

Assessment of Effectiveness of Short-Term Instructed SLA: Score Analysis

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Abstract: *The current study made analysis of scores by short term pre-session students at UDSM. The aim of the analysis was to make appraisal of effectiveness of course so as to empirically account for its worth and continuance. Two programmes were involved; a COET group that consisted of 19 Tanzanian students (8 females and 11 males) and a programme for a group of 36 Mozambican students (25 females and 11 males). Data were obtained from coordinators of the programmes; the data were recorded scores of pre-test and post-tests as well as marked scripts of the same. The data were analyzed through content analysis and sums and means were computed via excel spread sheet formulae. Findings show that after the candidates whose baseline proficiency was high in pre-test scores showed significant gain of proficiency after the post-test while those who score very low marks during pre-test either stagnated (no improvement resisted) or decreased further. As for gender comparison, bigger gained proficiency was registered more in female students than male ones. It is conclude that while score analysis showing high achievers improving more and low achievers stagnating or decreasing in terms of gained proficiency doesn't tell the full story about overall learner proficiency, it does provide insights on the role of pre-action motivation for learners.*

Key words: Instructed SLA; Pre-test; Post-Test; Score Analysis

1. Introduction

The research and theory on SLA do not uniformly account of how instruction can best facilitate language learning. There is considerable controversy (Ellis, 1993) about efficacy of instructed SLA. More particularly, there is no agreement as to whether instruction should be based on a traditional focus-on-forms approach, involving the systematic

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teaching of grammatical features in accordance with a structural syllabus, or a focus-on-form approach, involving attention to linguistic features in the context of communicative activities derived from a task-based syllabus or some kind of combination of the two. Nor is there agreement about the efficacy of teaching explicit knowledge or about what type of corrective feedback to provide or even when explicit grammar teaching should commence. These controversies reflect both the complexity of the object of enquiry (instructed language acquisition) and also the fact that SLA is still in its infancy.

Traditionally, language instruction has been directed at developing rule-based competence (i.e. knowledge of specific grammatical rules) through the systematic teaching of pre-selected structures - what Long (1991) has referred to as a focus-on-forms approach. While such an approach certainly receives support from the research that has investigated direct intervention in interlanguage development, curriculum designers and teachers need to recognize that this type of instruction is as likely to result in students learning rote-memorized patterns as in internalizing abstract rules (Myles, 2004). This need not be seen as an instructional failure however as such patterns are clearly of value to the learner. It points instead to an acknowledgement of what can be realistically achieved by a focus-on-forms approach, especially with young, beginner learners.

Instruction can seek to provide an intensive focus on pre-selected linguistic forms (as in a focus-on-forms approach or in a lesson built around a focused task) or it can offer incidental and extensive attention to form through corrective feedback in task-based lessons. There are pros and cons for both intensive and extensive grammar instruction. Some structures may not be mastered without the opportunity for repeated practice. Harley (1989), for example found that Anglophone learners of L2 French failed to acquire the distinction between the preterite and imparfait past tenses after hours of exposure (and presumably some corrective feedback) in an immersion programme, but were able to improve their accuracy in the use of these two tenses after intensive instruction. However, intensive instruction is time consuming (in Harley's study the targeted structures were taught over an 8 week period!) and thus there will be constraints on how many structures can be addressed. Extensive grammar instruction, on the other hand, affords the opportunity for large numbers of grammatical structures to be addressed. Also, more likely than not, many of the structures will be attended to repeatedly over a period of time. Further, because this kind of instruction involves a

response to the errors each learner makes, it is individualized and affords the skilled teacher on-line opportunities for the kind of contextual analysis that Celce-Murcia (2002) recommends as a basis for grammar teaching. Ellis et al (2001) reported that extensive instruction occurred relatively frequently in communicative adult ESL lessons through both pre-emptive (i.e. teacher or student-initiated) and reactive (i.e. corrective feedback) attention to form. Loewen (2002) showed that learners who experienced such momentary form-focused episodes demonstrated subsequent learning of the forms addressed in both immediate and delayed tests. However, it is not possible to attend to those structures that learners do not attempt to use (i.e. extensive instruction cannot deal with avoidance). Also, of course, it does not provide the in-depth practice that some structures may require before they can be fully acquired. Arguably, then, instruction needs to be conceived of in terms of both approaches.

