

The Effects of Teaching a Difficult Grammatical Feature of English through Grammar Instruction and a Communicative Approach

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The issue of the role of grammar instruction in L2 learning/teaching as opposed to a communicative approach is controversial. While communicative approaches have been greatly promoted in language teaching, research has suggested that grammar instruction can make a difference for L2 acquisition and speed the learning process for adult learners. The present study examines the effect of teaching the past perfect tense to adult EFL learners in a university in northern Taiwan, using two different instructional approaches. Sixty-five participants were randomly assigned to two groups, with one given form-focused instruction and the other, communication-focused instruction. A posttest containing a one-paragraph writing task and a grammar recognition test was given to the learners in each group immediately after instruction. Results show that the participants in the grammar group outperformed those in the communicative group in both the grammar recognition test and the writing task.

Key words: communicative approaches, grammar instruction, English teaching in Taiwan

1. Introduction

The issue of whether grammar instruction or the communicative approach is more effective in L2 acquisition is controversial. According to Krashen and Terrel (1983), the role of language knowledge may only serve as a monitor when there is enough time to think about rules for “self-repair.” Besides, research (e.g., Perkins & Larsen-Freeman 1975; Fathman 1975) has suggested that the development of language acquisition may not be affected by formal learning. The findings of Pienemann’s (1985) study also provide an explanation of the natural order of acquisition on the basis of learnability and teachability. Thus, grammar instruction may make a limited contribution to language development.

However, it is common for teachers to observe that communication in a second language is difficult for students with low grammar competence although higher competence does not necessarily guarantee better communication in the target language.

As Dickens and Woods (1988) have realized, learners with insufficient knowledge of the language form are often faced with problems when communicating at a rather high level. Therefore, the problem that arises is what role should grammar instruction play in language teaching? Communicative approaches are certainly powerful in affecting the process of language acquisition, taking into account noncognitive variables such as the learning atmosphere and the learners' attitudes (Savignon 1997). Yet it may be possible that grammar instruction can make a difference at least for adult learners who are considered better learners than children. Although Pienemann (1985) has hypothesized that there is a natural order of acquisition based on learnability and teachability, evidence shows that these constraints are limited in child learners. Grammar instruction may become so powerful as to help adult learners surpass the natural development stage and speed the process of their language acquisition. That is, adults' grammatical knowledge may not only serve as a "monitor" but may also be applied to language use. While much research has been conducted to compare the effects of grammar instruction on language acquisition, it is still uncertain whether it contributes to language use. In addition, there has been no research so far to compare the effects of grammar instruction on features of a language that are difficult for learners to acquire through communicative teaching.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare grammar instruction with communicative approaches with regard to their effects on learning language features that are difficult for learners to acquire. The following section contains a review of the relevant literature along with the research hypotheses for the study

2. Literature Review

The role of grammar instruction has diminished with the rise of communicative teaching, the predominant pedagogy in second language teaching today. Krashen and Terrell (1983) distinguish acquisition from learning, advocating that only in low-anxiety, natural communicative settings with much rich and meaningful input can the learner acquire the language, and that formal learning would not intervene with the natural order of the acquisition of morphemes. The overall attainment of language acquisition is communicative competence, which, as Savignon (1997) suggests, is much greater than grammatical competence. The list of the guiding tenets of a

communicative approach, summarized by Savignon (pp. 28-29), is rudimentary to current second language teaching.

A number of research studies have reported the success of communicative teaching. Savignon (1972) examined the effect of communicative activities that were added to an ALM (audiolingual materials)-based, beginning-level college French course. The results indicated that the group that received training in performing specific communicative acts achieved much better scores on tests of communicative competence than the other two groups, one practicing in the laboratory what was learned in class, the other receiving a series of cultural orientation sessions conducted in English. Savignon's study was conducted within a form-focused learning environment.

A completely communicative program can be very successful as Lightbown and Spada's (1990) study of one such large project revealed. The results indicated that children's acquisition levels of listening and reading comprehension skills, as well as their speaking ability in a communicative English program were significantly higher than those of learners in regular programs, where English teaching was grammar-focused..

