Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) explicit information seems to be more effective in promoting uptake. Consequently, if students receive preemptive focus on form it may be more effective at promoting uptake and therefore more effective at promoting acquisition.

In a similar study, Loewen (2004) observes and describes the uptake that occurs during incidental focus on form instruction during meaning-based tasks in ESL classrooms. An important aspect of uptake, according to Loewen, is its relation to learner output in the L2. He considers uptake to be a type of “pushed output” as defined by Swain (1985 and 2000). Pushed output happens “when learners process language syntactically rather than semantically” (p. 157). During an uptake move, a learner may be reformulating an incorrect utterance in order to produce a more targetlike form. Loewen states that this pushed output may be a sign of noticing; a main goal of focus on form instruction. Accordingly, when uptake takes place, it is likely that the learner has noticed the L2 form (Schmidt, 1990). This is not to say that a learner cannot notice a form without evidence of uptake, but that the noticing is more apparent with an uptake move.
Loewen (2004) discusses other studies that have shown various levels of successful uptake in language classrooms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) show a rate of 27% for successful uptake out of all feedback (meaning that 27% of the time when learners receive feedback it results in successful uptake), Mackey and Philp (1998) have a rate of 33%, and Oliver (1995) finds a rate of 35%. On the other hand, Ellis et al. (2001) finds a much higher rate of 74% for successful uptake. The key difference between these studies is that Ellis et al. (2001) used adult university-aged participants from a private language school, whereas the other studies were all completed with school-aged children from their regular school. This suggests that context and age may play a role in the success of uptake and consequently its effect on acquisition.

The participants in Loewen’s study were 118 students from 12 English classes at a private language school. The researcher observed classroom interaction for incidental focus on form that occurred during meaning-focused activities. The instructors were not guided to teach in any particular manner; researchers only asked if they could observe the meaning-focused language lessons, allowing them to observe the most natural classroom interaction as possible. Students were all university-aged and represented a variety of nationalities. The language proficiency of the students, based on a school placement test, extended from the low- to upper-intermediate level.

In total, 32 hours of meaning-focused lessons were observed and recorded. The focus on form episodes (FFE$s$) were then identified and transcribed. FFE$s$ were identified when an error occurred in a student utterance and was addressed by the teacher (reactive FFE) or when a student asked about a linguistic element (student-initiated FFE). In both reactive and student-initiated FFE$s$, the student has shifted attention from
meaning briefly to address a form, and then returns to the meaning-based task at hand. After identification, FFEs where coded by type, linguistic focus, source, complexity, directness, emphasis, timing, response, uptake, and successful uptake.

Loewen’s (2004) results found 1373 FFEs in the 32 hours of meaning-focused lessons, with uptake occurring in 73% of these FFEs. Within the total uptake, 66.1% of the total was successful uptake. Next Loewen considered the coded FFEs and the uptake that occurred within the different codes. Of the eight codes, three were found to be significant: complexity, timing, and response. Complex FFEs were shown to be four and a half times more likely to produce uptake than simple FFEs. Deferred FFEs were one fifth as likely to produce uptake as immediate FFEs. Elicit response FFEs were three and a half times more likely to produce uptake than provided response FFEs. Loewen performed a similar analysis for successful uptake and found that complex, code-related (the FFE dealt with the grammatical form and was not a request for vocabulary), reactive, immediate, and heavy (the FFE had direct emphasis on the form) FFEs with elicit responses were more likely to lead to successful uptake.

Loewen’s results are comparable to those of Ellis et al. (2001), in their finding of higher levels of uptake and of successful uptake than those found in the aforementioned studies (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Philp, 1998; and Oliver, 1995). The results suggest that the learning context is a factor in uptake. It may be that adult students in a language class are better able to view language as an object while in the context of meaning-based activities, compared to students in immersion or content-based classes that may see language more as a tool to complete a task rather than something to be studied. This possibility shows support for focus on form during meaning-based tasks in
a university language class because the students would be more closely related to the participants in Loewen and Ellis et al.’s studies and therefore may share the same ability to view language as an object of study. Additionally it may be possible that university students would have similar rates of uptake and successful uptake during focus on form as those found in Loewen and Ellis et al.’s studies.

Additional classroom research has shown that rather than having separated grammar and communicative activities, instructors can be more effective when maintaining a continuous integration of focus on form. In Lightbown and Spada (1990), the instructor was able to redirect learners’ attentions during an interactive communicative activity, without discouraging learners. In that study, Lightbown and Spada investigated the effects of focus on form instruction on the English present progressive and word order of nouns and adjectives. The participants in this study were 100 students in a Canadian ESL program; all students had French as their L1. The students were ages 10 to 12 and in four classes of grades 5 and 6. The classes were divided into an experimental focus on form group, and a comparison group that maintained a communicative approach. Prior to instruction both groups completed a pretest to evaluate their accuracy with the progressive and noun-adjective syntax. The instruction was given to participants for 5 hours per school day for 5 months. After instruction, the participants completed a posttest, the results of which show a statistically significant improvement for the focus on form group, but not for the communicative group. These results are positive for focus on form instruction, but Lightbown and Spada recognize the need for more empirical studies of this type to further demonstrate that focus on form instruction is needed for more accurate grammar production by L2
learners. In a similar study, Spada and Lightbown (1993) investigated the effects of focus on form instruction of question formation. Again, participants were from an ESL program in Canada and consisted of 79 L1 French students aged 10-12. Students were divided into two groups, a focus on form group and a communicative group. Prior to treatment, participants completed a pretest on question formation. The participants received the treatment over a two-week period during regular class time, and immediately afterwards completed a posttest. As in Lightbown and Spada (1990), the focus on form group showed significant improvement in grammatical accuracy in the questions that they produced. These results support the hypothesis that form-focused instruction with corrective feedback in the context of meaning-based tasks can benefit L2 learners in their L2 development.

In addition to showing support for focus on form methodologies, in both of these studies learners appeared to receive the corrective feedback given in a positive manner and were still able to complete meaning-based activities. In fact most learners of a second language expect to be corrected and will not be surprised at an instructor’s interruptions during their work. The point that instructors must keep in mind is to only correct errors that are part of the form in focus; this form should be an integral part of the meaning in the activity. When this type of correction is made, learners will be gaining from this double focus on form and meaning (Lightbown, 1998). In support of this idea, Doughty and Varela (1998) also state that the aim of these corrections is to add attention to the form while in a primarily communicative task. In this way an instructor is not truly leaving a communicative goal in order to discuss a grammar feature, but is helping to make the communicative goal better understood. In their study, Doughty and Varela
investigated the effects of focus on form instruction of English past tense and conditional in two ESL science classes. The participants in this study were 34 intermediate school students between the ages of 11 and 14. The students had a variety of L1s, with a majority having Spanish as a L1. The students normally received content-based communicative instruction in their science class and the instructor did not focus on grammatical form. The tasks used in this study were simple science experiments and reports that required students to use past tense and the conditional. The science experiments consisted of both written and oral reports. For the purposes of the study, one class was designated the focus on form group while the other class was a comparison group and continued with their normal communicative approach. In this study, six science experiments were conducted by the students. The first experiment was conducted before the treatment and was considered to be the pretest. During the treatment, the participants completed three more experiments. The focus on form group received corrective feedback in the form of recasts for errors in the past tense or conditional, no other errors were corrected and there was no grammar explanation given. After the treatment, the fifth experiment was used as a posttest. Two months later, the sixth experiment was completed as a delayed posttest. No treatment was received in the time period between the fifth and sixth experiment. Results show that on the immediate posttest the focus on form group made significant and drastic improvement, while the communicative group did not show improvement and remained at their same level of accuracy. For the delayed posttest the focus on form group was able to maintain their levels of improvement, and again, the communicative group showed no change. In addition to evaluating student progress, Doughty and Varela also observed the students’
and instructor’s reaction to corrective feedback. They found that corrections that were brief and given at appropriate times (for example during group work as opposed to during an individual oral report) were best received and seemed to be more effective. If corrections were too lengthy or given at a less than appropriate time, students either stopped paying attention to the correction or were embarrassed by the correction. Doughty and Varela suggests that if instructors are sensitive to these issues and are well trained on how to implement corrective feedback, than focus on form can be beneficial during content-based instruction.

A study that considers different types of focus on form in the classroom is Toth (2000) which investigates the acquisition of the Spanish clitic se by English-speaking learners in a classroom setting. The study included 91 beginning-level L1 English participants from six different sections of a university Spanish course. Additionally, there were 31 adult native speakers of Spanish employed as a comparison group. The 91 learners were divided into three treatment groups: an input processing instruction group, a communicative group, and a task-based instruction group. All three groups received the same short grammar explanation but used different form-focused communicative activities. The input processing instruction group focused on comprehension activities and did not entail a great amount of learner output. The communicative group used question-and-answer activities, calling for students to provide output. In the task-based instruction group students completed speaking activities in small groups. Because of the native speaker comparison group, a traditional control group was not used in this study. The treatment period lasted for seven class days, after which a posttest was administered. The native speaker group took the same test as the learners, but only once. An additional
posttest was administered 24 days later. There was no additional instruction between the two posttests, but *se* did continue to appear in classroom input. The tests used for Toth’s study contained a guided production task, a free production task, and a grammaticality judgment task.

Toth’s results show that overall for the guided production task the learners greatly improved from pretest to posttest and maintained these levels in the second posttest. However, the learner results were still quite low when compared to the native speaker data. A repeated-measures ANOVA showed significant effects for time only, with no significant differences occurring between the treatment groups and no interaction of time and group. For the free production task, the learners again made a statistically significant improvement over time, but there was not significant difference between the groups nor between time and group. With the grammaticality judgment data, again a positive difference was seen for time. Unlike the other tasks, the grammaticality judgment did show a significant difference for both group and the interaction between time and group. The results show that the input processing group made significantly greater improvement from the pretest to the posttest than the other groups. However the input processing group started out with lower scores on the pretest and although it made significant improvement, their level of improvement did not surpass the levels of the other groups. Due to this fact, it cannot be concluded that input processing instruction is superior to the others. The results of Toth’s study strongly suggest that all three types of focus on form instruction assisted learners in improving their use of the clitic *se* in production tasks and in judging sentences using *se* to be grammatical. These results continue to support the results of other studies that explicit information combined with L2 input can often
quickly improve and add to learner’s L2 grammars. Additionally, there is evidence to support the theory that there is a connection between the salience of L2 input, the noticing of L2 forms, and the intake of these forms in the L2 grammar.

Further support in favor of focus on form instruction over communicative instruction can be found in Han’s (2002) study that considers the effects of recasts on tense consistency in oral and written production of L2 students. This study was a small-scale investigation with eight adult female participants from a one-semester upper-intermediate intensive English course. The participants were divided into two instructional groups, a recast group that received the recast instruction, and a nonrecast group that received only communicative instruction, which served as the comparison group. Prior to instruction, the participants completed a pretest with a written and oral narration task. After the pretest, the participants received instruction in 8 sessions over a period of 2 months. During these sessions the participants performed the same written and oral narration task. At the end of instruction, a posttest was administered using the same written and oral narration task. A delayed posttest was also completed a month later and again used the same activity.

The results of Han’s (2002) study show that for posttest1, the recast group greatly improved their tense consistency in both tasks. The nonrecast group also showed improvement of tense consistency in the oral task, but this improvement was not a great as the recast group. In the written task however, the nonrecast group decreased in their ability of tense consistency. For posttest2, the recast group maintained their level of consistency for both tasks. The nonrecast group decreased in their tense consistency for both tasks. Overall this study provided evidence that recasts for tense will help learners
to maintain tense during a narration, making it possible to hypothesize that recasts may be beneficial in helping students acquire other grammatical aspects.