There followed a number of empirical studies designed to (1) compare the order of acquisition of instructed and naturalistic learners (e.g. Pica, 1983), (2) compare the success of instructed and naturalistic learners (Long, 1983) and (3) examine whether attempts to teach specific grammatical structures resulted in their acquisition (Ellis, 1984). These studies showed that, by and large, the order and sequence of acquisition was the same for instructed and naturalistic learners, a finding supported by later research (e.g. Ellis, 1989; Pienemann, 1989); that instructed learners generally achieved higher levels of grammatical competence than naturalistic learners and that instruction was no guarantee that learners would acquire what they had been taught. This led to the conclusion that it was beneficial to teach grammar, but that it was necessary to ensure it was taught in a way that was compatible with the natural processes of acquisition.

Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis of studies investigating form-focussed instruction demonstrated that the extent of the effectiveness of instruction is contingent on the way in which it is measured. They distinguished four types of measurement: 1. metalinguistic judgement (e.g. a grammaticality judgment test), 2 selected response (e.g. multiple choice), 3 constrained constructed response (e.g. gap filling exercises), and 4 free constructed response (e.g. a communicative task). They found that the magnitude of effect was greatest in the case of (2) and (3) and least in (4). Yet, arguably, it is (4) that constitutes the best measure of learners' L2 proficiency, as it is this that corresponds most closely to the kind of language use found outside the classroom. The ability to get a

multiple choice question right amounts to very little if the student is unable to use the target feature in actual communication.

Pica's (1985) cross-sectional study compared the production of 18 adult native speakers of Spanish acquiring English through either (1) classroom instruction exclusively, (2) input solely from everyday social interaction, or (3) a combination of (1) and (2). Results of the study showed that classroom instruction had a selective effect on the learners' production, accelerating the development of accuracy for linguistically simple plural *s*, but retarding the attainment of target-like use for the more linguistically complex progressive *-ing*. For highly complex grammatical morphology such as article *a*, instruction appeared to have little impact, as all three groups followed a similar developmental sequence, unaffected by their conditions of exposure to English L2.

Findings of the study suggest that complex areas of target grammar might be excluded from direct instruction in the second-language classroom, so that increased attention can be given to items more responsive to classroom presentation and practice.

Spada and Loghtbown (1999) pretested 150 francophone children (age 11–12 years) with a variety of measures (including oral production, a preference task, and scrambled questions) designed to probe their knowledge and use of English questions. Each child's developmental stage (in terms of the stages of acquisition of English questions proposed by Pienemann, Johnston, & Brindley, 1988) was determined. In oral production, most students were at stage 2 of the 5-stage sequence. Over the next 2 weeks, they participated in classroom activities that exposed them to hundreds of English questions, mostly consistent with stage 4 and stage 5. These focussed activities were guided by their regular classroom teachers and integrated into the communicative activities that were typical of their English as a second language (ESL) program. The focussed activities accounted for about 1 hour out of a 4- or 5-hour day in these intensive ESL classes. Following this intervention, the children were posttested, using essentially the same measures used on the pretest. Contrary to the predictions of Pienemann's (1985) teachability hypothesis, learners who were at stage 3 prior to the focussed activities did not progress more in their use of questions in the oral production task than students at stage 2 at the time of the pretest. However, on other tasks, there was evidence that all students had some knowledge of stage 4 and stage 5 questions. Further analysis showed that students tended to accept higher stage questions (with inversion of subject and verb) if the subjects were pronouns, but not if they were nouns. This pattern is consistent with

that of French, their first language (L1). The study adds to the literature that shows an interaction between developmental sequences and L1 influence and also suggests that explicit instruction, including contrastive metalinguistic information, may be needed to help students move beyond apparently stable interlanguage patterns.

Miralpeix (2007) analyzed the possible effects of Age of Onset (AO), Cognitive Maturity (Age at Testing-AT-) and Amount of Exposure (AE) on the productive vocabularies of learners of English as a Foreign Language (FL). Three groups of bilingual Catalan/Spanish students were tested towards the end of Secondary Education. The tasks were analysed with measures extrinsic to the learners' production. Firstly, their Lexical Frequency Profiles were computed with *VocabProfile* (Nation, 1995). Secondly, *P_Lex* (Meara, 2001) was used to assess the lexical richness of the texts. Furthermore, Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latin Cognate indices were obtained for each of the tasks. Results show that an early AO does not necessarily suppose an advantage for Early Starters (ES), as Late Starters' (LS) productive vocabularies are very similar to those of their younger peers.