Because communicative teaching can more capably deal with the complex process of language acquisition, its effects in the classroom are unquestionable. However, research also offers evidence that some learners, especially adults, can benefit from form-focused instruction (Long 1988; Pienemann 1985; Ruin 1996; Seliger 1975). Seliger (1975) suggests that adults are conscious learners and thus would benefit from form-focused instruction. Pienemann (1985) has hypothesized a natural order of acquisition on the basis of learnability and teachability, which Ruin (1996) thinks is "psychologically more satisfactory than Krashen's Natural Order Theory" (60). The teachability hypothesis predicts that formal instruction can promote language acquisition if the learner is at the appropriate acquisitional stage. Learners have to be at the $x+1$ stage in order to transfer their instructional knowledge to the $x+2$ stage of natural language use. However, if the learner is still only at the x stage, $x+2$ has to be introduced simultaneously with $x+1$. What can be improved through instruction, if learners are at the appropriate stage, is "the speed of acquisition, the frequency of rule application and the different linguistic contexts in which the rule has to be applied"

(Pienemann 1985: 37). Therefore, formal instruction, as other studies suggest (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991; Ellis 1985), speeds language acquisition.

Certain research evidence also refutes Krashen's Natural Order hypothesis that formal learning leads to the disturbance of language development (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Ellis (1985) summarized two studies by Lightbown et al. (1980) and Lightbown (1983), concluding that the disturbance in the natural order caused by formal instruction is only temporary. But once the learners "began to sort out the respective uses of '-s' and '-ing'" (219), the frequency of inappropriate use of those morphemes declines. In addition, Pienemann (1985) concluded in his study that evidence supports that "L2 classroom learners produce the same type of interlanguage structures as observed in natural acquisition" (39). That is, classroom instruction will not interfere with the natural development of acquisition, and in fact might "so powerfully tutor L2 development that the natural side of the process can even be improved" (29).

The implications from the previously cited research are that formal learning will not hinder subsequent development, and, instead, may facilitate L2 development. Most important of all, Pienemann (1985) emphasizes that the evidence for the learnability and teachability constraint, i.e., that learners have to be at the appropriate stage of acquisition, is not necessarily applicable to adult learners. Since adult learners have a different cognitive process and capacity for learning, the effect of instruction may be different from that on children (Pienemann 1985). The critical period hypothesis, proposed by Lenneberg and further examined by Johnson and Newport (1989), suggests that adult language development is different from children's second language acquisition.

Johnson and Newport (1989) studied 46 native Chinese or Korean speakers learning English as a second language whose age of arrival in the United States ranged from 3 to 39. The subjects were tested on their knowledge of English syntax and morphology in a laboratory setting. They were presented with 276 correct and incorrect spoken English sentences of 12 rule types and were asked to make grammatical judgments on the sentences. Findings show that there was a strongly negative relationship between the age of arrival in the U.S. and the individual's performance in the grammar of a second language. That is, subjects who had arrived after puberty performed on the average much more poorly than those who had arrived before puberty.

However, when comparing the performance of the late arrivals among themselves, the researchers found that their performance was highly variable and unrelated to the age of arrival. These findings indicate that adult language acquisition develops differently from children's, and while formal learning appears to be less effective for children than natural acquisition, it may be helpful for adult learners.

Perhaps there is a potential benefit that adults can gain from formal instruction. In Seliger's (1975) study, which made a controlled comparison between two instructional methods, learners using the deductive method outperformed those using the inductive method, but both groups of learners performed better than the control group on linguistic tasks. Although it is not clear which kind of instruction the control group received versus the two different experimental groups, results show that grammar instruction, whether deductive or inductive, explicit or implicit, can make a difference in language learning. The findings of Seliger's study have their limits, and although grammar competence has not been proven equal to communicative competence, it is a component of communicative competence. In fact, as Savignon (1997) suggested, an increase in any competence "interacts with the other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence" (49).

