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This action research investigated the effectiveness of two modifications, pocket chart activity and recast, in teaching an L1-L2 contrasted grammar feature in the Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) method. This study examined how a pocket chart activity and recast could benefit and foster students' grammar learning even more than a prescribed grammar teaching strategy, the pop-up grammar instruction alone does. This action research was conducted with thirteen eighth-grade students who had been taught Japanese mainly through TPRS and the communicative approach since they were in seventh grade. Data collection took place over a four-week period. Picture description tasks were administered throughout the study period including a pre-task. Three interviews were conducted. One lesson per cycle was video taped and daily journaling was done during the data collection period. This study revealed the benefit of utilizing two modifications in the TPRS method. The researcher learned that explicit and implicit approaches need to be balanced.

EFFECT OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE POP-UP GRAMMAR STRATEGY IN THE
TPRS METHOD IN TEACHING THE JAPANESE DIRECT OBJECT MARKING
PARTICLE *WO(O)* TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Ayumi Stockman

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Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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Committee:

Bonnie Swierzbin, Primary Advisor

Betsy Parrish, Secondary Advisor

Christina Maynor, Peer Reviewer

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Seven years of teaching Japanese at beginning levels has made me curious about how my students learn language features such as word order, omission of a subject in a sentence, and particle use which are totally opposite from many of my students' native language, English. This really came to light with the group I started working with two years ago. I noticed that particles which were used to show relationships between words were the most challenging ones for my students. Students often asked me why *wo(o)*¹ has to be there in order to show a direct object. They also asked me why they could not use *wa* instead of *wo(o)*. I had to teach them what an object is in a sentence. I also had to explain to them how word order was opposite from English and we needed *wo(o)* to show a direct object in Japanese. However, some students always confused *wo(o)* with some other particles. They also often omitted it in a sentence. Some of my students never seem to understand the concept of particles. Since there is no direct object marker in English, I thought it was the main reason that students struggled. The only thing I did to teach particle use was to use a pocket chart activity. I placed a verb such as *eat* or *drink* in the chart. Then, I showed a few noun cards such as *banana*, *milk*, or *water*. Students had to tell me which noun card worked the best with each verb. Then I placed an appropriate noun card in front of each verb with one letter space between. After this, I placed a particle card *wo(o)* and explained to students *wo(o)* was a direct object marker in Japanese. I pointed out the difference between English and Japanese in this regard. I usually did some different versions of this type of pocket chart activity every day for

¹ Footnote 1: The Japanese direct object marking particle is written as *wo*, but pronounced *o*.

about a week. After that, each time a new particle was introduced, the same pocket chart activity was conducted including the previously learned particles. Even though students were introduced to the concept explicitly, it was a struggle for students to master, especially the direct object marker *wo(o)*. Particles were one of the major grammar concepts that needed to be addressed repeatedly in class. I often became frustrated because I did not know any other way to teach particles effectively so that students will learn better.

It was not long before I heard of Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). I took a three day workshop one time in the summer, and I enjoyed it, but I never implemented it in my teaching. After that, I started hearing positive comments about TPRS at district meetings and from other colleagues in the building in which I was working. I heard some comments such as “It’s amazing how much kids learn,” and “I couldn’t believe how well my students were able to write after I started TPRS,” or “My students were so engaged and changed their attitudes for the better.” I felt the need to learn about TPRS more and implement it into my teaching because I felt that if it is that effective, then why not try it?

TPRS is a language teaching method which consists of three major steps: preteaching vocabulary, telling a story, and reading the story. The key component of TPRS is to provide comprehensible input repeatedly. In order to do this, a lot of questioning is involved in each of the three steps. The questioning here refers to teacher asking a question based on a statement that has been made in a story. For example, if a statement is “*There is a girl.*”, a question might be “*Is there a girl?*” The method of forming a question depends on which vocabulary or structure a teacher wants students to

learn. If a teacher wants students to learn the structure *There is*, that structure must be heard repeatedly by students. Therefore, the possible questions for the sample statement will be: *Is there a girl? Is there a boy? Is there a girl or a boy?* Besides using questioning techniques, the use of gestures and visual representation of objects to teach vocabulary is done throughout the storytelling.

Since I worked with colleagues who taught Spanish and French exclusively through the TPRS method at a high school, I started incorporating the TPRS method in my Japanese teaching. At the same time the school year began, I took a TPRS teacher training course. The participants of the course met once a month for six months. The instructors were Spanish and French teachers from the area who exclusively used TPRS in their high school classes. The Spanish teacher taught the course by modeling TPRS. The language used in modeling a lesson was Swedish since nobody knew the language and she was proficient in it. The French teacher stopped the lesson occasionally to point out some important techniques that the Spanish teacher was using in her lesson. I was trained both as a student who is experiencing learning a new language, in this case, Swedish, and as a teacher who teaches a foreign language. This experience was very beneficial for me. I was amazed how fun and how fast it was to learn Swedish through the TPRS method. At the end of one course meeting, I was able to write about a 100-word story in seven minutes. I still remember some vocabulary from the course. This experience was so powerful that I was convinced that I should try this method in my classroom. I could not totally change how I was teaching, so I gradually introduced my classes to the TPRS method. I spent about half of the instruction time on normal things that I did and other half on TPRS. First, I concentrated on using gestures to teach

vocabulary and questioning techniques to cycle the vocabulary as many times as possible. I made a good habit of giving a comprehension quiz to see how much students were learning. Then, when I felt comfortable, I started telling stories in class. First, I used the exact same stories from the course. My colleagues, one of whom was an instructor for the course, shared many easy simple mini stories with me. Then I started creating some stories by myself. My colleagues and I also worked together on creating a unit based on a story.