Swain (1981) and Cummins and Swain (1986) found that older learners acquired cognitively demanding aspects of L2 proficiency more rapidly than younger learners. In a school immersion context in Canada, which does not necessarily imply any contact with the language outside school, they show that older learners acquired more vocabulary in the same amount of time than did younger learners, as evaluated in a Picture Vocabulary Test.

McLaughlin, Osterhout, and Kim (2004) studied the rate of L2 vocabulary learning of adult learners during the first classes in a second language and they reached the conclusion that they learned different aspects of L2 words quite fast (initially about form and then about meaning). Adult L2 learning is not then "uniformly slow and laborious" as "some aspects of the language are acquired with remarkable speed" (2004:704). Also Ervin Tripp specifies that adults "tend to pay most attention to vocabulary".

Rodríguez-Modoñedo conducted an analysis of the spontaneous production of 4 Spanish-speaking children (between the ages of 0;9 and 2;11) from the CHILDES data base (López Ornat, Linaza, Montes, and Vila corpora). All sentences containing V-O structures were analyzed. From a total of 991 examples, the children made a total of 17 errors (8 cases of a present but not required and 9 cases of a omitted when required

with animate and specific objects). This amounts to a 98.38% accuracy rate with Differential Object Marking before age 3.

Donesch-Jezo (2011) presented the evidence from a class- room-based, small-scale study of the effect of output on learner acquisition of L2 modal verbs, adjectives and adverbs conveying the meanings of uncertainty, all of which are parts of speech that are important metadiscourse items. The results of the present study suggest that an approach in which students are encouraged to produce comprehensible output, combined with their being provided with learning reinforcement ensured by appropriate feedback, can be an effective source of establishing long-lasting grammatical accuracy in the students' target language.

Martin and Ellis (2012) analyzed phonological short-term memory (PSTM) and working memory (WM) and their relationship with vocabulary and grammar learning in an artificial foreign language. Non-word repetition, non-word recognition, and listening span were used as memory measures. Participants learned the singular forms of vocabulary for an artificial foreign language before being exposed to plural forms in sentence contexts. Participants were tested on their ability to induce the grammatical forms and to generalize the forms to novel utterances. Individual differences in final abilities in vocabulary and grammar correlated between 0.44 and 0.76, depending on the measure.

Despite these strong associations, the results demonstrated significant independent effects of PSTM and WM on L2 vocabulary learning and on L2 grammar learning, some of which were mediated by vocabulary and some of which were direct effects.

Hanan (2015) investigated the extent to which English learners of L2 German (aged 9-11) benefitted from instruction on accusative case-marking (*den*) for masculine definite articles in German, a problematic feature for L1 English learners due to a reliance on word order when assigning grammatical roles (as predicted by MacWhinney's Competition Model and VanPatten's First Noun Principle).

Two input-based interventions provided explicit information plus EITHER: Task Essential Form- Meaning Connection (TE-FMC) activities forcing attention on the article *and* its role-assigning function; OR Task Essential-Form (TE-F) activities forcing attention on the article only ('spot the form'). Learners were randomly assigned to the TE-FMC ($n = 45$) and TE-F ($n = 41$) treatments. A control group ($n = 52$) received instruction on lexical items, but no exposure to *den*. Two untimed written tasks (sentence matching, gap fill), three one-to-one oral tasks (act-out

comprehension, act-out production, elicited imitation), and a metalinguistic task were administered as pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests to assess knowledge of *der* and *den*.

Both interventions yielded large, durable gains across the written and oral tasks. The Control group made no improvement. The TE-FMC and TE-F learners' verbalisable knowledge also improved at post-test, but deteriorated by delayed post-test. Under both conditions, learners had developed explicit knowledge of the target feature, available on untimed written tasks, as well as more automatized knowledge, accessible under time and communicative pressure. Fine-grained analysis revealed that group-level gains could be accounted for by a sub-group of learners within each condition, reflecting the influence of individual differences on instructional effectiveness. The findings contribute to previous research by demonstrating the beneficial role of explicit instruction and knowledge for child L2 learning.

