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The Study of Turn-taking Processes through Focus on Form and Focus on Forms Instructions: Incidental Grammar AcquisitionAli Akbar

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Abstract

The present study aimed at examining whether the turn-taking processes in focus on form and focus on forms teaching contexts were similar or different. Turn-taking refers to 'how each of the interlocutors in an interaction contributes to the conversation'. Both lessons were designed to teach some words but they also provided opportunities for incidental acquisition by exposing them to the two target structures, namely, plural *s* and copula *be*. The FonF lesson was of planned while FonFs lesson employed present-practice-product (PPP) methodology. Forty-five beginner Iranian students were non-randomly divided into three groups of fifteen, namely, FonF, FonFs and control group. They received eight repeated lessons during six weeks. Two tests for receptive knowledge of plural-s, and one test for productive knowledge of copula-be were used to measure the acquisitions of target features in terms of the differences in interactions that takes place in the two instructional approaches and consequently opportunities for noticing of target structures. The study used a quasi-experimental design through pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests. Then the statistical analysis was run through one-way repeated measures ANOVAS. Conversation analysis (CA) was employed by utilizing seedhouse's 'form and accuracy' and 'meaning and fluency' framework to investigate classroom interactions. The analysis revealed that the interaction in the two groups differed in organization of turn-taking, occurrence of different kinds of repair, and the frequency and function of private speech. Overall, it was revealed that the interaction in the FonF lesson was 'conversational' while that in the FonFs lesson was 'pedagogical'.

Key words: turn-taking, focus on form, focus on forms, incidental acquisition, Iranian EFL learners,

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1. Introduction

This study aimed at investigating the turn-taking processes in two different instructional contexts, namely focus on form (FonF) by employing comprehension-based instruction and focus on forms (FonFs) by employing production-based instruction. The study focused on beginner Iranian students with no prior instruction of English. It tried to reveal whether leaners can learn a grammatical structure which is not taught directly and if so, what interactional processes are more facilitative in incidental acquisition of these features.

Turn-taking refers to an "organization of practices designed to allow routine achievement of what seems to be overwhelmingly the most common default statistical value speakership of talk – in- interaction: one party talking at a time" (Schegolff, p.1). The current turn construction identified by conversation analysts that is, the 'adjacency pair'. An adjacency pair refers to two turns that are functionally related to each other in such a way that a first turn required a second turn, such as question- answer repair (Sacks & Schegolff, 1979; Sacks, Schegliff, & Jefferson 1974).

The current study chose plural *s* morpheme and copula *be* as the target structures. The reason for choosing the plural s was that the researcher as an experienced teacher was aware that beginner learners had problems in distinguishing singular from plural form and copula be was selected because it was frequent in input but the students paid little attention to it.

Incidental acquisition is a challenging concept in second language acquisition. Hulstjin (2003) defines it as the learning of a second language (L2) without intention. So what separates incidental from intentional learning is the lack of any intention to learn not the lack of awareness. As Schmidt argues noticing, that is, conscious attention to linguistic form is a crucial factor in incidental acquisition. Therefore incidental acquisition can be distinguished from implicit learning which includes the lack of awareness.

Incidental acquisition is significant in either theoretical or pedagogical level. In the theoretical level, it is important as in many learning contexts learners develop their grammatical competence mainly through incidental acquisition. It is assumed that learning takes place while learners are exposed to comprehensible input and as a result have opportunities to produce the language during communication. This kind of learning does not require the learners to make a conscious effort to acquire a particular grammatical feature. According to Nick Ellis (2002) the frequency of exposure to grammatical structures in the input is one of the key determinants of acquisition.

Incidental acquisition is also important in pedagogical level as there are restrictions on a learner's capacity to learn the grammar of a language intentionally and therefore restrictions on the extent to which grammatical

competence can be explicitly taught. Krashen (1982) points out that that even the best students will only be able to learn a small part of a grammar as a language and therefore they must rely mostly on incidental acquisition.

Incidental grammar acquisition can be explored in two main ways. One is to afford a focused task (R. Ellis, 2002) that involves learners in meaning-focused tasks and then evaluates whether they have learned the particular grammatical structure targeted by the task. In this way the learners are not required to involve in intentional learning, rather they participate in communicative tasks that afford opportunities for incidental acquisition. The other way is to provide instruction planned to teach certain grammatical or lexical items and then to investigate whether they have learned other items which took place in the input but was not the main focus of the instruction. The present study compared the incidental acquisition that happened in these two contexts.