Based on studies of L2 immersion programs, Lyster’s (2004) study involved students in an immersion program at the Grade 5 level (10 to 11-year olds) and focus on form instruction of grammatical gender in French. One of the main goals of this study was to analyze the effects of different types of feedback that occur during instruction in the form of recasts, prompts, or no feedback. Lyster is of the belief that prompts are more effective in causing learners to focus on form and may be more beneficial to learners because it requires the learner to produce (or attempt to produce) the target form. In total, 179 students from eight classes participated in the study. The eight classes were divided into four groups with two classes per group. The first group was a comparison group that continued with regular communicative teaching. The other three groups were the treatment groups consisting of a focus on form recast group, a focus on form prompt group, and a focus on form only group. The recast group received focus on form instruction with recasts for error of grammatical gender. The prompt group also received focus on form instruction but with prompts as feedback to their errors. The focus on form only group received focus on form instruction but no feedback to their errors. The treatment was implemented in the classes over a 5-week period. To measure students’ progress, a pretest was administered before the treatment, followed by an immediate posttest after treatment and a delayed posttest eight weeks later.

The focus on form instruction for Lyster (2004) was employed within the context of subject-matter instruction and contained three parts: 1. noticing activities with enhanced text, 2. awareness activities with inductive rule-discovery tasks and
metalinguistic explanation, and 3. practice activities with both analysis- and fluency-based tasks. The tests used to analyze students’ progress were divided into two written tasks: a binary-choice test and a text completion test, and two oral tasks: an object identification test and a picture-description test. The results for the binary-choice tests show that there were significant effects for group, time, and an interaction between time and group. For posttest 1, the focus on form prompt group performed significantly better than the other three groups. In addition, the focus on form recast group performed significantly better than the comparison group. For posttest 2, the focus on form prompt group again performed significantly better than the other three groups. Moreover, all three treatment groups were significantly better than the comparison group. The results for the text-completion test also show that the focus on form prompt group performed significantly better than the other three groups on both posttest 1 and posttest 2. In addition to the significant performance of the prompt group, results of posttest 1 show that the three focus on form groups significantly outperformed the comparison group. For posttest 2, only the prompt group maintained a significantly better performance than the comparison group. For the object-identification test, all three treatment groups performed significantly better than the comparison group. However, unlike the above test results, there was no significant difference between the three treatment groups. For posttest 1 of the picture-description test, there was only a significant difference between the prompt group and the comparison group. For posttest 2 however, all three treatment groups significantly outperformed the comparison group.

The results from Lyster (2004) clearly demonstrate that overall, focus on form instruction is more effective at improving students’ ability to correctly assign
grammatical gender when compared to purely communicative instruction. In particular in the written tasks, focus on form instruction with prompts as feedback appears to be the most beneficial for students. Only to a lesser degree is this true for the oral tasks, as there was not as great a significant difference between the types of feedback. Based on Lyster’s findings, it could be hypothesized that a group that received both types of feedback, recasts and prompts, within focus on form instruction would perform better in grammatical production tasks than a group that did not receive this feedback.

Spada, Lightbown, & White (2005) explore the effects of form-focused instruction of the English possessive determiners *his* and *her* and question formation in communicative ESL classrooms. The participants in this study come from four communicative ESL classes of students, ages 11-12 years old. The students were divided into two treatment topic groups: one group received form-focused instruction on the possessive determiners (PD) *his* and *her* and the other group received form-focused instruction on question formation (QF). Each group served as the comparison group for the other because they did not receive specific instruction on the other form (i.e. the PD classes did not receive instruction on question formation and vice versa). To determine that learners were all at the same level for their specific grammar element, a pretest was administered. After the pretest, the groups engaged in a four-week treatment that consisted of thirty-minute lessons, three times per week, during which they completed communicative activities that provided opportunities to use their grammar element. During the treatment, the instructors provided corrective feedback when learners made errors in the targeted form in all classroom activities. Immediately following the treatment, a posttest was administered.
The tests used in Spada et al. (2005) consisted of three tests for the possessive determiners and three different tests for the question formation. For possessive determiners, the first test was a passage correction task in which learners found errors of the possessive determiners and then provided the correct determiner. The second test was an oral production task where the learners had to describe a picture. A third test was a meta-talk interview where learners explained the reasoning behind the corrections made on the first test. The first test for question formation was a grammaticality judgment where learners judged a set of written questions and explained what was wrong with any incorrect question. The second test was a writing task where learners wrote questions they might ask certain people (i.e. people returning from summer camp). The third test was an oral task where learners were required to ask questions about a picture set to determine which picture the researcher was holding.

Spada et al.’s (2005) results for the possessive determiner tests show that overall learners benefited from form-focused instruction and outperformed learners who did not receive this type of instruction. For the passage correction task, the PD classes made statistically significant improvement from pre- to posttest and outperformed the QF classes. For the oral production task, all classes made a statistically significant improvement from the pre- to posttest. However it can be seen that the improvement was greater for the PD classes than for the QF classes. For the meta-talk interview task, the PD classes had much more awareness of the possessive determiners than did the QF classes. The results for the question formation tests do not show a strong benefit due to form-focused instruction. There was a slight improvement by the QF classes over the PD classes but in all tests these differences were not high enough to be significant. For the
grammaticality judgment task of question formation, all classes showed significant improvement. In the written production activity, again all classes showed improvement. For this task, the QF classes did have a slightly higher level of improvement that the PD classes but this difference was not statistically significant. On the oral production task although there was improvement by all classes once more, in this case the QF classes improved more than the PD classes offering evidence that instruction played a role in the learners’ improvement.

Spada et al. (2005) conclude that, overall, the results show support for explicit form-focused instruction and state that it “can make a useful contribution within communicative language teaching”. When considering the two grammar elements that were studied, it becomes clear that learners that received form-focused instruction for the possessive determiners were able to make more progress and had more metalinguistic knowledge after instruction than did the QF learners. This may be due to several factors, but Spada et al. highlight that the possessive determiners have a strong link between form and meaning. From these findings, it is possible to consider that focus on form instruction is most beneficial when the grammar element that is in focus has both a high value in form and in meaning.

**Focus on Forms Approach**

There have been very few empirical studies comparing a focus on forms approach with focus on form approach. Long (1991) states that empirical studies are needed to compare these approaches, but for the majority, focus on form studies have used focus on meaning approaches as a point of comparison. A study that does compare focus on forms instruction to focus on form is Sheen (2005), which compares oral production of two groups of learners. The main grammar points utilized in this study are interrogatives and
frequency adverbs. The participants in this study are 48 6th grade students, ages 11 to 12, in an English immersion program in Canada that employs a communicative approach to language teaching. The students were in two separate classes, a class of 30 and a class of 18. For purposes of the study, the students remained in their set classes with the class of 30 as the control group and the class of 18 as the experimental group. The control group continued with their communicative approach with an addition of focus on form on the grammar points of interrogatives and frequency adverbs. The experimental group received focus on forms instruction of the same grammar points. Instruction was completed over a six month period, and consisted of 75 minutes per week. For the first three months the classes focused on interrogatives and for the second three months they added a focus on the frequency adverbs, while continuing to focus on interrogatives. The comparison group was taught by their regular teacher and the experimental group was taught by the researcher. The tests used for this study consisted of an aural written comprehension test and an oral interview. For the aural written comprehension test learners heard a listening passage of 100 words and then answered 12 information questions. There were two sets of oral interviews used in this study. First, learners had to answer questions about themselves and also ask questions about the interviewer for example, “Where were you born?”. Second, the learners had to again answer questions about themselves and then were instructed to produce utterances with frequency adverbs, for example learners were told “Tell me that you go to the movies often”. Instructions for the tests were given in French and English.

Prior to any instruction, participants completed the pretest, which contained the oral interview, using interrogatives. The experimental group received lessons that consisted
of three activities. First, grammar explanation was given in French about the differences between French and English structures either using interrogative or frequency adverbs. Second, students completed pair work in English using the same structures. To complete the pair work students were instructed on what questions to have their partner ask them, for example “Ask me if my mother likes movies”, and were also provided with the question form that they should expect to hear, allowing the students to correct each other. Third, students completed task work during which they asked questions in order to obtain prescribed information or produced sentences using frequency adverbs. The directions for the third activity appear to be similar to the pair work activity, and Sheen does not specify what makes the task work different from the pair work. After the three-month instruction period for interrogatives, participants completed the first posttest which unlike the pretest, used interrogatives and frequency adverbs in the oral interviews. Again, after the three-month period for frequency adverbs the participants completed a second posttest, this test again used the oral interviews with both interrogative and frequency adverbs. Also at this point, the participants completed a grammaticality judgment test on both structures. Finally, two months later the participants completed a final posttest using both structures that were taught.

The results show that for the comparison group, there were no statistically significant changes from the pretest to the posttests (both the immediate posttests and the delayed posttests). For the experimental group, on the other hand, there was statistically significant improvement in both grammar elements from pretest to the first posttest. Results of the delayed posttests show that there was a decline in improvement but the level of accuracy at the time of the delayed posttest was still significantly different from
the level found in the pretest. The grammaticality judgment test also showed a significant difference in favor of the experimental group.

Sheen’s results appear to give favorable evidence for focus on forms instruction when compared to focus on form instruction. However, there are two main issues in this study that make it difficult to clearly state that focus on forms is indeed better for the instruction of these grammatical elements. First of all, Sheen fails to explain the procedure used in the focus on form instruction. He states that

“All that he [the focus on form instructor] was requested to do during his teaching was to provide corrective feedback should his students make errors in question forms or adverb placement.” (p. 298)

Sheen goes on to explain that although the students in the comparison group had some opportunity to create questions or frequency adverb statements during their activities, it was not necessary for students to produce the types of questions and statements used in the tests. Secondly, the experimental group practiced the structures exactly as they were on the tests and received very similar instructions. It appears as if the instruction was designed to mirror the tests used. Without knowing more detail about the instruction in the focus on form group and with an obvious connection between the tests and the instruction in the focus on forms group, it is difficult to say that these lessons were a fair comparison. Additionally, Sheen states that because these tests were not free production tests, it is unclear if the students in the focus on forms group were able to truly produce questions and statements on their own. It may be due to the frequent and intense practice of the same style of questions and statements that they memorized stock phrases to create their answers on the tests.
The studies discussed in the previous three sections have all investigated the effectiveness of different teaching approaches in the L2 classroom. Overall, it has been found that focus on form instruction is more effective than focus on meaning instruction in helping learners make immediate improvement in these structures. This focus on form instruction has been shown to be most beneficial with structures that have a strong link between form and meaning. Additionally, these studies have shown that the improvement made is not short-lived but can be maintained over time. There have not been many studies which compare focus on form to the more traditional focus on forms approach, and there is a need for further investigations to discover if there is indeed a better approach between the two.

**Instruction of Direct Object Pronouns**

**First Noun Strategy**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the First Noun Strategy states that learners make the assumption that the first noun in a given sentence is the subject of that sentence, thus creating a SVO word order. Studies by VanPatten (1984), Lee (1987), and Houston (1997) have examined this phenomenon and found that learners frequently apply the First Noun Strategy in sentences with clitics.

VanPatten (1984) is a descriptive study in which 59 adult students from first- and second-semester university Spanish courses interpreted sentences that used both direct and indirect objects. In order to evaluate the interpretation strategies of the participants, VanPatten used a picture identification test. Participants heard a sentence in Spanish containing clitics and then identified the one picture out of a four picture set that matched the meaning of the sentence. The results showed no statistically significant difference between the first- and second-semester students, and revealed that students chose to
interpret OVS sentences as SVO sentences from 35% to 70% of the time, signifying that learners frequently employ the First Noun Strategy when evaluating L2 input. Additionally, VanPatten found that direct object pronouns were significantly more likely to be misinterpreted as subjects than indirect object pronouns. He suggests that this higher likelihood of misinterpretation is due to the fact that the direct object pronouns can have a wider variety in meaning than the indirect object pronouns.

Lee (1987) also researched the tendency for learners to use the First Noun Strategy with 22 beginning learners. A set of eight compound sentences containing a direct object pronoun was used to examine learners’ interpretation strategies. In these sentences an antecedent was introduced in the beginning part of the sentence and the corresponding direct object pronoun was used in the second part of the sentence. In this case, all direct object pronouns were sentence internal as opposed to sentence initial as in VanPatten (1984). Learners saw the sentences one at a time and had 10 seconds to read the sentence and then determine the antecedent of the direct object pronoun used. Lee’s results show that direct object pronouns were misinterpreted as subjects from 27% to 73% of the time, which is similar to VanPatten’s findings. Additionally, Lee finds that plural pronouns were misinterpreted 66% of the time while singular pronouns were misinterpreted 38% of the time. This difference was found to be statistically significant. In considering the gender of the pronouns and the subjects, Lee does not find a significant difference between sentences that had the same gender for both and sentences that had different genders. He does, however, find a significant difference in singular pronoun and subject sentences of the same gender. In these sentences learners interpreted the pronoun as the
subject 46% of the time versus 30% of the time for different gender singular sentences. Again, this study shows evidence that the First Noun Strategy is used often by learners.