A longitudinal research study by Bryant et al (2000) investigated the relationship between children's (eight to ten years old) explicit linguistic awareness and their understanding of the orthographic rule governing the use of the apostrophe used to denote possession. The participants completed a series of awareness tasks (morpho-syntactic, phonological syntactic/semantic) followed by a spelling task in which they had to write singular nouns in the genitive case (with apostrophe) or plural nouns in the nominative/accusative cases (without apostrophe). Bryant et al (2000) found that success in learning correct use of the apostrophe depended upon the learners' explicit morpho-syntactic awareness.

Similarly, Bryant et al (1997) sought to determine whether instruction would be effective in improving learners' knowledge of the grammatical function of apostrophes. Two intervention studies were conducted with children aged nine to 11. The experimental group in both studies received instruction relating to the use of apostrophes with genitive nouns and their performance was compared to that of a taught control group (same materials but no explicit instruction relating to the use of apostrophes), and an untaught control group. In both studies the experimental group was found to significantly improve in their use of the target feature compared to either control group (Bryant et al., 1997). Further the second study found additional evidence that it was the children's explicit awareness of grammatical distinctions which played an important role in learning about apostrophes and that the difficulties the learners had in using apostrophes were due to limited awareness of the genitive case (Bryant et al., 1997). Further, in line with such findings, a study by

Nunes et al (2003) demonstrated that instruction resulted in significant gains in participants' (aged seven to eight) use of morphological spelling rules (e.g. how morpheme boundaries affect the pronunciation of particular letter sequences, such as *sh* in *misheard* or *disheartened*), as measured on a standardised read-aloud test and a spelling assessment.

In addition to studies investigating the role of morpho-syntactic awareness, two in-depth systematic reviews were carried out into the effectiveness of teaching a) syntax (sentence-level grammar) (Andrews, et al., 2004) and b) sentence combining (e.g. use of conjunctions) (Andrews, et al., 2004) on learners' accuracy in written comprehension. In a review of 18 studies, Andrews, et al. (2004) found that grammar teaching methods such as *sentence combining* were effective in improving the syntactic maturity of learners from as young as age 5 to age 16. In contrast Andrews, et al (2004) reviewed 10 studies, which had explored the effectiveness of traditional (e.g. classifying and describing the relationship between internal elements of a sentence) and / or transformative (e.g. teaching the basic deep structural rules and how they transform into actual spoken or written utterances) grammar teaching approaches and argued based on their review that no convincing evidence has yet been put forward to suggest that the teaching of syntax is useful in improving learners' accuracy in writing. Harley (1998), for example, investigated the effect of focus on form instruction on learners' (seven to eight year old French immersion pupils) proficiency in grammatical gender in French. The experimental intervention took the form of classroom games, which required the learners to pay attention to gender distinctions: for instance naming objects using the correct masculine (*un*) or feminine article (*une*); or performing an action when they heard a masculine (e.g. touch toes) or feminine noun (e.g. hands on head) (Harley, 1998, p. 163). Harley (1998) found that the learners improved in their ability to discriminate between masculine and feminine articles as well as demonstrating greater accuracy in their productive use of the correct gender article with familiar nouns. However the learners were not able to use their knowledge of noun endings in order to predict the gender of novel nouns, suggesting that the instruction had resulted in item rather than system learning. Harley (1998) argued that this was likely due to the volume of new vocabulary that was introduced in the instruction sessions. Consequently the learners may have been pre-occupied with the meaning of the novel vocabulary items and therefore unable to attend to the relevant grammatical features.

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White and Ranta (2002) found that the provision of metalinguistic information regarding possessive determiners in English, coupled with contrastive L1/L2 information (Rule group), led to an improvement in the learners' use of the target feature as measured on an oral picture description task. Additionally the Rule group were found to outperform the Comparison group (who had received no explicit instruction relating to possessive determiner use) on a metalinguistic ability task (White & Ranta, 2002). These findings demonstrated that not only did the provision of metalinguistic information improve the learners' knowledge "about" the target feature, but also their knowledge of how to "use" the forms in oral communication (White, 2008; White & Ranta, 2002). It should be noted that a number of pupils from both the Rule (at pre-test) and Comparison groups (at post-test) had acquired the target grammatical rule without instruction. White and Ranta (2002) attributed this finding to individual learner differences in language analytic ability; those learners with high analytic ability were able to induce the target grammatical rule simply from previous exposure to target language input. For those learners with lower analytic ability, however, such 'rule-inducement' was not possible.