Further, Melendez (1993) found evidence that adults can benefit from both "explicit" and "implicit" instructions. It is interesting to note that the subjects in Melendez's research not only outperformed the control group on the grammar task but also on the oral task. The learners' performance in demonstrating their grammatical knowledge and their ability to use the language, both of which underlie grammatical competence, further strengthens the beliefs of those advocating formal instruction.

However, few studies have compared the effects of grammar instruction on features difficult for learners to acquire through completely communicative teaching, which does not provide any rules, drills, or form-focused activities. This limitation leads to the research question of the present study. Will learners with grammar instruction on difficult language features outperform those with communicative teaching methods, not only on the grammar task but also on the communicative task, that is, a written communication task? It is not the researchers' intention to suggest that grammar instruction or any form-focused method should be revived to replace or prevail over communicative approaches. Rather, the intention is to see to what extent

grammar can be taught, and how it can aid or speed the learner's language development. The hypotheses in this study, therefore, are as follows:

H1: On a grammar recognition test, the average performance of a learner in the group with grammar instruction will be better than that of a learner in the group with communicative instruction. That is, HR 1: $XG > XC$; H0: $XG \leq XC$.

H2: On a writing task, the average performance of a learner in the group with grammar instruction will be better than that of a learner with the communicative approach. That is, HR 2: $XG > XC$; H0: $XG \leq XC$.

The operational definition of grammar instruction in the present study is the formal presentation and explanation of the past perfect tense related to time sequences. The communicative approach employed in this study is meaning-focused instruction with communicative activities and without rule explanation or practice of the target feature. Language acquisition is operationalized as the scores of the tests in this study.

It was expected that learners with grammar instruction would outperform those with communicative instruction on the grammar task. And since grammatical competence interacts with other competencies and helps to increase overall communicative competence, it was expected that learners with grammar instruction on features difficult to learn would also outperform other learners on the writing task.

3. Method

3.1 Subjects

Sixty-five freshman students taking an English reading and conversation-based course in a university in the northern part of Taiwan were randomly assigned to two groups, one of which was given grammar instruction, and the other, communicative teaching. The subjects were of the same L1 background (Chinese). Most of them had at least six years of learning experience with English as a foreign language.

3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study included a posttest containing a one-paragraph writing task and a grammar recognition test (Appendix A).

The grammar recognition test included 23 multiple choice items in four categories examined in this study. The four categories included nine items on the past perfect tense (Items 1, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, and 23), five on the past tense with past perfect tense (Items 2, 5, 6, 11, and 17), four on the simple past tense (Items 8, 10, 21, and 23), and five on the present perfect tense (Items 3, 4, 12, 16, and 18). The reason for including the present perfect tense in the posttest is that learners are often confused between the use of the past perfect tense and present perfect tense. In explaining the use of the past perfect tense, the instructor also compared the differences between the two tenses. The reliability of this test is .90.

The writing task required every subject to write one paragraph on a directional topic eliciting meaningful writing and perhaps the use of appropriate tenses. The topic was relevant to the reading materials covered in the instruction..

Also included in the instruments were questionnaires investigating the subjects' background information and their attitude toward the instructional type used by the researcher/instructor. Since attitude was not a major finding that this study aimed to obtain, only one questionnaire item was created to measure it (Appendix B).

3.3 Design of the Study

This was a quasi-experimental design with one group receiving grammar instruction and the other receiving instruction via a communicative approach. Therefore, the dependent variable in this study was the performance of the two groups on the tasks involved, and the independent variables were the instructional types. The age of initial English learning, the length of English learning, gender, and overseas experience were the moderator variables.

3.4 Procedures

The subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. One group was given grammar instruction by one of the researchers on the past perfect tense for about 50 minutes. After the instruction, a posttest containing the writing task and the grammar recognition test plus a questionnaire investigating the participants' background was given. While the subjects completed the posttest and the questionnaire, the researcher/instructor went to teach the other group. The second group received

meaning-focused (communicative) instruction for about 50 minutes. Then a posttest and a questionnaire were given, following the same procedure for the first group.