In present study, incidental acquisition is operationalized as the leaning that rises while the learners were incidentally exposed to two target grammatical structures, namely plural *s* an copula *be* which were not directly taught. In FonF lesson, learners completed some focused tasks that were planned to teach some new words and on the other hand, expose them to the target features while in the FonFs lesson, the words were explicitly taught and also exposed the learners to the target structures incidentally. The current study aimed to determine whether differences in the types of the interactions that took place in these two kinds of lessons resulted in differences in the incidental acquisition of the two features.

The main purpose of the current study was to determine whether the turn-taking process in the two different teaching contexts were similar or different, that is, "in what ways were the classroom interactions process in two different teaching context different"? And consequently how these turn-taking processes impact on 'noticing' and as a result lead to incidental grammar acquisition.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Incidental acquisition in focus on form and focus on forms lesson

The current study examined incidental acquisition in instruction engaging FonF and FonFs instructional contexts. Long (1991) and Long & Crooks (1992) define FonF as a type of instruction in which the main focus is on meaning rather than form. It involves an infrequent shift of learners' attention from meaning to form, while the overriding focus remains on meaning. This shift occurs when both learners and teachers attempt to solve either comprehension or production problem in the communication.

FonF can be planned or unplanned ((R. Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002). Unplanned FonF occurs while the learners' attention is occasionally directed onto specific grammatical structure while they are implementing

unfocused tasks. On the other hand, in planned FonF the focus on particular linguistic structure is predetermined and a focused task is planned to afford a context for its use. In this kind of FonF attention to the selected linguistic feature is intensive. Either planned or unplanned FonF aim at incidental acquisition.

FonFs constitutes a traditional approach to language teaching in which according Long (1991, 1996) language is broken down into discrete elements which are then taught item by item in a linear, additive fashion. In this kind of instruction the main focus is directed on linguistic form but this does not mean that meaning necessarily is not excluded. In the FonF lesson grammatical development is of intentional and learners consciously improve their grammatical competence. However, FonFs can also provide opportunities for incidental acquisition by exposing the learners to input containing the target structures. The current study tried to compare incidental grammar acquisition in two different teaching contexts in which some new vocabulary items were designed to be taught. The FonF lesson was of planned, that is was planned to teach some preselected set of words which were embedded in meaning-focused tasks that is, they were not taught directly. On the other hand, the FonFs lesson taught the same set of words explicitly by employing present-practice-product methodology. Either FonF or FonFs lessons provided opportunities for comprehending or producing plural-s and copula be. But no attempt was made both types of instructions in order to teach the two target structures explicitly.

Interactionist theories like Gass, 1997 & Long, 1981 argue that L2 acquisition happens through interaction while the learners' primary attention is directed at message content but also declare that attention to form is required. Long (1996) claims that this happens while learners notice the positive evidence afforded in the input and also the gap between input and their own interlanguage. Swain (1995) claims that acquisition can occur as the learners try to produce the target language and also they notice a gap in their linguistic knowledge. So either Long or Swain emphasize the role of 'noticing' in incidental learning.

A few studies have examined the incidental acquisition of one feature in instruction that has been planned to teach some other language feature. Slimani (1989) examined FonFs. She used self-report in order to examine uptake by adult beginner learners of English in the language classroom. After receiving a 2-hour teacher –fronted form-oriented lesson that is, by introducing the target features followed by practice exercises, the learners filled in an Uptake Recall Chart in which they stated the 'completely new' language items that they have learned during the instruction. She informed that 11% of the language features that the learners claimed that they have

learned in the classroom were not the topic of the instruction. The study concluded that incidental acquisition of features not directly taught can occur.

Loewen, Erlam, and Ellis (2009) also examined incidental acquisition in FonF lesson. The main focus of the instruction was the use of indefinite article but the instruction also provided intensive exposure to third person *s*. An elicited oral imitation test and an untimed grammaticality judgment test were employed in order to measure acquisition. The results indicated no considerable improvement of the learners' knowledge of third person *s*. they claimed that the learners were unable to dual-task that is, to attend to both features at the same time.

Recently, Shintani & Ellis (2010) examined the incidental acquisition of plural *s* in FonF and FonFs lessons. The lessons were planned to teach 24 new words to language learners aged 6 to 8. The FonF lesson used lesson and do tasks and FonFs lesson employed present-practice-product methodology. In order to avoid bias, acquisition was measured by both receptive and productive tests. The results reveal that both groups improved in the receptive test, but only in the production test. They concluded that FonF lesson provided opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and this enabled them to accomplish a form-function mapping for plural *s*. This did not occur in FonFs lesson.