In a study by Bouffard and Sarkar (2008) participants (aged eight to nine) were shown recordings of their performance on communicative activities and encouraged to discuss and analyse any errors which they observed. Bouffard and Sarkar (2008) found that the learners' ability to discuss errors improved considerably over the three-month study. Further, the learners were able to use their analysis as a tool to improve their language awareness, for example of the link between their L1 (English) and their L2 (French) use. Moreover the findings demonstrated that it is possible to teach younger learners how to "draw on their grammatical knowledge to build their developing L2" (Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008, p. 21). As one example, over the course of the study the learners were able to co-construct a basic understanding of verb tenses in French. Such findings highlight that learners as young as eight years old are able to successfully attend to form and explore languages as "dynamic systems" provided they are taught how to (Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008). Similarly, Hanan (2011) investigated the metalinguistic ability of young English learners of L2 German using a one-to-one oral task in which the learners were asked to identify and discuss key grammatical features of the target language. The learners demonstrated the ability to discuss and put forth hypotheses regarding the L2 grammar, through drawing on both their L1 and L2 explicit knowledge. This finding is in line with that of Bouffard and Sarkar (2008) who highlight the importance of learners having an awareness of both the L1 and L2, and argue that "the process of learning an L2 might be embedded in an understanding of how the L1 system works" (p. 21). Norris and Ortega's (2000) comprehensive meta-analysis of effect of instruction research found that explicit instruction was more effective than implicit instruction and resulted in substantial, target oriented, durable gains, although arguably on fairly controlled measures (Truscott, 2004).

Similarly, Spada and Tomita (2010), in their meta-analysis of research studies investigating the interaction between different types of instruction and the complexity of grammatical features, observed more substantial gains resulting from explicit rather than implicit instruction for both simple and complex features. Consequently in recent years the focus of research has shifted from investigating whether or not explicit instruction may be useful, to determining which type of explicit grammar instruction is most effective in promoting learning within the instructed setting (Norris & Ortega, 2000) and on the precise measures that learning is observed on.

The survey of literature shows that research in the assessment of language programme evaluation has been widely done. However, similar programmes in Tanzanian EFL context have not been carried out. The current study sought to make a contribution towards this vacuum.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at the University of Dar es Salaam. It involved two pre- sessional short term programmes that sought to boost general proficiency of English of to be first year undergraduate students before their commencing studies. The first group was 36 engineering students (25 females and 11 males) that were to be registered in different programmes at the College of Engineering and Technology (COET). The other group consisted of 47 Mozambican students (31 females and 16 males) that were to join various degree programmes in selected public universities. Permission was sought from programme coordinators to access and use both score and scripts for the study. Having been granted permission and obtained the materials, the scores were reposted to the excel spreadsheets then sums and means were computed for pre- and post- tests and differences sought between and within each groups first between high achievers and low achievers and secondly between females and males.

3. Findings

Findings are organized in terms of; first, comparative analysis of general performance across the two groups and secondly, specific comparative analysis across gender categories both within and between groups.

Table 1 Comparative Summary of Performance

S/N	PRE TEST						POST TEST					
	MOZAMBICAN			COET			MOZAMBICAN			COET		
	SEX	SCORE	AGGR.	SEX	SCORE	AGGR.	SEX	SCORE	AGGR.	SEX	SCORE	AGGR.
1	F	28	D	M	43	C	F	52	B	M	73	A
2	F	47	C	F	36	D	F	66	B+	F	47	C
3	F	84	A	M	41	C	F	86	A	M	46	C
4	M	42	C	F	55	B	M	49	C	F	68	B+
5	M	55	C	M	54	B	M	59	B	M	75	A
6	F	39	D	M	52	B	F	58	B	M	53	B
7	F	40	C	M	55	B	F	49	C	M	56	B
8	M	56	B	F	54	B	M	57	B	F	55	B
9	F	59	B	F	53	B	F	59	B	F	69	B+
10	F	63	B+	M	37	D	F	64	B+	M	73	A
11	M	56	B	M	54	B	M	58	B	M	64	B+
12	M	44	C	F	63	B+	M	48	C	F	64	B+
13	F	80	A	M	62	B+	F	81	A	M	75	A
14	M	57	B	M	55	B	M	69	B+	M	57	B
15	M	74	A	F	48	C	M	79	A	F	50	B
16	F	44	C	F	18	E	F	59	B	F	20	D
17	M	53	B	M	48	C	M	59	B	M	50	B
18	M	67	B+	F	56	B	M	76	A	F	67	B+
19	F	55	B	M	47	C	F	63	B+	M	60	B+
20	F	60	B				F	64	B+			
21	F	32	D				F	38	D			
22	F	47	C				F	67	B+			
23	M	36	D				M	54	B			
24	F	42	C				F	61	B+			
25	M	45	C				M	56	B			
26	F	49	C				F	61	B+			
27	F	59	B				F	65	B+			
28	M	52	B				M	57	B			
29	F	60	B+				F	67	B+			
30	F	73	A				F	81	A			
31	M	44	C				M	54	B			
32	F	70	A				F	76	A			
33	F	45	C				F	55	B			
34	M	82	A				M	86	A			
35	M	59	B				M	69	B+			
36	M	54	B				M	58	B			