Houston (1997) also investigated the First Noun Strategy in a study with 28 adult students in their fourth semester of Spanish. More than just describing the way in which learners process direct object pronoun sentences, the goal of this study was to determine if background information could influence the propensity for learners to use the First Noun Strategy. The students’ course regularly used instructional videos that showed scenes with repeating characters. Students were familiar with both the characters and the storylines that had been presented. For the test, Houston wrote two matching sets of direct object sentences, one set used the names and storylines from the videos; the other set used invented names. The general hypothesis was that students would better interpret direct object pronouns in the sentences using the video characters because of the background knowledge they possessed. During the test, learners heard a sentence and then filled in a subject blank and an object blank surrounding a verb. The verb was given in English to further determine how the learners interpreted the sentences and to discourage simple dictation of the sentences. Results showed that for the sentences with the background information learners had an average of 72% for correct interpretations. For the sentences without the background knowledge, the average was 52% for correct interpretation. With the high percentage of accurate interpretation, these results demonstrate that background knowledge can diminish the tendency to use the First Noun Strategy. Additionally, the results show that the participants did not rely on the First Noun Strategy in the absence of background knowledge as heavily as the participants in Lee (1987) and VanPatten (1984) did. Houston suggests that the intermediate level of his
participants may have been a factor, and that it is possible that as learners progress in the 
L2 they do not rely as heavily on the First Noun Strategy.

**Processing Instruction and Clitics**

VanPatten’s (1983) development of Processing Instruction (PI) in order to help
students avoid the First Noun strategy has led to several studies involving PI and Spanish 
clitics. One such study is VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) that compares a traditional 
instruction approach to PI for beginning learners of Spanish. The participants in this 
study were 80 adult students from a third-semester university Spanish course. The course 
normally used the Natural Approach. Participants were divided into three groups, a 
traditional instruction (TI) group, a PI group, and a control group that received no 
instruction.

Prior to instruction, all groups completed a pretest. Four versions of the test were 
created and distributed so that groups would never repeat the same test. For example one 
group completed version A for the pretest, and version B for the first posttest, while 
another group completed version B for the pretest and version C for the first posttest, and 
so on. The pretest was used to determine the level of accuracy the participants had for 
interpreting and producing direct object pronouns. Any participant that was shown to be 
at a significantly higher level of accuracy was eliminated from the data base. For the 
instruction, the TI group received an explanation of the direct object pronoun paradigm. 
After this explanation, they completed oral activities that used the direct object pronouns 
in mechanical, meaningful, and communicative ways. The focus of this instruction was 
production of the pronouns and at no time did these learners interpret the meaning of 
input with a direct object pronoun. The PI group received an explanation of third-person 
direct object pronouns as well as information about processing strategies including the
First Noun Strategy. These learners then completed sentence interpretation activities using sentences with direct object pronouns from an instructional packet designed for the study. Unlike the traditional instruction group, these learners did not practice production of direct object pronouns. After the two-day instruction, three posttests were administered, the first, immediately after instruction, the second, a week after instruction, and the third, one month after instruction. These tests had an interpretation section, a distracter section, and a production section. For the interpretation section participants heard a sentence in Spanish and had to choose between two pictures to represent the meaning that was heard. Five sentences were OVS with a noun as the O, five sentences were OVS with a clitic pronoun as the O, and five were distracter SVO sentences. The distracter section of the test was used to separate the two parts of the test using direct object pronouns and to allow participants to clear their working memory after the interpretation task. The distracter task consisted of five free response questions in Spanish. The production section used five critical items and five distracters and was a sentence completion task. The participants saw two pictures and completed a sentence that accompanied the pictures. For the critical items the pictures were in sequence to create a story, but for the distracters the pictures were unrelated to each other. Vocabulary used in the tests was from the course, but to avoid any potential vocabulary problems, participants were given a vocabulary familiarization sheet. The pretest was administered before treatment and two versions of the test, A and B, were assigned randomly to the classes. The treatment lasted for two days, there was no homework assigned and participants left their instructional packets with the instructor between the two days. Immediately following treatment on the second day, the first posttest was
administered and classes that completed test A for the pretest, now completed test B and vice versa.

Results of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) show that the control group, which received no instruction, remained at the same level of accuracy in all tests. In the first posttest the PI group significantly improved in their interpretation of direct object pronoun sentences and maintained this level of improvement in the additional posttests. The TI group did not show a significant improvement in interpretation on any of the posttests. For the production activities on the posttests, the TI group significantly improved as expected and maintained their level of improvement on subsequent posttests. The surprising part of this study was that the PI group also significantly improved in their production of the direct object pronouns and maintained this level over the second and third posttests. This level of improvement was equal to that of the TI group, thus showing that overall PI is more beneficial to learners than traditional approaches because it enabled learners to improve in both production and interpretation.

Another study that considers the effects of PI with direct object pronouns is VanPatten and Sanz (1995) a study that tested PI with more communicative production activities. For this study, participants were 44 adult students in a third-semester university Spanish course. The participants were divided into a PI group that used the same design for PI as VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), and a control group that received no instruction. Prior to instruction all participants completed a pretest to determine that they were all at the same level, and scored below a 60 percent. This pretest consisted of an interpretation task of twenty direct object pronoun sentences. The posttest used in this study was more intricate, consisting of the same interpretation task as the pretest and
three different oral and written production tasks. The first production task was a sentence completion task similar to the one used in VanPatten and Cadierno. The second production task was a structured interview about seven pictures. The third production task was a video narration task and required participants to first view a video segment and then describe what they had seen. The video was about seven actions involving the same direct object throughout. Participants viewed the video twice before giving their description. There was only one posttest completed immediately after instruction.

Results for VanPatten and Sanz (1995) show that overall the PI group improved significantly on both the interpretation test and the production tests, with the exception of the oral video narration. Additionally, the PI group outperformed the control group, which did not show improvement. Results also show that mode (written or oral) was a significant factor for the sentence completion and the video narration production tests for the PI group. For the written tests, the scores for the sentence completion task were significantly higher than the scores for the video narration. For the oral tests, scores in for the sentence completion improving significantly but scores for the video narration did not. Mode was not significant for the structured interview, and VanPatten and Sanz point out that although the PI group improved significantly, the mean scores were low, indicating an overall nontarget like use.

To further explore the findings of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996) completed a partial-reduplication of that study. In the new study, 59 high school students received different versions of the types of instruction used in the 1993 study. Students were divided into three instructional groups. The first group received a grammar explanation of the direct object pronouns and explanations of
processing strategies, but did not complete any activities either processing or producing direct object pronouns. The second group completed processing activities using structured input, but did not receive any type of explanation of the grammar nor processing strategies. The third group received the same PI instruction as VanPatten and Cadierno’s PI group. All instructional materials and tests were identical to VanPatten and Cadierno. The results show that in the interpretation part of the tests, all groups showed improvement, however the PI group and the structured-input activities group significantly outperformed the explanation group. There was no statistically significant difference between the PI group and the structured-input activities group for interpretation. In the production test, the PI group performed significantly better than the explanation group. The mean scores of the PI group were also higher than the mean scores for the structured-input activities group, but the difference between the two was not statistically significant. Additionally, there was no statistical significance between the structured-input activities group and the explanation group. These findings suggest that within PI, the completion of processing activities using structured input is more fundamental than the explanation of the linguistic form.

VanPatten and Fernández (2004) also investigated the use of Processing Instruction on the Spanish direct object pronouns. VanPatten and Fernández state that, overall, research has shown a positive effect for focusing learners’ attention to grammatical form during instruction. It is however, unclear as to what extent this instruction has on learners’ L2 grammars. It may be that results are only temporary and the increased levels of particular skills that appear after instruction may not carry over into long-term skills. In these previous studies, positive effects were found for Processing Instruction with
learners performing better at interpretation tasks of direct object pronouns than learners from traditional instruction groups. These studies also show that learners from the Processing Instruction groups were able to produce direct object pronouns after instruction, even though this skill was not practiced during the treatment. In this study, VanPatten and Fernández wished to discover the long-term effects of this type of form-focused instruction both in interpretation tasks and production tasks of the direct object pronouns. The study was a replication of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) but with a larger period of time between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest.

The participants of VanPatten and Fernández (2004) came from nine third-semester university Spanish courses. The total number of participants was 45. These participants were all part of the treatment group. VanPatten and Fernández determined that a comparison or control group was not necessary for this study because the original study of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) was able to show that a group that received no instruction did not show any improvement from the pretest to the posttests, including the delayed posttest.

The instruction for this study was the same as for VanPatten and Cadierno, consisting of the same instructional packets and treatment with three components: explicit information about direct object pronouns, explicit information about wrong processing strategies (the first-noun strategy), and structured input processing activities. The pretests and posttests used in VanPatten and Fernández were also the same tests employed in VanPatten and Cadierno. The pretest was administered before treatment and as in VanPatten and Cadierno two versions of the test, A and B, were assigned randomly to the classes. The treatment lasted for two days, again there was no homework assigned
and participants left their instructional packets with the instructor between the two days. Immediately following treatment on the second day, the first posttest was administered and classes completing the other version of the test. Eight months later, the delayed posttest was administered. For this posttest all classes completed test A, it was determined that test familiarity would not be an issue due to the long period of time between tests. The researchers were able to ensure that no additional instruction or feedback was given on the object pronouns in the time period between the immediate and delayed posttests because one of the researchers was the director of the language program for these classes making it possible to have a controlled curriculum.

Results show that participants significantly improved from the pretest to the immediate posttest for the interpretation task. Between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest there was a decline in scores but this level still remained higher at the time of the delayed posttest than at the time of the pretest. A repeated-measures ANOVA found a statistically significant effect for time, therefore showing a positive effect for instruction. A post hoc test yielded significant differences between the pretest and the immediate posttest, between the pretest and the delayed posttest, and between the two posttests. These findings show that even with the decline between the two posttests, participants still performed significantly better in the delayed posttest than in the pretest. For the production task, similar results were found with immediate improvement in the first posttest and a decline in the second posttest. A repeated-measures ANOVA found a statistically significant effect for time. The post-hoc test then yielded significant differences between the pretest and the immediate posttest, between the pretest and the delayed posttest, and between the two posttests. Again, these findings show evidence of
a positive effect for instruction both in the short-term, due to the significant improvement in the immediate posttest, and in the long-term, because there was still significant improvement in the delayed posttest over the original test.

These results visibly demonstrate a positive effect for Processing Instruction of direct object pronouns. Learners who received Processing Instruction made significant improvement in their understanding of input with direct object pronouns and significant improvement in the production of output using direct object pronouns. Similar to the aforementioned studies of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), VanPatten and Sanz (1995), and VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996), this increase in targetlike output is particularly remarkable because the learners did not practice producing output during the treatment. In addition to making improvement after treatment, this study shows that the learners were able to maintain some of the knowledge gained after an eight month period. Since the curriculum had been controlled or “sanitized” from additional direct object pronoun study, the levels of knowledge shown in the delayed posttest can only be ascribed to the information acquired from the Processing Instruction treatment. VanPatten and Fernández propose that the decline in scores seen between the posttests may imply that without additional input containing direct object pronouns learners may have been unable to maintain the higher level of improvement.

Based on the above studies it can be seen that learners respond well to form-focused instruction of the Spanish direct object pronouns. In these studies, the main focus has been on fostering the correct ways to process input and eliminating the incorrect processing strategies that learners often apply. Although PI is not used in this study, it is beneficial to see that learners have had a positive reaction to at least some type
of instruction of the direct object pronouns because this indicates that instruction can assist learners in acquiring this structure. Additionally since there are two form-focused approaches that will be used in this study, it can be speculated that learners may also respond positively to these instructional approaches.