More recently, Shintani (2014) investigated two grammatical features, namely plural *s* morpheme and copula *be* in FonF and FonFs lessons. The two target features were not directly taught, but opportunities for learning them happened in the classroom interactions. Thirty complete beginner Japanese learners received nine repeated lessons during five weeks. The study investigated the learners' acquisition of the two features measured by tests and sought descriptions for the results in terms of the differences in interactions that took place in the two lessons and, in particular, opportunities for noticing the structures in the interactions. The results revealed that the learners in the FonF lesson showed acquisition of plural *s* but not copula *be*. Neither plural *s* nor copula *be* was acquired by the learners in FonFs lesson. The analysis of the classroom interactions indicated that there was a functional need to attend to plural *s* only in the FonF lesson.

To summarize, these studies reveal that incidental grammar acquisition can occur either in in the FonF lesson (Shintani & Ellis 2010, Shintani 2014) and in the FonFs lesson (Slimani 1989) and in some cases it did not happen in the FonFs lesson (Loewen et al 2009) or occurs less effectively than in fonF lesson (Shintani & Ellis, Shintani 2014). One probable factor that establishes whether incidental acquisition occurs is the functional value of the grammatical structure. Plural *s* is semantically meaning bearing. (Shintani & Ellis, Shintani 2014). Third person *s* is redundant in meaning. Incidental acquisition is possibly to take place while the grammatical feature conveys functional value and requires learners to make a form-meaning connection.

The two target grammatical structures examined in present study differed in terms of whether they were semantically meaning bearing or redundant. So the study aimed at indicating whether incidental acquisition was affected by the nature of the grammatical structure.

To the best of our knowledge very few studies have investigated the incidental grammar acquisition in both FonF and FonFs contexts by Iranian beginner learners, so this study was motivated because incidental acquisition is significant in both theoretical and pedagogical level and also Iranian beginner learners are not very satisfied with explicit grammar teaching and they usually have problem with it.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Forty five Iranian male beginner EFL learners aged 8 to 12 were randomly selected and then divided into three groups of 15. The instructional process took place in a private institute (Behgooyan institute) in Miyaneh. The instruction constitute 6 lessons which lasted 8 weeks. The learners met 60 minute instruction per week.

3.2 Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental design, namely two experimental and a control group by using a pre-test, immediate posttest and a delayed posttest. This study compared the impact of turn-taking processes in incidental grammar acquisition through FonF and FonFs teaching approaches.

3.3 Target Features

The current study aimed to investigate the incidental acquisition of two grammatical structures, i.e., plural-s morpheme and copula be. The main reason for choosing plural-s was that the researcher as an experienced teacher was aware that his students have serious problems in distinguishing singular nouns from plural ones. The second grammatical chosen item was copula be. The motivation for selecting this grammatical element was that this feature was very frequent in classroom interactions and in teacher's utterances but students did not pay much attention to this feature and had difficulty in using it properly.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Thirty vocabulary (twenty four in single form and six in plural form) were selected to be taught during the instruction. They were divided into three groups, that is, ten items labeling fruits and vegetables, eten for animals and ten for home appliances. In FonF lesson all the vocabularies were introduced

in every session, but in FonFs lesson, four words were taught to the learners per session.

*Treatment Materials and Procedures for the FonF Group***:** the lessons contained three listen and so tasks that required the learners to listen to their teacher's command and doing those tasks. The main reason for selecting these kinds of tasks was that learners were beginner learners and this was the only way to provide them FonF instruction. In order to achieve the task outcomes the learners were given thirty flash cards. The learners were required to listen to their teacher's command in order to complete the tasks. Each task had a different goal. The objective of each task was explained in both English and Persian to the learners (E.g. the task one required the learners to collect as many as possible cards for zoo and supermarket). So they had to listen to the teacher's instruction to a complete a task (e.g. take the ostriches to the zoo).

Treatment Materials and Procedures for the FonFs Group: as the nature of this approach requires the goal of the activities explicitly were explained to the learners, that is, leaning some new vocabularies. Every lesson was consist of five activities. The first one required the learners to repeat the vocabularies after the teacher. The second and third activities involved them to say both chorally and individually the words shown on the flashcards. The fourth and fifth activities were game-like. For example, activity five required the learners to produce the items. Six set of cards (60 flash cards) were put face down on the table. The students asked to turn over one of the cards one by one and then all the students repeated the word shown on the card. If a student turned over a card that matched one of the cards already face up, he could keep the pair of cards. If they were unable to name the item, or gave wrong answer, the teacher helped him by affording recast. When all of the cards had been turned over, the number of pairs chosen by each student was counted.