3.4.1 Teaching materials

The target grammatical feature selected for the study was the past perfect tense. The reason for its selection is that the past perfect tense is difficult for learners to acquire in natural settings based on Pienemann's (1985) hypothesis of learnability. It was the researchers' intention in the present study to test the power of explicit instruction. The same sample reading paragraphs, which contained the target structure, were drawn from *Using English* (Danielson, Porter, & Hayden 1990: 49) and *Focus on Grammar* (Fuchs & Bonner, 1995: 32). They were given to each subject in the two groups. The instructor's teaching scripts (available upon request) for both approaches were strictly followed. Every step of each method of instruction is explicit and replicable.

3.4.2 Researcher/instructor's script for grammar instruction

The subjects in the group with grammar instruction were given a handout (available upon request), which included two short readings. The subjects first read and underlined all the phrases in the past perfect tense and then the verbs in the simple past. The researcher/instructor then presented and explained the past perfect form with examples. Only one function of this tense was covered in this instruction, that is, the past perfect tense expressing an activity that was completed before another activity or time in the past. This example also provided the introduction of the simple past tense. After explaining the function with many examples, the researcher/instructor asked the subjects to work in small groups, making a list of things they had never seen or eaten before they came to study at the university, and to practice speaking, using the past perfect tense together with the simple past. Next the researcher/instructor compared the target tense with the present perfect tense, which subjects were supposed to be familiar with because of its presence in many dialogues in their English textbook and their prior knowledge of it. Then they were asked to do the exercise of using appropriate tenses in the sentences. Finally, they were given the posttest, including the grammar recognition test and the writing task.

3.4.3 Researcher/instructors' script for communicative teaching

The same reading paragraphs, which included much use of the past perfect tense, were given to the subjects in the communicative group (available upon request). The researcher/instructor went through the vocabulary in the readings and then asked the subjects to read the paragraphs silently. Then the subjects' understanding of the readings was checked by the use of several questions that were designed to elicit subjects' use of the past perfect tense. The researcher/instructor also asked how they felt about the stories. She then illustrated her own experience, which surprised her at the time it occurred (This step is also relevant to the reading). After reporting her interesting experience, the researcher/instructor paired up the subjects in this group to talk about their own experiences for five minutes, and then to choose some of the subjects to share their experiences or their partners' experiences with the whole group. Finally, the subjects were given the posttest. The instructor's script (available upon request) was carefully designed to elicit the subjects' use of the target grammatical feature in both responding to the researcher/instructor's questions and doing pair work.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the posttest, the results were analyzed. The grammar recognition test contained 23 items. One point was given for each correct answer for a total optimum score of 23.

After the subjects completed the writing task in which they were guided to produce one written paragraph, two English teachers were invited to rate the collected writing data on the basis of the degree to which each subject's writing was interesting, informative, and fluent, with a rating scale of 2-14 points. Scores were not given based on grammatical correctness. The writing data were scored based on the following scale modified from Melendez (1993):

2 = several phrases produced; phrases produced are not meaningful.

3-5 = several short sentences produced; there is an attempt to produce information.

6-8 = a complete paragraph produced; paragraph provides meaningful or interesting messages though sentences are not necessarily logically connected.

9-11= a complete paragraph that is meaningful or interesting with sentences logically connected.

12-14 = a complete paragraph that is either very meaningful or very interesting, or both, with sentences logically connected.

The raters were free to score in any range (e.g., 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11), once the range was determined.

Another pair of raters scored the tense use in the writing with a focus on the target feature, the past perfect tense. Only the presence or absence of the past perfect tense was measured. For example, if an appropriate use of the past perfect tense was present, a point was assigned to the writing.