**Conclusion**

As the above discussion has shown, there is positive evidence that focus on form instruction is beneficial to beginning L2 learners. When compared to the communicative approach, research has given support to the hypothesis that focus on form within meaning-based activities is more helpful to learners than the meaning-based activities on their own. There are not many studies that have compared focus on form instruction to the more traditional focus on forms instruction, necessitating a need for these types of studies. In the current study that compares all three approaches together, it will be advantageous to see which approach, if any, better assists L2 learners. In order to compare these three approaches, research has shown that a linguistic element that has a strong link between form and meaning will be most useful. The Spanish direct object pronouns are known to have this strong connection, and from the large body of work by VanPatten et al. it can be seen that learners respond well to form-focused instruction of these pronouns. In these studies, the main focus of the instruction is on the processing of input and avoiding potential problems. The question remains if learners are able to benefit from other types of form-focused instruction, particularly instruction that occurs with activities that are both meaning-based and production tasks.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this section the methodology used to conduct this study will be explained. Initially, the goals of this study and the research questions used will be discussed. Next, a description of the participants will be given. After that, the procedures will be described, as will the test design. Next, the instructional day for each instructional approach will be explained in detail. Finally, a description of the data analysis will be provided.

Research Questions

As stated previously, the main goals of this study are to compare students’ accuracy in using direct object pronouns after receiving one of three types of instruction in this area: focus on form, focus on meaning, or focus on forms. The specific research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. Between the three approaches (focus on meaning, focus on form, or focus on forms) is there a more effective approach for teaching the Spanish direct object pronouns to beginning learners?
2. For each approach, is there a significant level of improvement in direct object pronoun production immediately following instruction?
3. For each approach, if there is a significant level of improvement immediately following instruction, is this level of improvement maintained three weeks after instruction?

Participants

Three sections of the University of Florida’s Elementary Spanish Review and Progress (course number SPN 1115) participated in the study. Elementary Spanish Review and Progress is a three credit hour undergraduate course designed for students
who have had an introduction to Spanish in high school but are still considered to be at the beginning level. A focus on meaning approach is normally used in this course. The principal investigator was the instructor for two of these sections and a second instructor taught the third section. This instructor participated in three one-hour meetings with the principal investigator in order to prepare the lesson plan for the instructional day and testing procedures for the pre- and posttests. The students that participated in this study were all native speakers of English. These students did not have regular contact with Spanish outside of the classroom. Any student who was absent on the day of the Pretest, Posttest I, Posttest II, and/or the instruction day was eliminated from the study. In total 51 students attended all sessions and constitute the final number of participants.

These three sections of Spanish classes were assigned at random to three instructional approaches: a focus on form group, a focus on meaning group, and a focus on forms group. Due to this random assignment, the principal investigator was the instructor for the focus on meaning and focus on form groups. The second instructor taught the focus on forms group. The focus on meaning group was designed to be a comparison group for the other two groups because they continued with their normal class plan and type of instruction. In the focus on form group there were 19 participating students. In the focus on meaning group there were 18 participating students. In the focus on forms group there were 14 participating students. All three groups followed the same study plan: a pretest, an instructional day, a posttest I, and a posttest II.

In order to best evaluate student response to the three different instructional approaches in a classroom setting, a quasi-experimental study that used students from predetermined university classes to create the subject groups was chosen. Rather than
create artificial classes using volunteer subjects or subjects chosen at random, the researcher felt it was best to use real classes because the students would be in a familiar setting. In this way, the researcher hoped to better ensure that the students would participate in the study’s activities in the same manner as other classroom activities. To further ensure this familiar setting, the classes that participated were taught by the regular instructor for that section during all aspects of the study.

**Procedures**

The pretest was administered first during regular class meeting time prior to any instruction of the direct object pronouns. Students were instructed to complete the tests anonymously, using only a number to identify the test. The course instructor maintained a list of students and the number of their test. The number list was used only to ensure proper matching of all three testing components. The pretest was used to determine to what extent the participants were already familiar with and skilled in the use of direct object pronouns in Spanish, since they could have had prior exposure in their high school classes. It was decided that any student who scored higher than 60% on either task on the pretest would be eliminated from the study to ensure that the results obtained here could be correlated to the instruction technique the students received. However, there were no students that scored higher than 60%; the average score was 16% for the sentence completion task and 2% for the question task.

The participants received instruction on the direct object pronouns during the class meeting time after the pre-test. All groups received instruction and then completed in-class activities geared toward the type of instruction. More information regarding specific teaching and practice design will be discussed below. The class syllabus allots only one day of instruction for direct object pronouns, so it was determined that it would be
unrealistic to incorporate additional treatment merely for the purposes of this study. Since
the aim of the study is to determine the most effective teaching techniques for students, it
is important to carry out the experiment under normal pedagogical circumstances.

Following the instruction day, Posttest I was administered during the next class meeting
time. Posttest II was administered three weeks later during regular class meeting time.
Between the first and second posttests the students did not receive any additional
instruction specifically targeting direct object pronouns; however, they did complete
activities from both their workbooks and listening-activity manuals that focused on direct
object pronouns. During this time, the students also took an exam with a direct object
pronoun section. Additionally, the students were continually exposed to direct object
pronouns as they occurred in normal classroom input in both spoken and written contexts.
However, these activities were uniform for all groups.

Test Design

Three versions of a written test (Quiz A, Quiz B, and Quiz C)\(^1\) were created to be
used as the pre- and posttests. The focus on forms instruction group completed Quiz A as
the pretest, Quiz B as posttest I, and Quiz C as posttest II. The focus on meaning
instruction group completed Quiz B as the pretest, Quiz C as posttest I, and Quiz A as
posttest II. Finally the Focus on Form instruction group completed Quiz C as the pretest,
Quiz A as posttest I, and Quiz B as posttest II.

Each of the three tests consisted of two separate activities: a lower communicative
value activity and a higher communicative value activity. The lower communicative

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\(^1\) I chose to call them quizzes instead of tests so as not to confuse students with respect to grading. Tests
consisted of 40% of the final grade and I wanted to assure them that these tests were not included in that
grade.
value activity consisted of five fill-in-the-blank sentences with the instructions to fill in the blanks appropriately to complete the sentence. This activity was directly based on the example tests used in Camps (1997). Four of the five sentences required the student to conjugate a verb in parenthesis and add a direct object pronoun where necessary. For example, sentence 1 from Quiz A is *Pilar necesita su libro y __________ (buscar)* por *la casa* (“Pilar needs her book and __________ (to look for) throughout the house”), which requires the student to complete the sentence with *lo busca* (“she looks for it”).

One of the five sentences was used as a distracter and did not require a direct object. For example, sentence 3 from Quiz B is *Nina y Pablo van a la playa y __________ (nadar)* en *el océano* (“Nina and Pablo go to the beach and __________ (to swim) in the ocean”), which requires the answer *nadan* (“they swim”). This activity is a mechanical activity requiring that a student conjugate the verb correctly and provide the correct pronoun based on the antecedent in the beginning of the sentence, and was therefore considered to have a lower communicative value: there is only one possible answer and there is no opportunity for self-expression on behalf of the student.

The higher communicative value activity consisted of four open-ended questions with instructions to answer the questions by writing a complete sentence. This activity was based on activities from the course exams and homework assignments from the workbook. All of the questions contained a direct object, giving the students the option to use the direct object pronouns. For example question 3 from Quiz C is *¿Dónde haces la tarea normalmente?* (“Where do you normally do your homework?”) and a possible answer is *La hago en la biblioteca* (“I do it in the library”). This activity is considered slightly more communicative than the fill-in-the-blank portion of the test because it
allows the student more opportunity to express his/her own ideas. It is not, however, a truly communicative activity, such as free-writing composition would be, because the students are limited to only a few possible responses and must still use the given antecedent.

**Instructional Day**

All instructional groups followed a similar plan on the day of instruction which was the class period following the Pretest. Specific details of each group’s class are presented below, while the general plan is presented here. The class began with a general oral activity using vocabulary from the current chapter as a warm-up to the class. After completing this activity, the instructor led the group through a PowerPoint presentation about direct object pronouns. The PowerPoint presentation was created by the researcher and was unique for each group, having been designed specifically to follow the approach for each group. Next, the groups completed both oral and written activities using direct object pronouns; these activities were tailored for each group in order to follow that particular group’s approach. Finally, each group received a homework assignment to continue practice of direct object pronouns. In the three classes, homework was routinely given for each section in the textbook. Additionally, in the focus on form and focus on meaning groups the need to complete homework helped as a motivator to complete the in-class assignment. For these reasons, the researcher chose to have homework assigned to the classes, but this homework was designed based on the approach used in each class to ensure that the students completed an appropriate activity. It was an oversight that this homework was not collected because it could have been analyzed to see more detail about learners’ production skills. The textbook used in all three groups was *Puntos de Partida* written by Knorre, Dorwick, Pérez-Gironés, Glass, and Villarreal (2004). Prior to
the instructional day, all students were expected to read over the grammar explanation of direct object pronouns in the textbook.

**Corrective Feedback**

A main difference in the three approaches used in this study was the type of corrective feedback that each group received. In this section, the types of corrective feedback for each instructional group will be explained in order to see one of the key differences between these teaching approaches.

To stipulate the types of corrective feedback to be given, the researcher used the definitions of corrective feedback from Lyster and Ranta (1997), along with the definitions of feedback in the approaches in Long (1991). The focus on forms group received feedback on errors that occurred with all grammatical forms, including but not limited to, direct object pronouns. This feedback was explicit, clearly indicating to the learner that a mistake had been made, and providing the correct form.

In the focus on meaning group, in order to foster a better environment for fluid and unbroken communication, the instructor did not make corrections or interrupt students unless there was a serious breakdown in communication. In these cases, the students could not make themselves understood by their classmates and needed the instructor’s help to be able to continue with the activity. This means however, that if the students made errors but were still understood by their classmates, the instructor did not correct the error or point out that an error had been made. When corrective feedback was needed, the instructor provided implicit feedback in recasts or prompts. In a recast the correct form is always given to the learner, the instructor may either repeat or ask a question with the student’s phrase but with the correct form. For example if a student was attempting to get some cookies, *las galletas*, which is a plural feminine noun and
said “Por favor, los quiero.” (Please, I want them) the instructor might ask, “¿Las quieres?” (Do you want them?) in order to draw the student’s attention to the need for the feminine pronoun las (them). For a prompt, unlike a recast, the instructor would not offer the correct form, but indicate that there was a problem through either a verbal clue or possibly a non-verbal gesture. Using the above example, after the student’s error the instructor might ask “¿los?” (them) as a way to indicate that there is a problem with the pronoun. For a non-verbal gesture prompt, the instructor might make a puzzled expression to indicate that there is a problem.

For the focus on form group, corrective feedback was given on all errors with the direct object pronouns, any other grammatical errors were ignored by the instructor. These corrections were implicit and were given in both recasts and prompts.

**Instructional Groups**

In this section, a detailed description of each group’s instructional day will be given as well as a discussion of the style of the approaches that were used and the activities that were chosen for each approach.

**Focus on Forms Group**

**Pre-activity.** The focus on forms group began their class with a choral repetition exercise from *Puntos de Partida: Supplementary Materials* (2004). This exercise focused on the vowel sounds in Spanish and used vocabulary words from the chapter; it did not involve any direct object pronouns. The instructor read each word aloud and the students repeated the word after the instructor.

**PowerPoint presentation.** Following this warm-up exercise, the group saw their PowerPoint presentation. The intention of this group’s presentation was to offer a detailed and thorough grammatical explanation of direct object pronouns. By explicitly
explaining all details of the grammar and reviewing other aspects of Spanish grammar, such as grammatical gender, the instructor maintained a focus on forms approach to grammar teaching. In addition to keeping with a focus on forms approach, the pronouns were discussed in an abstract manner, lacking context or meaning for the most part. The content of this presentation will be summarized below; the slides themselves may be viewed in Appendix A.