Instructional materials for the control group: the lessons for control group consisted of practicing some English songs which contained some verb phrases such as get up, go to bed, wash your hands, get dressed, do your homework, eat breakfast, go to school, go home and so on and involving in Total Physical Responses and also tracing and copying English alphabets on their notebooks. The teacher did his best to avoid using any target grammatical with the control group directly but they were exposed to target features in the teacher's utterances and songs. (See appendix F)

Test Materials: Two tested were used in order to measure the learners' acquisition of plural morpheme-s. A multiple comprehension listening test assessed the receptive knowledge, and the wug test measured the productive knowledge of the learners. A tell and do task was used to calculate the productive knowledge of copula be. As it was impossible to evaluate

comprehension of this structure there was not any receptive test for copula-be. (The full explanations of the three tests are reported in Appendix A.)

3.5 Data Analysis

The procedure of conversation analysis (CA) was employed in order to investigate the interactions that took place in two kinds of instructional materials. CA is an effective instrument to investigate interaction (Mori, 2004; Markee, 2005) CA was utilized to distinguish the differences in the turn-taking and opportunities for incidental acquisition that may happen in two kinds of instructions. The eight lessons for both experimental groups were audio-recorded and then transcribed. This was used in order to identify the individual participant utterances and nonverbal answers. The target structures made by the teacher and learners were counted. The turn-taking processes in both lessons were analyzed for occasions when chances for acquisition took place in the learner uptake. Uptake occurred in two ways: (1) learners' correction of their incorrect utterance by receiving corrective feedback and (2) learners displaying that they have successfully comprehend the input after they had at first failed to acquire it. In both cases, uptake could be self-initiated (i.e., through self-correction or by asking questions) or other-initiated (i.e., by receiving corrective feedback).

Test scores for both plural tests (i.e., the comprehension listening test and the wug test) were separated into 'old items' (four items) and 'new items' (six items) in order to discriminate between item learning (i.e., participants remembering the items they had been exposed to) and system learning (i.e., internalization of a 'rule' that could be successfully directed new exemplars of the target structure; see Robinson 2005). In the case of production of copula be and also subject-verb agreement, separate scores were calculated. The test scores were analyzed by using SPSS version 19.

4. Results and Discussion

The turn-taking processes that took place in two different teaching contexts were analyzed by employing Seed house's framework (2004), namely, form- and accuracy oriented context and meaning-and-fluency oriented contexts. Expert 1 which is extracted from a FoF lesson, shows the sample kind of interaction in this instructional context. After the instructor's command, Reza demanded clarification (line 2), which provoked a react on the part of the teacher. The teacher initiated his utterance with a clear one. (Line 3), then he tried to attract the learner's attention to the difference between singular and plural objects (line 4) before repeating his instruction (line 5). Ahmad benefited from his teacher's explanation, as he promptly selected the correct card. (Line 6). However, Reza was unable to notice the plural form and inevitably asked for the number (line 7). Akbar replied to Reza's request (line

8), which caused the teacher's providing some kind of support. (Line 9). As a result, all the learners could complete the task.

EXCERPT 1 (*FontF Lesson 5)*

1. Teacher: ok the next one. Please take the ostriches, ostriches, to the zoo.
2. Reza: (1.0) one? One?
3. T: listen, listen carefully. گوش کن با دقت گوش کن
4. ((Shows the singular flash card)) ostrich (.) (Shows the plural card) ostriches (.)
5. Taha: ((hiding the card in her hands)) please take the ostriches to the zoo.
6. Majid: ((charges the card in his hand to the other card quickly))
7. Reza: one?
8. Ahmad: three.
9. T: three yes (.) ostriches.

This expert exemplified a predictable interaction in the FonF lesson. As shown the FonF lessons required the learners to complete the tasks successfully rather than proper production of the target words. Although the sequence of turn-taking mostly initiated by the teacher but the control of turn-taking sequence was shared by both students and the teacher, the students also started some turn which resulted in more turns on the part of the students. So the turn-taking process in FonF lessons was closely corresponded to Seedhouse's (2004) meaning and fluency contexts.