Table 1 shows that there were 36 course participants on the Mozambican students' courses whereas for COET pre-service programme there were 47 males participants. In other words, there were 15 more participants in Mozambican group than COET group. From among Mozambican group 20 (56%) were females and the remaining 16 (44%) were males; conversely, for COET group there more males (12, which is 63%) than females (07, which is 37%). As for these learners' baseline proficiency the females were comparably for letter in the Mozambican group (all seven A Grades belonged to them) than males. That, however, was for the Mozambican group. The situation was different for the COET group none of whose members scored an A and only two – a male and a female-scored B+ of marginal passes of 62% and 63%, respectively. In other words, the baseline proficiency was generally higher for the Mozambican group than the COET group.

As for extent of proficiency after the instructions there is evidence (in terms of holistic scoring, though) that the high achieving candidates for the Mozambican group improved their performance and significant number of mid –achieving (at B and C Grade) and low achievers (at D grade) improved drastically, some of whom attained two grades higher e.g. in table 1 above, s/n 1 from D to B and s/n 2 from C to B+. However, there are those whose scores did not change for both group; e.g. in table 1, s/n 9 from 59 (B) to the same 59 (B), and s/n 36 from 54 (B) to 58 (B) for Mozambican group. The situation in the COET group show that one of their high achievers (s/n 13) improved from 62% (B+) to 75% (A) while the other (s/n 12) stagnated with a B+ even though there was a difference score of 1 between pre-test and post-test.

Overall, it can be observed in figure 2 below that there was gained proficiency after the instructions though at differing levels.

Table 2: Aggregate Comparison

Aggregate	Pre-test		Post test		Total
	Mozambican	COET	Mozambican	COET	
A	6	0	7	4	17
B+	3	2	10	6	21
B	10	6	13	6	35
C	10	5	3	2	20
D	4	1	1	1	7
E	0	1	0	0	1
Total	33	15	34	19	101

Table 2 has clustered the number of respondents into the aggregates they belong to. The data show that the majority were at 'B' and 'C' in pretest for both groups. The Mozambican group has 10 respondents who scored B and together they made 61% of all test takers in Mozambican category. As for the COET group in pre-test, 6 (40%) and 5 (33%) scored 'B' and 'C', respectively. Thus, if we take 'B' and 'C' to stand for lower intermediate and novice –high proficiency scales, respectively, then we can infer that over 60% for Mozambican group and over 70% for COET group were of functional proficiency levels only, before commencement of the instructions. At the same time, only 6 scored an A (For Mozambican group) while none from COET group scored that grade, Also only 3 (9%) and 2 (13%) scored B+ for Mozambican group and COET group, respectively.

This is very telling in terms of magnitude of low language proficiency, which justifies having in place intensive pre-session courses. These are aimed, as Msuya (2008) asserts, to boost the learners' language proficiency – both at interpersonal level and at formal academic level- so as to function properly at EFL instructional context.

Effectiveness of the instructions is manifested in the increase of the number of test takers with higher scores. For example, the candidates who scored an 'A' from Mozambican group increased from 6 to 7 while those from COET increased from zero to 4. Those who scored B+ increased from 3 to 10 and from 2 to 6 from Mozambican group and COET group, respectively. As for 'B' Grade, those from Mozambican group increased from 10 to 13 while those from COET remained the same. Lower aggregates (C to E) decreased; eg. At 'C' Grade the decrease was from 10 to 3 and 5 to 2 from among Mozambican and COET test takers, respectively. Those that scored D decreased from 4 to 1 in the Mozambican group but the same number (1 candidate) was retained even after the instruction by the COET group.