Instrument reliability was given using KR-20 for the grammar test, and the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula was used to determine interrater reliability. As a result, the instrument reliability coefficient for the grammar test was .90, which is considered highly reliable, and the interrater reliability coefficients for the semantic aspect and the tense evaluation in the writing test were .76 and .92, respectively.

The unmatched groups' *t* test was used to compare the posttest results of the two groups on the grammar recognition test, as well as the message evaluation and the tense measurement of the paragraph writing. A .05 level of significance was expected.

4. Results

The unmatched *t* test was used to compare the group means on different tasks. The three sets of scores of the grammar test, the meaning-focused evaluation and the past perfect tense evaluation in the writing test were all normally distributed.

The results of the grammar recognition test and the one-paragraph writing test are shown in Table 1. The average score of group 1 ($M = 19.59$, $SD = 2.70$) on the grammar test is greater than that of group 2 ($M = 14.06$, $SD = 3.94$). Since $p < 0.01$, $t = 6.63$, the mean difference between the groups is statistically significant to reject the null hypothesis.

As to the measurement of the writing task, the results strongly support the second research hypothesis. The average score of group 1 on the semantic aspect of the writing test ($M = 7.72$, $SD = 1.96$) is greater than that of group 2 ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 1.54$, $p <$

0.01), and the difference is statistically significant. The mean of group 1 (M = 1.80, SD = 1.20) on the use of past perfect tense in the writing task is significantly greater than that of group 2 (M = 0.94, SD = 0.83, $t = 3.35$, $p < 0.01$). That is, group 1's average performance on both the meaning aspect of the writing task and the use of past perfect tense was better than group 2's. This indicates that the learners in group 1 did transfer what they learned, their knowledge of the past perfect tense, to their writing.

Table 1
Results of the Grammar Test and the One-Paragraph Writing Test

Instruction	Group means and standard deviations						
	N	Grammar recognition test <i>Reliability: .90</i>		Writing task			
		Mean	SD	Message evaluation <i>Rater reliability: .76</i>		Tense measurement <i>Rater reliability: .92</i>	
				Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Group with grammar instruction	32	19.59	2.70	7.72	1.96	1.80	1.20
Group with communicative instruction	33	14.06	3.94	6.52	1.54	0.94	0.83

$t=6.63^*$ $t=2.75^*$ $t=3.35^*$

$p < 0.01$

Since other variables such as gender and age of initial English learning may have moderated the relationship between instruction and test results, their effects were also examined. However, the results on these variables did not show significant correlations with the learners' grammar recognition scores and their writing scores

Also worth mentioning is the learners' attitudes towards the instructional approaches. The learners in group 1 tended to have a favorable attitude toward the grammar instruction in this study (M = 3.94, $t = 8.57$, $p < 0.01$), and all the learners in group 2 liked the communicative approach (M = 3.91, $t = 8.28$, $p < 0.01$). This

indicates that the learners in both groups perceived the instructional types as either effective or pleasant, or both. Their positive attitudes towards grammar instruction and the communicative approach made the researcher believe that attitude was not a variable contributing to the difference in the two groups' performance on the tasks involved in this study.

5. Conclusion

The first research hypothesis for this study states that on the grammar recognition test, the average performance of a learner in the group with grammar instruction will be better than that of a learner in the group with communicative instruction. Results indicate that the average performance of the group receiving grammar instruction was better than that of the communicative group; hence, the first hypothesis is supported. This result is different from the finding by Seliger (1975) that two experimental groups showed no significant difference on the first test given immediately after instruction; however, in the retention test, which was given three weeks after the lessons, the subjects in the deductive group outperformed those in the inductive group. Although this study's results support the first hypothesis, a retention test given after a period of time may also be possible, to see if the result remains the same as that of the posttest given immediately following the grammar instruction.

The second research hypothesis in this study states that on the writing task the average performance of a learner in the group receiving the grammar instruction will be better than that of a learner receiving the communicative approach. Results show that the students who received grammar instruction outperformed those who were instructed using the communicative approach, on both the semantic aspect of the writing task and the use of the past perfect tense. Therefore, the second hypothesis is also supported.