The turn-taking procedure in FonFs lessons was very different from that of FonF. Expert 2 that is extracted form a FonFs lesson (activity 5) displayed that at first the teacher gave a turn to one of the students (line 1) and he turned over a flash card (line 2). He noticed that the same card was face up and then he immediately took it, but he did not utter the name of the card he collected, therefore, the teacher requested him to tell the name of the objects that he had chosen. (Line 5). The student replied the teacher by producing the object in singular form. (Line 6). Then the teacher afforded a recast (line 7), but the student could not repair his erroneous utterance. (Line 8). This process, that is, repair sequence repeated again by the teacher by it did not lead to uptake, so the teacher immediately allocated the turn to another one. (Line 9)

EXCERPT 2 (FonFs, Lesson 3)

1. T: okay, now it's your turn, Milad.
2. Milad: ((turns over one of the cards on the table))
3. T: what are they?
4. Pooya ((collects the card with another card on the table))
5. T: wait (.) what are they? What are they? آنها چی هستند؟
6. Milad: toothbrush
7. T: toothbrushes

8. Mahdi: toothbrush
9. T: toothbrushes, yes. ((Looks at the next student)) okay, now it's your turn.

The above discussed expert revealed three crucial characteristics of the interaction processes in the FonFs lessons: (1) the main focus was on accurate production of target words. (2) The turn-taking procedure was tightly managed by the instructor. (3) The interaction process contained the pervasive initiate-respond-follow-up exchange procedure. The qualifications of turn-taking processes which happened in the above-mentioned two different context of teaching procedures is closely related to Seedhouse's (2004) 'form and accuracy oriented context' and 'meaning and fluency oriented context'.

The research question that this study tackled, was "in what ways were the turn-taking processes in FonF and FonFs different". The investigation of the three features of the conversation namely, turn-taking, repair and private speech revealed marked differences in the two lessons.

Turn-taking process demonstrated in the FonFs lesson related to Seedhouse's (2004) 'form and accuracy context'. The conversations in the FonFs lesson characteristically concerned short sequences consisting of single 'initiate-response-follow up (IRF), frequent occurrence of teacher-initiated display questions, and teacher's strict control of turn-taking and also frequent turns in chorus. Topics were not improved as the focus of the interaction were on accurate production of the target words. On the other hand, turn-taking process in FonF lesson demonstrated characteristics of Seedhouse's 'meaning and fluency context'. It involved longer sequences with several exchanges that engaged overlapping, frequent occurrences of student-initiated referential questions, learners' control of turn-taking, and no occurrence of choral turns and also the types of learner turns were more different than in the FonFs lesson and at the same time there were some circumstances while the learners' initiated improvement of the topics that the task constructed.

The repair sequence that took place in FonFs group was almost completely medium-oriented, and typically initiated and completed by the teacher. The characteristics of the FonFs lesson also related to Seedhouse's (2004) 'form and accuracy' context in which as Seedhouse argues, it is "the teacher who evaluate assess the accuracy of the learners' form and who consequently mostly initiates the repair sequence (p147)". In the FonF lesson, on the other hand, repair process was completely message-oriented and it was frequently initiated and completely by the learners. Researchers claim that self-initiated repair fosters learning by inducing 'noticing'.

In current study, private speech involved repetition and use of own language resources. While repetition was the predominant characteristic of

both lessons, the purpose of the repetition appeared to be primarily different in the two lessons. In the FonF lesson repetition was mostly happened while the learners were completing the tasks (i.e., within the task) whereas in the FonFs lesson repetition only took place while the learners were not trying to produce the needed vocabulary items (i.e., outside the task). The investigation of conversation revealed that the private speech in in the FonF lesson mostly worked as a means for accomplishing self-regulation but in the case of FonFs it did not. This might be because the FonFs lesson provided all the information needed to complete activities that is, through the pictorial images of the target words and as a result did not required the learners to solve any problems, on the other hand, the FonF lesson appeared to require self-regulation by the learners, leading to frequent occurrence of private speech.

The findings of the present study were in line with Shintani (2015). The turn-taking sequence in current study was the same as Shintani (2015) in that the turn-taking process in FonF lesson required the learners to 'notice' plural *s* and consequently acquire it.

Overall, the turn-taking process was completely different and this supports Seedhouse's claim that classroom conversation differs according to context. The investigation also revealed that the design and implementation of tasks in the FonF lesson affected the occurrence and type of conversation, demonstrating that tasks can create context that involve meaning-focused and authentic conversation while they are designed and implement properly.

5. Conclusion and Implication

The current study tried to examine in depth the process of instruction happening in the FonF (present-practice-production) and in FonFs (task based language teaching) interventions that were delivered in the study. The main goal of this study was to establish the extent to which the processes of the two types of instruction were similar or different. As revealed, the nature of the two different instructional methods resulted in different interactional processes during the project, that is, in FonF lesson the emphasis was on establishing mutual understanding in order to achieve task outcome while on the other hand, in FonFs lesson the main focus is on producing the accurate target language (L2) forms. The repair processes (recasts) also were completely different in two different teaching contexts, that is, in the FonFs were almost entirely medium-oriented while in the case of FonF lesson they were message-oriented. On the other hand, the turn-taking process in FonF lesson were mostly managed by the teacher whereas in FonFs lesson it was mainly handled by the learners. The repair sequence in FonFs was mostly both initiated and completed by the teacher, whereas this process in FonF lesson mostly initiated by the learners and completed by both the teacher and the learners.