This group’s presentation consisted of three slides, beginning with the paradigm of direct object pronouns showing both the Spanish and English pronouns. The instructor overtly reviewed each pronoun and its English counterpart. For the direct object pronouns in the third person, the instructor reminded students of the presence of grammatical gender on Spanish nouns and pointed out the importance of gender and number and the need for agreement between the noun antecedent and the pronoun. The second slide explained that pronouns may substitute for nouns and gave two examples of pronouns in a question with a direct object and two possible answers to the question: one repeating the noun and the other using the pronoun. The instructor explicitly explained the substitution of the noun with a direct object pronoun. The instructor also reiterated the importance of gender and number agreement between the antecedent and the pronoun. The third slide explained pronoun placement in Spanish for verb phrases containing a single conjugated verb and those that contain two verbs (such as the present progressive). Again, the instructor explicitly explained the placement of these pronouns. In addition to the placement, the instructor also reviewed the standard accent rules for Spanish and the need for a written accent mark in the gerund in the case of a pronoun attaching to that gerund.
In-class activities. The in-class activities used for this group were all chosen because they were essentially drill-style mechanical activities requiring the students to produce the correct direct object pronoun. In the first two in-class activities there was only one possible correct answer for each question. In the third in-class activity and the homework assignment, the students had more opportunity to express their own ideas beyond one correct answer, however, they were still restricted to only one correct direct object pronoun.

After the PowerPoint presentation, the focus on forms group completed three activities using direct object pronouns. The first activity was a brief instructor-to-student exercise from the textbook. It consisted of matching direct object pronouns with a subject pronoun or proper name. For example, 1. los (them) matched to c. Pedro y Carolina (Pedro and Carolina). This activity was completed orally with the instructor reading the pronoun aloud and the students giving the answer.

The next activity was also from the textbook and consisted of changing two sentences, both using the same direct object, to one sentence with the direct object and its corresponding pronoun. An example from this activity is the model given to students in (1) from Puntos de Partida (2004, p. 201):

(1) Sample sentence from the Focus on Forms second activity…

El camarero trae el menú. Lola lee el menú. →
El camarero trae el menú y Lola lo lee.

The waiter brings the menu. Lola reads the menu. →
The waiter brings the menu and Lola reads it.

Students completed this activity orally in small groups. While students were working, the instructor circulated around the room and responded to student questions.
When the students had finished, the instructor asked for the answers and then wrote student responses on the board explicitly correcting any errors as they arose.

The final activity completed in class was an individual written activity from *Puntos de Partida: Supplementary Materials* (2004). This activity consisted of four questions with the instructions to answer the questions using direct object pronouns. An example from this activity is given in (2) from *Puntos de Partida: Supplementary Materials* (2004, p. 98):

(2) Sample question and answer from the Focus on Forms third activity

¿Con quién practicas el español?  With whom do you practice Spanish?
Lo practico con mi amigo.  I practice it with my friend.

As with the previous activity, the instructor circulated around the room and responded to student questions while they were working and corrected all errors as they were heard. Again as a follow-up to the activity, the instructor asked for possible answers and wrote student responses on the board, correcting their errors.

Unfortunately, it was discovered after treatment had been given, that these activities were inadvertently very similar to the tasks on the tests used to evaluate learner progress. Therefore, the test performance of the focus on forms group may have been additionally influenced due to this oversight.

**Out-of-class activity.** For homework, the students were assigned a written assignment similar to the last in-class activity with questions containing a direct object. In these questions the direct object was underlined and students were instructed to answer using direct object pronouns.

**Focus on Meaning Group**

**Pre-activity.** The focus on meaning group also began the class with an oral activity. This activity consisted of three open-ended personal questions about the food
vocabulary from the current chapter; they were not related to direct object pronouns. These questions were written on the board by the instructor. The students took turns asking and answering the questions with a partner. As a follow-up activity the instructor posed the questions to the class and took volunteer responses to demonstrate possible answers.

**PowerPoint presentation.** After this activity, the group saw their PowerPoint presentation and was instructed to open their textbooks to the direct object pronoun explanation. In doing so, the students had access to the pronoun paradigm and the book’s English-written explanation. Again, all sides may be seen in Appendix A.

The first slide of this presentation consisted of three examples of questions containing a direct object and an answer that repeated the direct object and one that used the direct object pronoun. The direct object and the corresponding pronoun were colored in blue to highlight the connection between the two elements. With these examples, the students were able to see the grammar point in a conversational context and had the opportunity to make the connection between the direct object and the pronoun without having an explicit grammar explanation. The second slide consisted of a different set of examples of more complex questions and responses using the direct object pronouns. The first example set used a question with an infinitive verb and had the two possible responses that demonstrate the placement possibilities of the direct object pronoun. In these examples, only the pronouns were highlighted in blue in order to emphasize the placement of the pronouns rather than the connection with the direct object. As with the previous examples, an explicit explanation of pronoun placement was not used; instead the conversational context allowed the students to see this placement as it would occur in
natural speech. The third slide consisted of a set of compound sentences describing a party. All of these sentences used a direct object in the beginning of the sentence and its corresponding direct object pronoun in the second part of the sentence. The direct object and the pronoun were highlighted in blue to once again point out their connection to each other. As before, the students did not receive an explicit grammar explanation of these sentences, but were able to see how pronouns could be used in another type of situation. Throughout the presentation, direct grammar points were only addressed if students posed a direct grammar question to the instructor. For example after seeing and hearing the sentence *Yo cocino un pastel y lo traigo a la fiesta* a student asked “Does *lo* mean *the cake*?” and the instructor responded that indeed *lo* does refer to *el pastel* or “the cake” in that sentence.

**In-class activities.** The activities chosen for the focus on meaning group were all activities that allowed students to focus on meaning while using the direct object pronouns that they had just seen in the input (and had read about the night before). In the first activity, the students were more restricted to what they could say and stuck to a more predictable speech pattern. However, since they were trying to obtain what they thought was the best meal in this activity, it was their own ideas and requests that drove the activity, not simply a need to use direct object pronouns. The other two activities of discussing and writing up plans for a party were more communicative because they offered more of an opportunity for students to express their own thoughts in Spanish. In these activities the students had to create the language they wanted to use all on their own and they needed to make the decision to use direct object pronouns or not. In this way,

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2 The direct object and pronoun are shown in bold here for printing purposes, but were colored blue in the actual slide.
the students were able to use more realistic language that could transpire outside of the classroom.

Following the PowerPoint presentation, the focus on meaning group completed two activities using the direct object pronouns. The first activity consisted of two parts: one that was instructor-to-student and a second that was student-to-student. For this activity, the instructor had a collection of plastic food items, all of which was vocabulary from the current chapter. For the first part of the activity, the students had to obtain food from the instructor. The instructor would first announce the food item and then ask who wanted it using the appropriate direct object pronoun. For example:

(3) Sample statement and question from the instructor for in-class activity
Instructor: “Tengo un pollo. ¿Quién lo quiere?”
“I have a chicken. Who wants it?”

As students raised their hands, the instructor asked them directly if they wanted the food item. Students were allowed to answer as they wanted either with the name of the food item or with a direct object pronoun. As long as the correct meaning was conveyed, the student received the food item. There was some prompting by the instructor to encourage complete sentences. Additionally, the instructor made sure that each student had at least one food item by the end of the activity.

For the second part of the activity, the students had to interact with their classmates and try to obtain different food items with the intention of creating the best possible meal for themselves. In order to get an additional item a student would need to ask a classmate first what food they had, ¿Qué comida tienes? (“What food do you have?”) and then they would request the food item using either a direct object pronoun or the direct object itself “Por favor, lo quiero” (“I want it, please) or “Por favor, quiero el pollo” (“I want the
chicken, please”). The students were instructed to give away any food item if asked. In order to help the students understand this exchange, the instructor completed a few food transactions with a couple of students in front of the class using direct object pronouns. After the students had the general idea, they began their own food transactions, during which, the instructor circulated throughout the class, responding to questions. As a follow-up to this activity, the instructor asked students what they had collected and why they thought it was a good meal. After this, the instructor requested the items back using direct object pronouns.

The next activity for the focus on meaning group was a student-to-student writing and speaking activity. The activity was to plan a dinner party for the class with a partner. First, on their own, the students made a brief list of items they would need for the party. Then the students pretended to call their partner and discussed plans for the party. In this way, the students needed to talk about their ideas but could not just show their list to their partner. As part of the directions for the activity, the instructor modeled some possibilities for the party plans utilizing direct object pronouns to once again demonstrate how direct object pronouns can be used in everyday speech. In addition, during the planning students were told to take notes for their homework. As with the previous activity, while students were working together, the instructor circulated and answered questions as needed.

Out-of-class activity. For their written homework assignment, the students had to write up their party plans in paragraph form. While giving the instructions for the assignment, the instructor also gave a few model sentences to guide the students. The sentences contained both direct objects and the corresponding direct object pronouns.
However, in the directions the students were not explicitly told to use direct object pronouns. The motivation for assigning homework for the focus on meaning group was to motivate the students to actively participate in the final in-class activity. The researcher believed that if the students knew that they would need the information from that activity for a homework assignment, they would try their very best during that activity.

**Focus on Form Group**

The focus on form instruction developed for this study was developed primarily from the more proactive focus on form approach described by Doughty and Williams (1998). In this study’s version of focus on form, meaning-based activities were chosen based on their opportunities to use the direct object pronouns. During these meaning-based activities corrective feedback was only given for errors made with the direct object pronouns. Additionally, based on the ideas from Processing Instruction (VanPatten, 1993) of preparing students for possible difficulties with a grammar element, the researcher chose to take the idea of proactive focus on form further and offer the students a brief grammar explanation highlighting difficult features of the direct object pronouns. It is important to note that the version of focus on form used in this study is different from Long’s (1991) original definition.

**Pre-activity.** The focus on form group began with the same oral activity as the focus on meaning group, working with a partner to answer questions that encouraged use of the vocabulary from the current chapter. As with the focus on meaning group, the instructor also followed-up this activity by asking individual students for their possible responses.
**PowerPoint presentation.** This warm-up activity was again followed by a PowerPoint presentation. (All slides may be seen in Appendix A.) Students were also instructed to open their textbooks to the given explanation of direct object pronouns. Altogether, the goal of these slides for the focus on form group was to offer a brief introduction to the direct object pronouns in a meaningful context. The presentation was also intended to highlight the most important and difficult aspects from the grammar reading in the textbook. Building on the idea of a preemptive focus on form (Ellis et al., 2001), the presentation was a way to quickly and efficiently discuss key elements of direct object pronouns in anticipation of student questions and problems. Because the presentation was offered from the instructor, it is impossible to know if these topics were actually lacking in the students’ metalinguistic knowledge of direct object pronouns. However, based on a reading of the textbook grammar description, it can probably be safely assumed that the students did not yet fully understand the use of direct object pronouns and further clarification could only be beneficial to them. As opposed to a very technical and abstract focus on forms grammar explanation of these pronouns, this presentation was meant to refresh the students’ memories and prepare them to use direct object pronouns in the communicative in-class activities.

The first slide for this presentation was the same as the first slide for the focus on meaning group. It shows three sets of examples consisting of a question with a direct object and one response that repeats the direct object and a second that uses the direct object pronoun. The direct object and its corresponding pronoun were highlighted in blue to draw the students’ attention to the connection between the two. In addition, while showing this slide, the instructor actively pointed out this connection. The second slide
in this presentation shows the direct object pronoun paradigm with the English translation. The instructor briefly reviewed the pronouns with the students and pointed out the importance of agreement with gender and number for the third person object pronouns. The third slide contained both examples of direct object pronouns in sentences and statements in English about pronoun placement. Again the pronouns were highlighted in blue to draw students’ attention to the possible placements. When reviewing this slide, the instructor focused on pronoun placement only and did not give an in-depth grammar explanation beyond the two English statements from the slide.

In-class activities. Following this presentation, the focus on form group completed the same two activities using the direct object pronouns as the focus on meaning group, with a few changes to adjust them to a focus on form approach. In this way, the students were focused on completing a meaningful task and not focused on only using a grammar element. The main difference between the activities for the focus on form group and the focus on meaning group was the correction given by the instructor. By offering corrections, the instructor was assisting the students to focus on form while still maintaining a focus on meaning.

