

**Improving the Grammatical Accuracy of the Spoken English of
Indonesian International Kindergarten Students**

A THESIS



By

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GRADUATE SCHOOL
WIDYA MANDALA SURABAYA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled **Improving the Grammatical Accuracy of the Spoken English of Indonesian International Kindergarten Students** prepared and submitted by Imelda Gozali (8212712004) has been approved to be examined by the Thesis Board of Examiners.



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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I declare that this thesis is my own writing, and it is true and correct that I did not take any scholarly ideas or works from others dishonestly. That all the cited works were quoted in accordance with the ethical code of academic writing.

Surabaya, 18 September 2013



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ABSTRACT

The observation that the kindergarten students in one of the international preschools in Surabaya (Indonesia) - where the researcher is presently employed - spoke English fluently but with inaccurate grammar, prompted her to undertake this Classroom Action Research (CAR). Despite the implementation of Grammar subject at the highest level (Kindergarten-2), the researcher's students still seemed unable to apply the lessons learned in their spontaneous speech. To that effect, it was decided to use CAR to implement several Grammar lessons inspired with Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) strategy, coupled with Corrective Feedback (CF) treatment which consisted in providing oral corrections to the students when errors were detected. Specifically, the aim of this study was to investigate how FFI and CF could contribute to the improvement of the grammatical accuracy of those students. In order to provide some focus on the grammatical topics to be tackled, four were selected based on their needs and capability, namely Regular Plural form, Subject Pronoun, Auxiliary Verbs Do/Does, and Irregular Past Tense Verbs. Those Grammatical topics were also chosen based on the well-known order of acquisition in Second Language Acquisition, which purported that children of varying first languages acquire English morphosyntax in similar order. Based on that, the four topics above were deemed to be those that are acquired early in life.

With this in mind, the CAR was conducted in three cycles spanning about four months including planning and preparation time, with one to two grammar topics covered in each cycle. The FFI lessons executed by the Grammar teacher were video-taped and the students' spontaneous speeches, with the CF when applicable, were noted down in the observation sheet. Triangulation was done through document analysis and interview with the Grammar teacher. The video tape transcriptions and the coded speech samples were analysed for each cycle, with overall assessment of all the FFI lessons and the CF given done at the end of all cycles.

The results showed that FFI and CF contributed to the improvement of the spoken grammar in varying degree, depending on the academic performance, personality, and some specific linguistic traits of the students. Students with high academic achievement could apply the grammar points taught after the FFI lessons in their daily speech to a greater or less extent, while the so-called low-achievers were at least seen to be more enthusiastic and participated more actively during the FFI lessons. The success of FFI is most likely due to the 'noticing' and 'proceduralizing' features, which were absent in previous non-FFI lessons. Similarly, most of the high achievers did not need CF and one who was given CF could comprehend the grammatical aspect even before the FFI lesson of that topic was given. Most of the other students, especially those who were rather talkative, were sensitive to the feedback and could provide self-repair when prompted. Those with lower academic performance were generally unable to perceive the correction and to provide the

repair. Some unexpected findings were also noted in the form of two students who, despite their high academic achievement and ease in speaking English, were unable to master specific grammar topics; Subject Pronoun for one student and the Auxiliary Do/Does for the other. This might be the case of peculiar difficulty for a certain linguistic trait that is developmental in nature. An interesting result that falls outside the scope of this study but might be worth mentioning here is the fact that the Plural form was the topic that was least mastered by the students, in spite of the prediction that it is one of the early-emergent morpho-syntax in the order of acquisition. It is posited that, since this study was carried out in an English as Foreign Language (EFL) setting, other factors such as the absence of the equivalent form in the native language and the lack of salience of the morpheme /-s/ in the model input for the plural forms might have contributed to this variance.

To conclude, FFI strategy implemented in parallel with CF seemed to be able to effect some improvement in the grammatical accuracy of the K2 students' spoken English, albeit to a varying degree depending on the developmental readiness of the students. Perhaps future studies could be carried out in a more experimental manner to quantify the results of this study, or to implement other CAR type of research on other language aspects.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR – Action Research

CAR – Classroom Action Research

CF – Corrective Feedback

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ELL – English Language Learners

ESL – English as a Second Language

FB – Feedback

FFI – Form-Focused Instruction

FL – Foreign Language

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

PT – Processability Theory

SL – Second Language

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

SVO – Subject – Verb – Object

TEYL – Teaching English to Young Learners

TEYLIN – Teaching English to Young Learners in Indonesia

TPR – Total Physical Response

UG – Universal Grammar