So, while increase in number of test takers in higher grades and its decrease in lower ones does not take the full story about how much of the proficiency gain was made, it does say something about learner's migration from one or two lower aggregates to higher ones hence bearing testimony that the instructions had a part to play in boosting their levels of proficiency.

Gender Comparison of Gained Proficiency

We were interested to find out how gender was a factor in accounting for learner differences in the effect of instructed SLA. Our computations based on gender performances resulted in the data as summarized in figure 1.

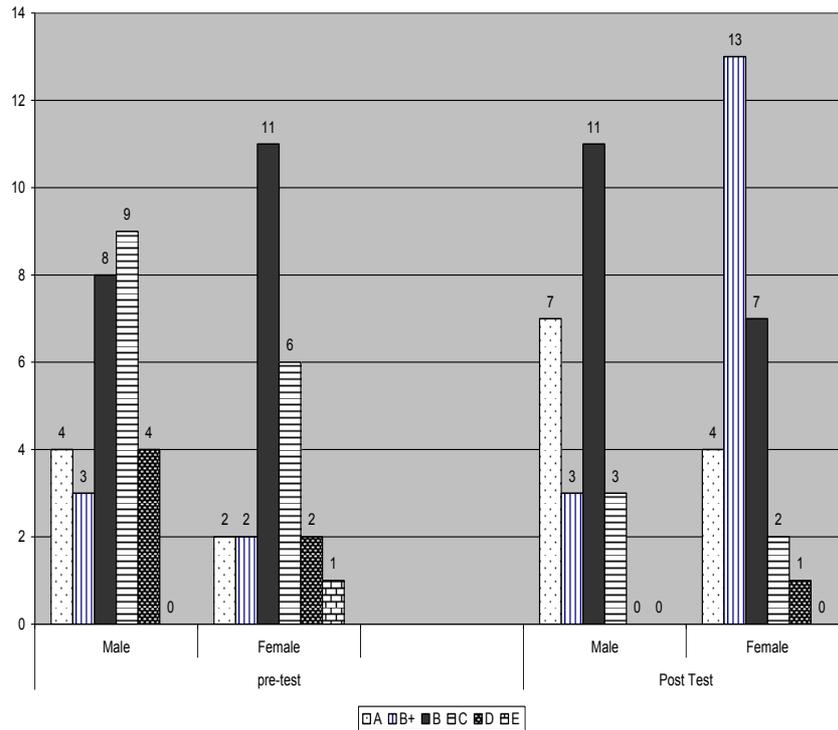


Figure 1: Gender Comparison of Performance

Figure 1 above illustrates gender comparative overview of the candidates' baseline proficiency (as measured in pre-test) and their performance in the post-test.

In pre-test the mean scores for female test takers was slightly above 50% for both COET and Mozambican groups although the latter had its mean four scores higher than the former. Conversely, the male test-takers for COET had its mean below 50 (at 43) and this was 7 marks less than their female counterparts. The difference between the two groups of the males is that the Mozambican's mean was 12% higher than the COET'S.

In terms of the overall gained proficiency after the instructions (measured by the post test results) bigger gained proficiency is noted among the females than males. The difference between pretest means and posttest means were 12% and 10% for COET group and Mozambican group, respectively; so, the COET female group made a far bigger gained proficiency than the COET one.

The males also made some level of improvement. The COET females group had mean score of 62% of the posttest from 50% attained in the pre-test, thus registering a mean difference of 12%. The Mozambican female group, on the other hand, registered a 10% mean. Difference between pre-test (54%) and post-test (69%).

So, in general, although the numerical value of the means between males and female is the same, the males are noted to have benefitted more from their instructions by moving from the mean value of a 'C' (49%) to nearly for a COET group and from a B (50%) to B + (62).

Again the females' proficiency gain is bigger than the males' since both female categories are at B+ after the instructions as contrasted to males' C and B for COET group and Mozambican group, respectively.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has established that generally, the programme benefitted more students whose baseline proficiency was higher than those who had average or low proficiency. This is highly telling in the role of pre- action motivation to both high and low performing students in pre- tests results. It could also account for classroom practices while handling the course, which was outside the scope of the current study.

As for gender aspects, females outperformed males, although marginally, more in baseline proficiency and the overall gained proficiency. These findings concur with earlier findings indicating females being better at languages than males.

In conclusion, while scores and analyses tell only part of the story about learners' proficiency in the absence data in actual language use at interpersonal informal setting, it contributes what works in intuited SLA and to what extent.

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