Another difference between the two groups occurred in the first activity. In the instructions for the first in-class activity, the focus on form group was explicitly told to use direct object pronouns. The reason for this was to push the students to try the new forms and begin to incorporate them into their interlanguage. If they were allowed to use either the noun or the corresponding pronoun, the researcher believed that there was a strong possibility that the students would continue to use the nouns because they felt comfortable with that structure and knew it to be correct. By completing an activity that
first forced them to use the pronouns, it was hoped that they would become comfortable enough to use them again, when the opportunity arose, without being told to do so. In the second in-class activity and the homework assignment, the students were not explicitly told to use direct object pronouns. The reason for this was to allow the students to recognize the opportunity for direct object pronouns. Again, to help the students do this, the instructor offered corrective feedback to bring the students’ attention back to the direct object pronouns within the context of the activity. Within this activity many of these prompts were preemptive to suggest to students to use direct object pronouns. For example if a student was using the same direct object over and over again instead of the direct object pronoun, the instructor asked if it was possible to avoid that repetitiveness in some way.

**Out-of-class activity.** For their written homework assignment, just as the focus on meaning group, the students had to write up their party plans in paragraph form. In the directions the students were not explicitly told to use direct object pronouns. Again, the purpose of the homework was to inspire the students to participate fully in the final in-class activity.

**Data Analysis**

**Test Scoring**

All tests were scored in the same manner. A completely correct response that used the correct direct object pronoun and correct placement of that pronoun received a score of two points. A response that used a pronoun but still had at least one pronoun error received a score of one point. These responses might include the use of the incorrect direct object pronoun, incorrect pronoun placement, or use of some other type of pronoun (indirect or reflexive). A response that did not use any pronoun received a score of zero
points. A further analysis was carried out on the answers the received one point, in order to determine the nature of the errors learners were committing. These errors will be described further in the results section of this paper. The total score possible on each test was eight points.

**Data Analysis**

The data for the two tests (sentence completion and questions) were analyzed separately due to the difference in test style. The first analysis that was run for each data set was a univariate ANOVA of the pretest scores in order to determine that there was no significant difference between the groups prior to instruction. The second analysis for each data set was a simple means analysis using the raw scores to determine the mean scores for each test and each group. Next a $3 \times 3$ ANOVA was run to determine the effect of time, group, and a possible interaction between time and group. Within this ANOVA, time stands for the three separate tests that were completed throughout the study and group stands for the instructional approach used. If a significant value was found for group, post-hoc tests (Tukey and Scheffe) were run to better understand the significance differences between the groups. To further evaluate the differences between the groups at the time of the specific posttests, a univariate ANOVA was run on both Posttest I and Posttest II. To analyze the groups on an individual basis, a repeated measures ANOVA was run on each group to analyze their progress from the time of the Pretest through the time of Posttest II. Additionally a t-test was run for each group to analyze the differences between the tests for that group.

**Conclusion**

In the methodology section, an explanation of the processes used to conduct this study were discussed and explained. The goals of the study and the three research
questions were first presented to clarify the guiding factors of this study. Next, a description of the participants was given. After that, the procedures and the test design were described to provide a clear picture of how the study was conducted and with what types of testing materials. Next, the instructional day for each approach was explained in detail. This explanation included first, a discussion of the types of correct feedback utilized by each approach, and second an account of each approach’s lesson plan for the instructional day. This account of the lesson plan also included the reasoning for presentation and activity choice for each approach. Finally, an explanation of the data analysis was provided to supply the details of the test scoring and the statistical analyses that were conducted with the data.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

In this section, the results from the three tests used (Pretest, Posttest I, and Posttest II) will be presented. Because of the two different types of tasks on the tests, the results will be presented separately; first the sentence completion data will be presented followed by the question data. Additionally in this section, the errors that occurred when pronouns were produced will be presented and explained.

Sentence Completion Data

A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was first completed for the Pretest for all three instructional groups and did not yield a significant effect for group, $F = 1.532$, df $= 2$, $p = .227$, confirming that at the time of the Pretest the three instructional groups were at the same level of knowledge for the direct object pronouns. The mean scores for the sentence completion data show that participants improved overall from the Pretest to Posttest II and can be seen in Table 1. The total possible score for the sentence completion was 8. Individually, the focus on forms instruction group rose from a Pretest mean of .36 (lowest score 0, highest score 2) to a Posttest I mean of 1.50 (lowest score 0, highest score 8) and rose again to a Posttest II mean of 3.21 (lowest score 0, highest score 8). The focus on form instruction group rose from a Pretest mean of .16 (lowest score 0, highest score 3) to a Posttest I mean of 2.63 (lowest score 0, highest score 8) and declined to a Posttest II mean of 1.63 (lowest score 0, highest score 8). The focus on meaning instruction group made no change from Pretest to Posttest I (for both the mean was .00, all scores 0) and rose to a Posttest II mean of 1.00 (lowest score 0, highest score 8).
Table 1—Mean Scores on the Sentence Completion Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Forms</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.902</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on meaning</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Form</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.419</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A repeated measures 3×3 ANOVA was completed for all data and yielded statistically significant effects for time, (p = .000), group, (p = .049), and time and group, (p = .014). These results can be seen in Table 2. Post-hoc Tukey HSD and Scheffe tests were conducted to determine the precise nature of the effect of instructional group.

Results of these tests do not show a significant difference between the groups and it was therefore necessary to further analyze the posttests on an individual basis. A univariate ANOVA was completed for Posttest I to determine the differences between the instructional groups. The ANOVA yielded a significant effect for group, F = 4.819, df = 2, p = .012. Additionally, post-hoc Tukey HSD and Scheffe tests yielded a statistically significant difference between the focus on form group and the focus on meaning group in favor of the focus on form group, p = .009 and p = .013, respectively. Unlike the ANOVA of Posttest I, a univariate ANOVA of Posttest II did not yield a significant effect for group, F = 2.176, df = 2, p = .125.

Table 2—Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Sentence Completion Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>82.465</td>
<td>41.232</td>
<td>10.681</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54.199</td>
<td>27.099</td>
<td>3.205</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time × Group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51.008</td>
<td>12.752</td>
<td>3.303</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To further see the details of the progress made by the individual groups, each group was analyzed first with a repeated measures ANOVA. After that, in order to determine the progression between tests, post hoc comparisons were done using t-tests. For the
focus on forms group, time was found to have a statistically significant effect, \( F = 4.949, \) df = 2, \( p = .015 \). The t-test for this group yielded a significant improvement between the Pretest and Posttest II, \( p = .009 \). Between the Pretest and Posttest I, no significant improvement was found, \( p = .116 \). Likewise between Posttest I and Posttest II, no significant improvement was found, \( p = .137 \). These results show that the focus on forms group made significant improvement overall from the time of the Pretest to the time of Posttest II, but that there was no immediate significant improvement. For the focus on meaning group, the ANOVA did not yield a significant effect for time but it approached significance, \( F = 3.122, \) df = 2, \( p = .057 \). The t-test for this group also did not yield significant effects for time between any of the tests; there was no statistically significant difference between the Pretest and Posttest I, between Posttest I and Posttest II \( p = .095 \) and between the Pretest and Posttest II \( p = .095 \). These results show that the focus on meaning group did not make significant improvement at any time. For the focus on form group, the ANOVA yielded a significant effect for time, \( F = 6.915, \) df = 2, \( p = .003 \). The t-test for this group showed a significant improvement between the Pretest and Posttest I, \( p = .006 \), and a significant improvement between the Pretest and Posttest II, \( p = .029 \). There was no significant difference found between Posttest I and Posttest II, \( p = .103 \). These results indicate that the focus on form group made an immediate significant improvement and were able to maintain that improvement over time.

**Question Data**

As with the sentence completion data, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was first completed for the Pretest for the instructional groups and did not yield a significant effect for group, \( F = .837, \) df = 2, \( p = .439 \), confirming that at the time of the Pretest the three groups were at the same level of knowledge for the direct object
pronouns. The mean scores for the question data show that participants improved overall and can be seen in Table 3. As with the sentence completion data, the total score possible was 8. Individually, the focus on forms instruction group rose from a Pretest mean of .00 (all scores 0) to a Posttest I mean of 1.50 (lowest score 0, highest score 8) and rose again to a Posttest II mean of 2.14 (lowest score 0, highest score 8). The focus on form instruction group rose from a Pretest mean of .05 (lowest score 0, highest score 1) to a Posttest I mean of .47 (lowest score 0, highest score 7) and declined to a Posttest II mean of .42 (lowest score 0, highest score 6). The focus on meaning instruction group made no change from Pretest to Posttest I (for both the mean was .00, all scores 0) and rose to a Posttest II mean of .89 (lowest score 0, highest score 8).

Table 3—Mean Scores on the Question Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pretest Mean</th>
<th>Pretest SD</th>
<th>Posttest I Mean</th>
<th>Posttest I SD</th>
<th>Posttest II Mean</th>
<th>Posttest II SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Forms</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.849</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>3.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on meaning</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>2.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Form</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>1.611</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>1.427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A repeated measures 3×3 ANOVA was completed for all data and yielded a statistically significant effect for time, (p = .001). There was not a significant effect for group, (p = .080), nor was there a significant interaction between time and group, (p = .101). These results can be seen in Table 4. Since results of the ANOVA did not show a significant effect for group, post-hoc tests were not conducted. However in order to see if there was any effect for group in the individual posttests, they were analyzed on an individual basis. A univariate ANOVA was completed for Posttest I to determine if any differences existed between the instructional groups. The ANOVA did not yield a significant effect for group, F = 2.856, df = 2, p = .067. Similar to the ANOVA of
Posttest I, a univariate ANOVA of Posttest II again did not yield a significant effect for group, $F = 2.072$, df = 2, $p = .137$.

Table 4—Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Question Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32.364</td>
<td>16.182</td>
<td>7.305</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.131</td>
<td>12.566</td>
<td>2.661</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x Group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.718</td>
<td>4.429</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, to examine the details of the progress made by the individual groups, each group was analyzed first with a repeated measures ANOVA. After that, in order to determine the progression between tests, post hocs comparisons were done using t-tests. For the focus on forms group, time was found to have a statistically significant effect, $F = 3.584$, df = 2, $p = .042$. The t-test for this group yielded a significant improvement between the Pretest and Posttest II, $p = .041$. Between the Pretest and Posttest I, no significant improvement was found, $p = .071$. Nor was any significant improvement found between Posttest I and Posttest II, $p = .404$. Like the results from the sentence completion task, these results show that the focus on forms group made significant improvement overall from the time of the Pretest to the time of Posttest II, but that there was no immediate significant improvement. For the focus on meaning group, the ANOVA did not yield a significant effect for time, $F = 2.754$, df = 2, $p = .078$. There was no change between the Pretest and Posttest I and there was no change between Posttest I and Posttest II. These results show that as in the sentence completion task, for the question task the focus on meaning group did not make significant improvement at any time. For the focus on form group, the ANOVA did not yield a significant effect for time, $F = 1.149$, df = 2, $p = .328$. There was no change between the Pretest and Posttest I nor was there a change between Posttest I and Posttest II. Unlike the improvement that
the focus on form group showed with the sentence completion task, these results indicate that the focus on form group made no significant improvement after instruction.

**Error Analysis**

In the three tests combined, there was a total 1224 answers. Of this total, 146 answers used pronouns. However of these 146 uses, there were 36 instances where participants provided a pronoun but it was either used in an erroneous way and/or was an incorrect pronoun. Out of the 36 errors, it was shown that 14 students were the source of these errors. The student with the highest number of errors (ID 54) was responsible for 25% of these errors making 9 out of the total 36.