As long (1991) argues learners mostly learn from interaction. So classroom interaction, that is to say, learner-learner and teacher-learner interactions are very important as they enable the learners to negotiate meaning as some problems arise while they are involved in meaningful communication. As the nature of Commutative language teaching approaches like task based language teaching (TBLT) reflects, classroom interaction is very significant since they enable the learners to be communicatively competent in order to use language in real life situation.

Overall, the differences in the turn-taking processes in two teaching contexts can be summarized as follows: while the interactions that took place in FonFs lesson were fundamentally 'pedagogical', those in the FonF lesson were predominantly 'conversational'. This reflects the essential differences between 'tasks' and 'activities'. Tasks provoke incidental where learners involve in conversation and the target language is used as a tool for communicating whereas activities involve intentional learning where the L2 is considered as an object to be learned. It is now possible to investigate whether these differences had any influence on learning outcomes of the two kinds teaching contexts.

Hence, this study can conclude that FonF instruction is more effective than FonFs instruction. All in all, it should be noted that of the two techniques applied for investigating the turn-taking processes between Iranian beginner EFL learners, FonF was found to be more effective than FonFs.

The findings of present study brought about some pedagogical implications for EFL curriculum developers, teachers, learners, and those preparing grammar textbooks. Given the benefits of FonF reported in the present study, the findings showed that focusing learners' attention on achieving the task outcomes resulted in meaningful interaction. Moreover, the findings indicated that the nature of the turn-taking process in FonF group led to distinguishing plural from singular form and consequently resulted in incidental grammar acquisition.

There are several factors that have posed limitations on the generalizability of this piece of research. One evident limitation of study is the limited sample size: In particular, the number of participants was very small. The period of implementing the research was somehow short (6 weeks). The participants of this research were selected from complete beginner students. The study was limited to this kind of participants for three reasons: First, by examining these children the researcher could be certain that they did not have any familiarity with English outside the classroom. Second, the researcher as an institute instructor had a convenience access to this kind of participants. Third, there is few research that has studied incidental L2 acquisition by very young beginner learners.

Therefore, care must be exercised in generalizing the findings to other learners. Furthermore, the participants of the present research included just male learners; so gender was a variable. Besides this variable, the results of this research may have been affected by some other variables such as social and cultural factors and individual differences, which were not considered in this research.

The participants for this study were young beginner learners who had had no previous experience of a formal English language classroom and no communication with English outside the classroom. The study was limited to this kind of participants for three reasons: First, by examining these children the researcher could be certain that they did not have any familiarity with English outside the classroom. Second, the researcher as an institute instructor had a convenience access to this kind of participants. Third, there is few research that has studied incidental L2 acquisition by very young beginner learners.

Therefore, future research needs to analyze the effects of different techniques of FonF and FonFs instructions in classroom interaction in learning of various grammatical structures on learners with different proficiency levels. The impact of individual learner factors such as language aptitude and working memory on the acquisition resulting from FonF and FonFs should also be examined.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Test materials

Comprehension test .This was a multiple-choice test. The students were given a test sheet consisting of ten pairs of pictures. Each set had two pictures (one representing the item in singular form and one in plural form). The participants listened to an audio-recorded word and then indicated which picture corresponded to the word they had heard. They had five seconds to respond to each item. Ten words were tested in both their singular and plural forms (i.e., there were ten questions in total). Four of them had appeared in both singular and plural form in the treatment (i.e., "old items") while six had appeared only in the singular form (i.e., "new items"). The test was administered to the participants in their groups. Care was taken to ensure the participants could not see the other students' test papers during the test.

Wug Test. This was adapted from Berko's (1958) test for young L1 learners. The test consisted of ten items. There were five items testing words that had been introduced in the treatment and five testing nonsense words (i.e., ten questions in total). The test was administered to participants individually by the researcher. The researcher first provided the singular form orally while pointing to a picture (e.g., "This is a wug"), and then pointed to the picture depicting two objects while saying "There are two of them. There are two ____" in order to elicit a plural noun. The questions were provided in English and Persian. Ample time was given for the participants to answer.