In this study, the learners in the grammar group, as in Melendez's (1993) study, not only produced meaningful content in their writing but also transferred linguistic knowledge to language use. In Melendez's study, learners in the two grammar groups (explicit versus implicit) were more able to get meaning across orally and use reflexive verbs correctly in the oral task than the control group. In the present study, subjects in the grammar group were significantly better in getting meaning across and applying the past perfect tense in the writing task than those in the communicative group. This

suggests that the explicit grammar instruction in this study helped process input and develop grammatical competence so that the learners in the grammar group were able to use the linguistic knowledge for written communication. Grammar instruction in the present study may have enhanced not only the learners' grammatical competence, i.e., the ability to recognize a rule and use it, but also their ability to communicate with it in writing. Thus, based on Savignon's model of communicative competence (1997), this increased competence may interact with other components and lead to a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence.

The results of the present study have provided evidence to answer the research question positively: *Learners with grammar instruction on a difficult language feature outperformed those given real communicative teaching instruction, not only on the grammar task but also on a written communication task.* The results of this study also corroborate the findings of Seliger (1975) and Melendez (1993) that grammatical knowledge learned in the classroom enhances learners' grammatical competence and can be transferred for language use in communicative expression.

6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although the research hypotheses in this study have been supported, there were some limitations.

(1) First of all, despite the fact that the subjects in this study were randomly selected for the two groups, they were from one intact class. Future research may consider randomly selecting subjects from a larger population or including more intact classes, with each further divided into two groups in order to examine the effects of different instructional approaches.

(2) Since this study only examined the effect of teaching a grammatical feature that is relatively difficult to learn, i.e., the past perfect tense, and languages contain numerous structural features, more research should investigate the effect of teaching other language forms that are relatively difficult to learn.

(3) Although the instruction in the two groups has demonstrated significant effects on language learning, the short-term instruction in this study may have affected the result. Understandably, a long-term treatment will be more useful in examining the learning

process than a short-term one. Future studies may examine instruction of different types for a longer term to see if the results are in accordance with those in this study.

This study has compared the effects of two instructional types on the learning and use of the past perfect tense, a difficult language feature to learn. Results suggest the superiority of grammar instruction over the communicative approach on the learning and application of this difficult language form. It has also shed light on the issue of the effects of different instructional types and the possibility of incorporating grammar instruction into a communication-based teaching program.

Appendix A

Posttest

Part I.

Read each of the following statements and choose the correct answer.

- ____1. John called at eight o'clock. He wanted to invite Lucy and Mary for dinner, but Lucy and Mary ____ dinner before he called.
 a. have had b. have c. had had d. are having
- ____2. He had been a teacher before he ____ a businessman.
 a. became b. becomes c. have become d. had become
- ____3. I ____ Mexico. This winter my sister and I plan to have our vacation there.
 a. have never visited b. had never visited c. never visit
 d. am never visiting
- ____4. John is studying for the exam tomorrow, and I ____ yet.
 a. hadn't started b. haven't started c. didn't start d. hasn't started
- ____5. I had never seen any of Picasso's paintings before I ____ the art museum.
 a. had visited b. has visited c. visit d. visited
- ____6. The bad man simply ____ in. Someone had forgotten to lock the door.
 a. walks b. walked c. had walking d. is walking
- ____7. Last night I went to a party. When I got there, the room was full of people. Some were dancing and others were talking. One young woman was standing alone. I ____ her, so I introduced myself to her.
 a. never seen b. have never seen c. never saw d. had never seen
- ____8. It was a sunny day yesterday. I went to the park with Annie, and ____ a wonderful day there.
 a. have b. had had c. has d. had
- ____9. Sam ____ the room when I walked in. His sister was there and gave me a letter from Sam.
 a. has left b. had left c. left d. leaves
- ____10. I ____ to school yesterday. It took me thirty minutes.
 a. walk b. walked c. have walked d. had walked
- ____11. Before I ____ to study at Ming Chuan University, I had never been to Taipei.
 a. come b. had come c. have come d. came