To further investigate these errors, they were coded by type. Six types of errors were found:

- **position** – errors with the correct direct object pronoun but the wrong position, ex. *Yo necesito mi libro y busco lo*
- **indirect** – errors where the student used an indirect object pronoun in place of a direct object pronoun, ex. *Yo necesito mi libro y le busco*
- **reflexive** – errors where the student used a reflexive pronoun in place of a direct object pronoun, ex. *Yo necesito mi libro y se busco*
- **wrong direct object pronoun** – errors with an incorrect direct object pronoun, ex. *Yo necesito mi libro y la busco*
- **wrong direct object pronoun and position** – errors with both an incorrect direct object pronoun and an incorrect position, ex. *Yo necesito mi libro y busco la*
- **indistinguishable** – an error committed with the Spanish pronouns *me, te, or nos* which can be used as direct object, indirect object, or reflexive pronouns, ex. *Yo busco mi libro y me busco*

The frequency of these errors is given in Table 5. Of the error types, position was the most common error accounting for 44.44% of the errors. However, it is important to point out that all 9 of Student 54’s errors were position errors. The next most common error was wrong direct object pronoun and position accounting for 19.44% of the errors.

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1 The correct response would be *Yo necesito mi libro y lo busco* (I need my book and I look for its)
This was followed by wrong pronoun making up 13.87% of the errors, indirect making up 11.11% of the errors and indistinguishable making up 8.33% of the errors. The least common error was reflexive which appeared only once and accounted for only 2.78% of the errors.

Table 5—Frequency of All Direct Object Pronoun Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Frequency of Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>position</td>
<td>44.44 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun and position</td>
<td>19.44 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun</td>
<td>13.87 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>11.11 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indistinguishable</td>
<td>8.33 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td>2.78 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Errors</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at where errors occurred, it was shown that the majority of the errors happened during the sentence completion task, which accounted for 75% of the errors (27 out of 36). Consequently 25% of the errors (9 out of 36) occurred in the question task.

The frequency of errors for the sentence completion can be seen in Table 6. Of these errors, the most common error was position, making up 51.85% of the errors.

Table 6—Frequency of Direct Object Pronoun Errors in the Sentence Completion Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Frequency of Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>position</td>
<td>51.85 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun and position</td>
<td>14.81 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun</td>
<td>7.41 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>14.81 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indistinguishable</td>
<td>7.41 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td>3.70 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Errors</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of errors in the question task can be seen in Table 7. Of these errors, there was not one common error type but two that made up the majority of the errors: wrong
direct object pronoun, 33.33% of errors (3 out of 9) and wrong direct object pronoun and position, 33.33% of errors (3 out of 9).

Table 7—Frequency of Direct Object Pronoun Errors in the Question Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Frequency of Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>position</td>
<td>22.22 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun and position</td>
<td>33.33 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong direct object pronoun</td>
<td>33.33 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indistinguishable</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td>11.11 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Errors</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, of the 146 answers that used a pronoun, about 25% of these answers were erroneous. There were six types of incorrect pronoun use that were identified within these errors. The most common type of pronoun error was an incorrect pronoun position. These errors occurred more frequently in the sentence completion task than in the question task.

**Conclusion**

In this section, the results from the Pretest, Posttest I, and Posttest II were presented for the two different types of tasks on the tests. For the sentence completion data, a repeated measures 3×3 ANOVA yielded statistically significant effects for time, group, and time and group. When further analyzing the difference between groups, it was found that in Posttest I there was a significant difference between the focus on form group and the focus on meaning group, in favor of focus on form. The groups were also analyzed individually. It was shown that the focus on forms group did not have an immediate significant improvement but did show overall significant improvement. The focus on meaning group did not show any significant improvement. The focus on form group showed immediate significant improvement and was able to maintain this improvement.
over time. For the question data, a repeated measures 3×3 ANOVA yielded statistically
significant effect for time only, meaning that there were no significant differences
between the groups. Only the focus on forms group was able to show overall significant
improvement in the question task. However, as in the sentence completion data, there
was no immediate significant improvement for the focus on forms group. Additionally in
this section, the results of the errors with pronouns were presented and explained. It was
found that approximately one quarter of all answers with a pronoun were erroneous. Of
these erroneous answers, the most common error was position of the pronoun with most
ersors occurring in the sentence completion task. In the following chapter, these findings
will be discussed and analyzed in light of previous work in the comparison of the focus
on forms, focus on meaning and focus on form approaches.
In this section, a discussion of the findings in this study will be presented. As with the presentation of the data in the Results section, the two different testing tasks (sentence completion and question) will be discussed separately. The research questions will be considered again as well as the answers to these questions. In addition to discussing the results, the limitations of the study will also be considered. Finally, to conclude, the implications of this study will be discussed.

**Discussion**

**Sentence Completion Task**

Overall, results show that all three instructional groups made improvement from the Pretest to Posttest II in the sentence completion task. Although the focus on meaning group showed some improvement in Posttest II, they failed to show any immediate improvement after treatment. Additionally, the improvement that was shown was not found to be statistically significant. These results indicate that the treatment the focus on meaning group received had no effect on the learners’ ability to accurately produce direct object pronouns. The focus on meaning group performed in a similar manner to the communicative comparison groups from previous studies by Lightbown and Spada (1990), Spada and Lightbown (1993), Doughty & Varela (1998), and Spada, Lightbown and White (2005). In these studies, the communicative (focus on meaning) instructional groups also did not show any significant improvement after treatment.
Both the focus on forms group and the focus on form group showed considerably more improvement than the focus on meaning group on this task. These findings support the theory that L2 learners will benefit from more attention to form. In the studies by Lightbown and Spada (1990), Spada and Lightbown (1993), Doughty and Varela (1998), Lyster (2004) and Spada, Lightbown and White (2005) the focus on form groups performed significantly better than the communicative (focus on meaning) groups. The results from this study support the findings of the previous studies because the focus on form group was able to perform significantly better than the focus on meaning group immediately following instruction. From these results, it can be clearly seen that a form-focused approach is more effective than a focus on meaning approach for teaching the Spanish direct object pronouns to beginning learners. As hypothesized by Spada, Lightbown and White (2005), focus on form instruction is most effective with grammatical structures that have a high link between form and meaning. Knowing that the Spanish direct object pronouns have this strong connection between form and meaning, the results from this study correlate with this hypothesis. However, due to their similar levels of improvement, it is difficult to clearly state the more effective approach between the focus on forms group and the focus on form group. When considering the first research question for the investigation, we asked if the results demonstrated the existence of a more effective approach for teaching the Spanish direct object pronouns to beginning learners between the three approaches, focus on form, focus on meaning, or focus on forms. The answer to this question for the sentence completion data is not entirely clear because although the results did illustrate the effectiveness of form-focused
teaching overall, it was not clear if there is a more effective approach between focus on form and the more traditional focus on forms.

When considering each group separately, it can be seen that although the focus on forms group improved after the treatment, this improvement was not found to be statistically significant. What was surprising about the focus on forms group was that they continued to improve on Posttest II. This level of improvement was found to be statistically significant when compared to the Pretest. Through discussion with the instructor of the focus on forms group, it was found that he kept to the procedures outlined in the study and did not review or give any additional instruction on the direct object pronouns between Posttest I and Posttest II. Therefore there must be another explanation as to why this improvement occurred. It may be that the treatment had a delayed effect and the students in the focus on forms group needed to have time to process the information they received before being able to fully realize their abilities to produce the direct object pronouns. Another possibility may have to do with the types of activities that were completed during treatment. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the activities that the researcher chose for the focus on forms group were inadvertently very similar to the tasks on the tests. It may be that after having practiced producing the direct object pronouns with the same style of sentence completion, they were better prepared to complete the tests. However, this does not seem very likely for the sentence completion task because their higher level of improvement came three weeks after having practiced the task and not immediately after. A third possibility to consider is that outside factors may have influenced the students in the focus on forms group to show this improvement. In the time following Posttest I, the students were assigned to complete activities from
the workbook and laboratory manual (listening activities) that focused on direct object pronouns. The activities were assigned to all sections of the course and eliminating these activities from the assignment was outside the realm of control for the researcher. These activities are mechanical, with very little communicative value, and are more typical of a focus on forms approach. It may be that by completing additional activities that fit in to the approach that they received, the learners from the focus on forms group were able to improve through this additional practice that was similar to their in-class activities. In addition to the workbook and laboratory manual activities, there was also a course-wide exam given to students between Posttest I and Posttest II. It is possible that learners spent extra time studying and reviewing the direct object pronouns because of this exam and this enabled them to improve on Posttest II. It is however important to note that the other groups shared these last two outside factors with the focus on forms group and may have also been effected in the same way.

Different from the focus on forms group, the focus on form group did show a statistically significant improvement immediately after receiving treatment. Although there was a slight decline in their performance on Posttest II, statistically the focus on form group was able to maintain their level of improvement. The ability for the focus on form instructional group to maintain their improvement has been seen in studies by Doughty and Varela (1998), Toth (2000), and Lyster (2004). The similar results in this study maintain the finding in these previous studies that focus on form instruction is an effective instructional approach because it has been shown to help learners improve quickly and maintain this improvement. For the focus on form group, it can be clearly seen that the treatment had a positive effect on these learners’ ability to produce direct
object pronouns. Because of the significant immediate improvement that was shown in these results, the focus on form approach appears to be more effective than the other two approaches. However, as discussed also by Sheen (2005), additional investigation is needed to sufficiently determine if focus on form is more effective than focus on forms.

Returning to the second research question, we asked if there was a significant level of improvement in direct object pronoun production immediately following instruction. The results for the sentence completion data do not show a significant level of immediate improvement for all approaches, but only for the focus on form group. Additionally, the third question asked if any improvement immediately following instruction was maintained three weeks after instruction. The results show that the focus on form group, which made an immediate and significant improvement, was able to maintain this level of improvement. In general, from the results shown, it appears as though form-focused instruction is more beneficial to beginning Spanish students when learning the direct object pronouns.

It is important to point out that although the three groups showed improvement on their production of the direct object pronouns, the learners’ use was still considerably nontarget-like. A considerable amount of learners in all groups showed little or no improvement in their abilities to produce direct object pronouns. This is similar to Toth’s (2000) findings that learner results were well below those of native speakers. It is therefore comprehensible that whichever approach is chosen, there may be a need for more practice and instruction of the direct object pronouns before learners are able to demonstrate target-like production.
**Question Task**

The results for the question task show considerably less improvement for all three instructional groups. Based on the mean scores for all three groups there was some improvement shown, but upon further analysis this improvement was not as great in the sentence completion task. Also unlike the sentence completion task, there appears to be one more effective approach. The focus on forms group outperformed the focus on meaning and focus on form groups in this task and demonstrated a statistically significant level of improvement from Pretest to Posttest II. These results somewhat uphold Sheen’s (2005) findings that focus on forms is a more effective approach than focus on form. However, as in the sentence completion task, this significant improvement was delayed. From the Pretest to Posttest I, the focus on forms group showed improvement but this improvement was not found to be statistically significant. Again this sort of improvement outside of the treatment is unusual. It can be said that the same possibilities for this improvement that exist for the sentence completion task, also exist for the question task due to the similarities in performance on both elements of the tests. Bearing in mind the first research question again, the answer for the question data is again not entirely clear because although the results did illustrate the effectiveness of form-focused teaching overall, it was not clear if the progress made by the focus on forms group was completely due to the instruction alone.

The focus on meaning group again showed no improvement from the Pretest to Posttest I, and only a slight improvement from Posttest I to Posttest II. As with the sentence completion task, the instruction does not appear to have had any effect on the learners in the focus on meaning group. The performance of the focus on meaning group is again similar to the communicative groups from previous studies (Lightbown & Spada
(1990), Spada & Lightbown (1993), Doughty & Varela (1998), Lyster (2004) and Spada, Lightbown & White (2005)). When compared to the level of improvement shown by the focus on forms group, it can be said that these results support a need for more form-focused instruction for the direct object pronouns.