Tell-and-Do task. This was a one-way information-gap task performed by the researcher working individually with each participant. Two different sheets for the participants and the researcher were prepared. The participants' sheet had ten pictures in various colors (five representing singular items and five plural items). The researcher's sheet had the same ten pictures as the participant sheet but they were not in color. The researcher explained in Persian that the participants needed to tell the researcher how to color the researcher's pictures. The learners were given flash cards representing all the objects and colors needed to complete the test. They were allowed to ask the L2 words for the objects and colors at any time during the task. The task was piloted with five slightly older learners with three to four years of experience in learning English to establish that it successfully elicited the target items. Participants were awarded one point if they attempted to use copula *be* irrespective of subject-verb agreement. They were awarded two points if they used the copula with subject-verb agreement.

Appendix B

Individual Scores for the Comprehension Test, the Wug Test, and the Tell-and-Do Task

	Comprehension test								Wug test						Tell-and-Do task			
	Pre-test		post-test1		post-test2				pre-test		post-test1		post-test2		pre-test		post-test1	post-test2
	Old		Ne		Old		Ne		Old		Ne		Old		Ne		Ag	Pr
	Ag	Pr	Ag	pr														
FonF	2	2	4	5	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	3	1	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	3	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	3	4	5	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	2	3	6	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	2	4	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	4	4	6	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	1	4	5	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	3	4	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	1	3	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	3	4	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	2	2	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	4	4	4	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	2	3	4	6	3	6	0	0	2	4	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonF	1	2	4	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	1	3	4	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	2	2	2	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	2	4	3	6	4	4	0	0	2	7	2	7	0	0	9	5	9	5
FonFs	1	3	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	1	4	2	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	2	3	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	2	4	4	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	1	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	3	0	2	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	2	2	1	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

FonFs	2	2	2	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	0	4	4	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	0	4	1	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	0	3	2	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FonFs	0	4	1	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	3	0	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	2	4	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	2	3	2	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	0	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	3	2	3	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	0	1	1	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	2	2	1	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	0	1	1	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	2	3	3	4	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	2	4	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	0	1	3	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	5	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	3	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Con-G	1	1	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NOTE: Prd. = Production scores, Agr. = Subject-verb agreement scores.

Appendix C: Transcription Conventions (adapted from Markee, 2008)

Name:	pseudonym of an identified participant
T:	the teacher talking
Ss:	several or all students talking simultaneously
[ ]	overlapped talk
(0.0)	length of silence
(.)	micro-pause
?	rising intonation
!	strong emphasis, with falling intonation
.	a period indicates falling (final) intonation
,	a comma indicates low-rising intonation suggesting continuation
::	noticeably lengthened sound
Underlined	marked stress
CAPS	loud volume
((words))	comments by the transcriber
/ /	phonetic transcription
(= *words*)	English translation of the Persian wor

Appendix D

Pretest

pretest

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
BetweenGroups	5.511	2	2.756	1.587	.217
Within Groups	72.933	42	1.737		
Total	78.444	44			

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no statistically significant differences among three groups on pretest, F(2, 42) = 1.58, P = .21 (with an alpha level of .05).

Immediate posttest

immediate

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	120.044	2	60.022	18.321	.000
Within Groups	137.600	42	3.276		
Total	257.644	44			

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was statistically significant differences among three groups on immediate posttest, F(2, 42) = 18.32, P < .001 (with an alpha level of .05).

Delayed posttest

delayed

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	72.933	2	36.467	11.077	.000

Within Groups	138.267	42	3.292	
Total	211.200	44		

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was statistically significant differences among three groups on delayed posttest, F(2, 42) = 11.07, P < .001 (with an alpha level of .05)

Descriptive Statistics for the Comprehension Test, Wug Test, and Tell-and-Do Task

	Group	*Pre-test*		*Post-test 1*		*Post-test 2*	
		Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
Comprehension Test (Plural –*s*)							
Old items	FonF	35.57	14.30	84.55	26.76	90.00	22.76
	FonFs	34.67	29.58	42.33	16.59	40.00	24.62
	Control group	32.00	23.39	35.00	22.52	28.32	22.16
New items	FonF	51.22	15.27	75.44	24.38	79.95	18.05
	FonFs	47.89	21.33	52.20	18.66	51.11	27.78
	Control group	42.89	22.12	47.11	14.66	44.45	13.34
Wug test (Plural –*s*)							
Old items	FonF	0.00	0.00	13.23	35.14	13.31	34.17
	FonFs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Control group	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
New items	FonF	0.00	0.00	12.40	33.07	11.56	29.13
	FonFs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Control group	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tell-and-Do task (Copula *be*)							
Production	FonF	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.75	1.00	3.75
	FonFs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Control group	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S-V Agreement	FonF	0.00	0.00	0.32	1.27	0.33	1.27
	FonFs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Control group	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Results of comparative test (Mann–Whitney U) for the comprehension test