- _____12. I am hungry now. I ___ breakfast today.
 a. had not eaten b. have not eaten c. do not eat d. wasn't eating
- _____13. Yesterday Jessica heard a loud noise and looked out the window. A car ___ into her new car.
 a. have just backed b. had just backed c. just backed d. is backing
- _____14. The teacher came very late. All the students ___ when she arrived. No one was in the classroom.
 a. had left b. were leaving c. have left d. leave
- _____15. I went to Jill's house but she wasn't there. Clearly she _____ out.
 a. has gone b. went c. goes d. had gone
- _____16. Did you like the movie "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"? I don't know. I _____ it.
 a. don't seen b. haven't seen c. wasn't seeing d. hadn't seen
- _____17. I had finished my homework before I _____ to bed.
 a. have gone b. had gone c. go d. went
- _____18. Jane is expecting a letter from me, but I _____ to her yet.
 a. didn't write b. hadn't written c. haven't written d. don't write
- _____19. We arrived at the theater at 8:00, but the film _____ at 7: 30.
 a. had started b. started c. was starting d. has started
- _____20. I was the last to leave the office. Everybody else _____ home.
 a. went b. have gone c. had gone d. was going.
- _____21. Last night my friend and I had some free time so we _____ to a music concert.
 a. had gone b. went c. were going d. have gone
- _____22. Amy asked me how to use the fax machine yesterday. She _____ it before so she didn't know what to do.
 a. had never used b. has never used c. never uses d. wasn't using
- _____23. Sorry I'm late. The car _____ down on my way here.
 a. breaks b. broke c. has broken d. had broken

Part II.

Please write a paragraph of about 100 words. In your writing tell where you went last weekend, or last month, or even last year. The place you visited should be a place you had been to before. Tell the differences of the two experiences at the same place. You may use your imagination as much as you can. Start your paragraph by writing the following incomplete sentence or use your own way to start the paragraph.

For example: Last Saturday my friends and I went to Jade Garden for a dinner. I had been there several years before. I was so happy to find that the food was better than what I had had before and I also found that they had remodeled the restaurant.

Last weekend ("Last month," or "Last Friday," or "Last year," ...), I went to....

Appendix B

Questionnaire

1. Sex: M _____ F _____
2. Age: _____
3. Native language: _____
4. Have you ever lived in any English speaking countries before?
 Yes _____ What country or countries? _____
 No _____
5. When did you start learning English?
 Before 7 years old ____ Between 7 & 12 years old ____
 After 12 years old ____
6. How long have you been learning English? _____
7. Do you speak English?
 Often ____ Sometimes ____ Seldom ____ Never ____
 Do you read English?
 Often ____ Sometimes ____ Seldom ____ Never ____
 Do you write English?
 Often ____ Sometimes ____ Seldom ____ Never ____
 Do you watch TV programs in English?
 Often ____ Sometimes ____ Seldom ____ Never ____
8. What was your score on the English section of the Joint College Entrance Examination? _____
9. I like the way the instructor taught this lesson.
 Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Neutral ____ Disagree ____
 Strongly disagree ____

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文法教學與溝通式教學效果之比較— 以英文時態「過去完成式」之教學為例

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文法教學與溝通式教學在第二外語學習過程中一直是爭議不斷的議題。儘管在外語教學過程中，一直強調溝通式教學法，然而各種研究亦顯示文法教學有助於成年學生學習外語。因此本研究針對較難之文法時態「過去完成式」，比較兩種教學法之成效。研究對象為台灣北部某大學 65 位大一非英語系學生，隨機分為兩組，一組採用文法教學法，另一組採用溝通式教學法。課後立即進行測驗，其內容包括文法測驗及段落寫作。結果顯示，文法教學組不論在文法測驗或是段落寫作上，都明顯優於溝通式教學組之成績。

關鍵詞：溝通式教學、文法教學