The focus on form group did not show any significant improvement between the Pretest and the Posttests, demonstrating very different results from the sentence completion task. These findings differ from previous studies (Lightbown & Spada (1990), Spada & Lightbown (1993), Doughty & Varela (1998), Lyster (2004) and Spada, Lightbown & White (2005)) that have shown focus on form to significantly improve in a variety of tasks. From these results it appears that the instruction given to the focus on form group enabled them to improve their production on the sentence completion task, but not the question task. When the researcher further evaluated the question task, the test showed that the majority of the learners overall produced an answer that repeated the direct object instead of using a direct object pronoun. Since the use of the direct object itself is still a grammatically correct possibility, albeit redundant, it is understandable that, in the question task, learners chose to give an answer with the form that they knew to be correct, rather than try out a new form. Additionally, given that the instructions for the task did not explicitly direct the learners to use direct object pronouns in their response, it may be that they did not think to use the pronouns, but again used the responses to which they were already accustomed. In any case, the results from this task appear to show that the focus on forms approach is more effective than the focus on form approach for teaching the direct object pronouns. However, when considering the second and third research questions, there was not any group that showed an immediate
significant improvement in the question data, and due to this lack of immediate improvement in the focus on forms group, it is unclear as to whether the focus on forms learners’ improvement came entirely from the instruction. Consequently, it would be prudent to carry out further investigations before making a definite statement that focus on forms is preferable to focus on form in reference to the direct object pronouns.

Resembling the results for the sentence completion task, in the question task in general the learners did not show target-like production. Although improvement could be seen, this improvement was still very low in accuracy. Once more, Toth’s (2000) study finds similar results with learners’ use of the Spanish pronoun *se* being far from target-like after instruction. Therefore the results from both this study and Toth’s strongly advocate the need for more instruction and more practice with the Spanish pronouns in order to raise learners’ abilities to a more target-like level.

**Limitations**

As with any study, there are certain drawbacks that may have impacted the overall quality of the study and that should be addressed in future work. The first of these would be to provide a more careful choice of activities for the focus on forms group. In planning the lesson for this group, the researcher neglected to consider the tasks on the test; consequently the activities were very similar. Due to this oversight, there is some uncertainty in the results for the focus on forms group because these results may have been additionally influenced by the additional practice.

The second point to consider would be the design of the tests themselves. It would be beneficial to have a highly communicative meaning-based task on the tests to additionally compare the three groups. Since the focus on form group and the focus on meaning group completed meaning-based activities as part of their instruction and the
focus on forms group did not, it would be advantageous to see how these groups would perform on a more communicative test since their improvement might be evidenced there rather than on grammar. However, it can be seen in many other studies such as VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996), and VanPatten and Fernández (2004) that tests often contain more mechanical and less-communicative tasks. Norris and Ortega (2003) discuss this frequent non-communicative testing used with communicative teaching approaches and indicate that it is more favorable to develop communicative testing when investigating the effectiveness of communicative instruction. Therefore a test that contained a task with a higher-communicative value would allow for a more complete analysis of the three approaches used in this study.

In addition to a communicative task on the tests, it would be favorable to have an additional delayed posttest. This later posttest would allow for more information on the long-term effects of these approaches. Especially in the case of the focus on forms group, a third posttest would help see if the learners would continue to improve in their abilities to produce the direct object pronouns over time as they did in this study.

Another consideration is the number of participants in this study. Since this is a smaller-scale investigation, each group had a fairly low number of participants. With a larger population, the results could be easily affected since the addition of a few participants to each group may be able to change both the simple means for that group, as well as the results of the groups’ significant (or not) improvement.

The final two considerations for future studies of this type have to do with limitations that could not easily be overcome by the researcher. The first is the length of instruction time provided to the learners. If the researcher were to repeat this study, she
would design the instructional time to be longer since results show that learners do not appear to demonstrate target-like production of the direct object pronouns. However, due to the tight schedule of the course used in this study, a longer instruction time was not feasible in this case. The final consideration would be to eliminate some of the outside factors that may have influenced the results. Specifically it would have been better had the students not had the additional workbook and laboratory manual assignments, nor been preparing for the course-wide test that used direct object pronouns in the time period before Posttest II.

**Conclusion**

This study has provided evidence for the effectiveness of form-focused instruction in assisting beginning learners to improve their production of the Spanish direct object pronouns. Furthermore, this study supports previous investigations’ results that focus on form instruction is more effective than focus on meaning instruction for certain grammatical forms that have a high connection between form and meaning. One of the main implications of this study is that focus on meaning instruction is not sufficient to help beginning learners improve their production of Spanish direct object pronouns. Rather, learners are in need of more form-focused instruction to assist them in learning to produce the direct object pronouns. As with other investigations that compare focus on meaning instruction to more form-focused instruction, there is an implication that second language classrooms that employ the form-focused approaches will be more beneficial to learners.

It is possible to conclude from these results that focus on form instruction is better at helping learners to show immediate improvement with the production of direct object pronouns than the other two approaches used in this study. However, due to the overall
level of improvement attained by the focus on forms instructional group, it cannot be stated that focus on form is absolutely more effective than focus on forms. This study therefore sustains the belief that further investigation comparing these two instructional approaches is needed.

Another implication of this study is that beginning learners are in need of a longer period of instruction in order to show more target-like use of the direct object pronouns. Although form-focused instruction was shown to be effective in facilitating learners with the production of direct object pronouns, the levels of improvement that were reached were not comparable to target-like use. There is a need for further investigations of the Spanish direct object pronouns that are able to have a longer treatment period in order to see if learners can obtain more target-like results. Furthermore, additional investigations of classroom instruction of Spanish direct object pronouns will be beneficial in the overall understanding of how learners acquire the direct object pronouns and what instructional approaches are most beneficial for that acquisition.
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- me  me
- te  you
- lo  you, him, it
- la  you, her, it
- nos  us
- los  you, them
- las  you, them

Figure A-1. The first slide for the focus on forms PowerPoint presentation
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- Pronouns may substitute for nouns used previously:
  - ¿Comes el bistec a veces?
    - Sí, como el bistec a veces.
    - Sí, lo como a veces.
  - ¿Compras las fresas hoy?
    - No, no compro las fresas hoy.
    - No, no las compro hoy.

Figure A-2. The second slide for the focus on forms PowerPoint presentation
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- Direct object pronouns come before the conjugated verb
  - Ellos me llaman.
  - Yo los compro.

- Direct object pronouns may be connected to an infinitive or gerund
  - Yo los quiero comprar.
  - Yo quiero comprarlos.
  - Ellos me están llamando.
  - Ellos están llamándome.

Figure A-3. The third slide for the focus on forms PowerPoint presentation.
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- ¿Comes el bistec a veces?
  - Sí, como el bistec a veces.
  - Sí, lo como a veces.

- ¿Compras las fresas hoy?
  - No, no compro las fresas hoy.
  - No, no las compro hoy.

- ¿Busca a Uds. Pablo?
  - Sí, Pablo busca a nosotros.
  - Sí, Pablo nos busca.

Figure A-4. The first slide from the communicative PowerPoint presentation. The words shown in bold here for printing purposes were colored blue in the original slide.
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- ¿Quieres comprar los huevos?
  - Sí, yo **los** quiero comprar.
  - Sí, yo quiero comprar **los**.

- ¿A quién están llamando ellos?
  - Ellos **me** están llamando.
  - Ellos están llamándome.

Figure A-5. The second slide for the communicative PowerPoint presentation. The words shown in bold here for printing purposes were colored blue in the original slide.
Pablo y Juan hacen una fiesta...

- Pablo y Juan necesitan **un vino tinto** y **un vino blanco** para la fiesta y **los** compran en ABC.
- Yo cocino **un pastel** y **lo** traigo a la fiesta.
- Maricarmen prepara **una pizza** y **la** comemos durante la fiesta.
- Luis quiere **unos refrescos** durante la fiesta y **los** encuentra en el refrigerador.
- Pablo invita a **ti** a la fiesta y **te** ve en la pista de baile (**dance floor**).

Figure A-6. The third slide for the communicative PowerPoint presentation. The words shown in bold here for printing purposes were colored blue in the original slide.
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- ¿Comes el bistec a veces?
  - Sí, como **el bistec** a veces.
  - Sí, **lo** como a veces.

- ¿Compras las fresas hoy?
  - No, no compro **las fresas** hoy.
  - No, no **las** compro hoy.

- ¿Busca a Uds. Pablo?
  - Sí, Pablo busca a **nosotros**.
  - Sí, Pablo **nos** busca.

Figure A-7. The first slide for the focus on form PowerPoint presentation. The words shown in bold here for printing purposes were colored blue in the original slide.
Los pronombres de objeto directo

- **me** you
- **te** you
- **lo** you, him, it
- **la** you, her, it
- **nos** us
- **nos** us
- **los** you, them
- **las** you, them

Figure A-8. The second slide for the focus on form PowerPoint presentation.
Las pronombres de objeto directo

- Direct object pronouns come before the conjugated verb
  - Ellos me llaman.
  - Yo los compro.

- Direct object pronouns may be connected to an infinitive or gerund
  ¿Quieres comprar los huevos?
  - Sí, yo los quiero comprar.
  - Sí, yo quiero comprarlos.

¿Quién están llamando ellos?
- Ellos me están llamando.
- Ellos están llamándome.

Figure A-9. The third slide for the focus on form PowerPoint presentation. The words shown in bold here for printing purposes were colored blue in the original slide.
APPENDIX B
TESTS

The following are the three versions of the tests used in this study.

Quiz A

Instructions: Fill in the blanks appropriately to complete the sentences.

1. Pilar necesita su libro y ____________ (buscar) por la casa.
2. Antonio y Luis son buenos estudiantes porque ______________ (estudiar) mucho.
3. Maricarmen quiere una falda nueva y ______________(comprar) en la tienda Gap.
4. Yo veo un coche muy rápido y _____________ (querer).
5. Ana compra unos huevos y ______________ (comer) para su desayuno.

Instructions: Please answer the questions using complete sentences.

1. ¿Comes la pizza con frecuencia?

____________________________________________________________________

2. ¿Quién paga la matrícula para ti?

____________________________________________________________________

3. ¿Cuándo vas a clase siempre traes los libros?

____________________________________________________________________

4. ¿Dónde compras tu comida normalmente?

____________________________________________________________________
Quiz B

Instructions: Fill in the blanks appropriately to complete the sentences.

1. Yo estudio el italiano y _____________ (hablar) con mi amiga italiana.
2. A Lucia le gustan mucho las verduras y _____________(preparar) frecuentemente.
3. Nina y Pablo van a la playa y _____________ (nadar) en el oceano.
4. Teresa quiere un vestido nuevo y _____________ (buscar) en el centro comercial.
5. Tomás usa tres platos durante la cena y _____________ (lavar) después.

Instructions: Please answer the questions using complete sentences.

1. ¿Dónde estudias el español?

____________________________________________________________________________

2. ¿Quién cocina la comida para tu familia?

____________________________________________________________________________

3. ¿Escribes unos mensajes por correo electrónico (email) con frecuencia?

____________________________________________________________________________

4. ¿Cuándo vas a una fiesta usualmente llevas los jeans?

____________________________________________________________________________
Quiz C

Instructions: Fill in the blanks appropriately to complete the sentences.

1. Miguel tiene un apartamento grande y ____________ (limpiar) cada sábado.
2. Juana compra una novela para sus vacaciones y ____________ (leer) en la playa.
3. Eva prepara una tortilla y ____________ (comer) para su cena.
4. Pilar y Teresa están cansadas porque ____________ (trabajar) mucho.
5. Yo no puedo encontrar mis libros y ____________ (buscar) por mi oficina.

Instructions: Please answer the questions using complete sentences.

1. ¿Quién lava los platos en tu casa?

____________________________________________________________________

2. ¿Cuándo vas a la playa, juegas el voleibol?¹

____________________________________________________________________

3. ¿Dónde haces la tarea normalmente?

____________________________________________________________________

4. ¿Hablas español con frecuencia?

____________________________________________________________________

¹ It was discovered after data had been collected that the structure used in this question does not allow an answer that uses direct object pronouns.
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Melanie Lynn D’Amico holds a Bachelor of Science in Spanish with a business option from The Pennsylvania State University. Upon graduation, she entered the field of computer consulting with All Star Consulting, Inc. in San Francisco, California. After working nearly five years with All Star Consulting, Melanie chose to pursue an advanced degree in Spanish linguistics at the University of Florida. Upon completion of this master’s thesis, Melanie will receive a Master of Arts in Spanish linguistics. After receiving her degree, Melanie will remain at the University of Florida to purse her doctorate of philosophy in Spanish linguistics.