Test	*Old/new*	*Comparative results*	*Values*
Pre-test	Old items	FonF = FonFs = control group	U=111.000, *p*=.97, *r*=.00
	New items	FonF = FonFs = control group	U=104.500, *p*=.75, *r*=.09

Post-test 1	Old items	FonF>FonFs group	&	control	U=23.000, *p*=.00, *r*=.67
	New items	FonF>FonFs group	&	control	U=45500, *p*=.01, *r*=.40
Post-test 2	Old items	FonF>FonFs group	&	control	U=16.500, *p*=.00, *r*=.72
	New items	FonF>FonFs group	&	control	U=42.000, *p*=.00, *r*=.51

FonF = FonFs = control group: There was no significant difference between FonF and FonFs

FonF>FonFs & control group: the FonF group outperformed the FonFs and control group

Chi-square tests results

Comparisons		*Results*	*Values*
Frequency of the target features	plural *–s*	FonF >FonFs&Con-	χ^2 =23.800, **df**=1, <.01, *w*=.10
	copula *be*	FonF >FonFs&Con-	χ^2=63.022, **df**=1, <.01, *w*=.15
Number of "acquired" students in the Comprehension Test	post-test 1	FonF >FonFs &Con-	χ^2 =15.415, *df*=1, <.01, *w*=.74
	post-test 2	FonF >FonFs&Con-	χ^2 =21.927, *df*=1, <.01, *w*=.85
Number of "acquired" students in the Wug test	post-test 1	FonF =FonFs=Con-	χ^2 =2.132, *df*=1, >.01, *w*=.26
	post-test 2	FonF= FonFs=Con-	χ^2 =2.132, *df*=1, >.01, *w*=.25
Number of "acquired" students in the Tell-and Do task	post-test 1	FonF =FonFs=Con-	χ^2 =2.132, *df*=1, >.01, *w*=.26
	post-test 2	FonF = FonFs=Con-	χ^2 =2.132, *df*=1, >.01, *w*=.26

Appendix E
Sample plural-s comprehension test

1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Appendix F
camel, ostrich, crocodile, monkey , seal, giraffe., bear, peacock, pan, ladle, spoon, fork, glass, plate, soap, toothbrush, banana, pepper, eggplant, radish, lettuce, pear, zucchini, peach (+ crocodiles, soaps, toothbrushes, ostriches, pears, bananas)

Appendix G
Control group songs
Mulberry Bush

Here we go 'round the Mulberry bush,
The Mulberry bush, the Mulberry bush.

Here we go 'round the Mulberry bush,
So early in the morning.
This is the way we wash the clothes,
Wash the clothes, wash the clothes.
This is the way we wash the clothes
So early in the morning.
This is the way we iron the clothes,
Iron the clothes, iron the clothes.
This is the way we iron the clothes
So early in the morning.
This is the way we scrub the floor,
Scrub the floor, scrub the floor.
This is the way we scrub the floor
So early in the morning.
This is the way we sweep the house,
Sweep the house, sweep the house.
This is the way we sweep the house
So early in the morning.

Here we go round the Mulberry bush, the Mulberry bush
the mulberry bush, here we go round the mulberry bush
early in the morning
This is the way you wash your face, wash your face, wash your face
this is the way you wash your face, every Monday morning
wash, wash, wash your face (repeat)
This is the way you brush your teeh, brush your teeth, brush your teeth
this is the way you brush your teeth, every Tuesday morning
brush, brush, brush your teeth (repeat)
This is the way you comb your hair, comb your hair, comb your hair
This is the way you comb your hair, every Wednesday morning
comb, comb, comb your hair (repeat)
This is the way you take a bath, take a bath, take a bath
this is the way you take a bath every Thursday morning
take, take, take a bath (repeat)
This is the way you go to school, go to school, go to school
this is the way you go to school, every Friday morning
go, go, go to school (repeat)
This is the way you read a book, read a book, read a book
This is the way you read a book, every Saturday morning
read, read, read a book (repeat)

Twinkle, twinkle, little star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
****
When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
****
Then the traveler in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
****
In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
****
As you're bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveler in the dark,—
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN

London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down
London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.
How shall we build it up again, up again, up again?
How shall we build it up again, my fair lady?
Build it up with silver and gold
Silver and gold will be stolen away
Build it up with wood and clay
Wood and clay will wash away
Build it up with iron and steel
Iron and steel will bend and bow
Build it up with stone so strong
Stone will last for ages long.