Even though I did not use TPRS exclusively in my teaching in my level I high school classroom, I discovered some positive things about the method along the way. By doing TPRS in class, I was able to get students' attention most of the class time. Although I had a story line as well as vocabulary in mind so that I could teach through a story, some details were decided on the spot as I told a story. Often times, students came up with ideas of what the character's name was, where the character went, what the character wanted, and so on. It was easy for students to get engaged in class because they could feel a personal connection to it. As suggested in the TPRS book (Ray & Seely, 2004), I often gave a comprehension check quiz. My goal was 80 % or more students would get 80 % or higher score on the comprehension check. I did not reach my goal often times; however, occasionally, I was able to secure more than 80 % accuracy in students' understanding of the materials. The whole classroom atmosphere was also very positive, alive, and exciting. I could see that students were enjoying a story and it was so much fun for them.

I agreed with almost every aspect of the TPRS method except how to teach grammar. I did not feel confident in the strategy to teach grammar in the way the TPRS

suggested. The strategy is called pop-up grammar. A teacher stops for a moment as she or he tells a story to briefly explain a grammatical point which is occurring in that story. This grammar explanation is given in the students' L1, English. Sometimes, it is not only a teacher explanation, but also the teacher asking questions about a grammatical point such as "Class, why is it *wo(o)* not *wa*?" I felt that this was not sufficient to teach Japanese grammar because I thought it was difficult for students to distinguish the differences among several particles which are used in Japanese to show relationships between words. After my students are exposed to some important grammatical concepts, they always make the same mistakes. In the case of particles, they might omit a particle altogether. They might simply use the wrong particle. It takes some time to master them. In level I Japanese, once the particles are introduced, we continue to work on them throughout the school year and possibly in the second and third year.

In order to narrow my topic for this capstone project, I identified one of the most difficult grammatical concepts in level I Japanese: the direct object marking particle *wo* (*o*). There are several particles taught in level I Japanese. The particles such as the time marker *ni*, the place marker *de*, the possessive marker *no*, and the destination marker *e* have equivalent prepositions in English, namely *at*, *in*, *of*, and *to*, respectively, whereas the object marker *wo(o)* does not have any equivalent preposition in English. Therefore, it may be likely that this is at least one of the reasons for the difficulty.

To some extent, the effectiveness of the TPRS method has obviously been positive to me in terms of how fast students learn vocabulary, its retention in their memory, and what kind of learning environment it creates. There is some anecdotal evidence which supports the effectiveness of the TPRS method. Marsh (1998) stated two

teachers had reported that several years of test results indicated that grammar was successfully acquired. Davidheiser (2002) also reported the success of the TPRS method, reporting that it reinvigorated German programs. Davidheiser listed five key elements for the TPRS method's success: first, it is active learning; second, it created students' ownership for learning; third, students get a lot of comprehensible input; fourth, students feel confidence; and the last, TPRS is fun. Davidheiser affirmed the positive results of the TPRS method in the beginning levels of his German language program. However, he considered that more grammar instruction is necessary at higher levels. A question remains regarding how to teach grammar within the TPRS method. I have not encountered any studies done previously which support the effectiveness of the pop-up grammar strategy. I am very interested in finding out how the pop-up grammar strategy is effective compared to teaching particles in a way that is a little more elaborate than the pop-up grammar strategy is. In this project, I attempt to find answers to the following research question: What is the effectiveness of using modified forms of the pop-up grammar strategy from TPRS in teaching the Japanese particle *wo(o)* to middle school students? I plan to conduct action research in order to explore this question. The particle *wo(o)* is a case of L1- L2 contrast and it is appropriate to explicitly present it to students. I always used a pocket chart activity to teach particles before I had known the TPRS method. As a way to teach particle *wo(o)* explicitly, I will attempt to bring back my old way to teach particles into the TPRS lessons. I also plan to find out how recast, which occur naturally in conversations, might help students learn the particle *wo(o)*.

This study will be helpful to me because I will be able to adapt pop-up grammar in my teaching in order to be more effective in particle teaching. Also, I will be able to

see if the use of pop-up grammar improves students' accuracy in using Japanese particles. I will also gain some good insights into how I can adapt and modify the pop-up grammar strategy in teaching Japanese grammar generally. The information here will be of value to teachers who teach Japanese as a foreign language at secondary levels. Among Japanese teaching professionals, it has been known that students who are learning Japanese always have trouble with particles. What I will find out from this study will benefit Japanese teaching pedagogy. This project also will be beneficial for teachers who use the TPRS method to give insights on how they can teach grammar using the method. I plan to share the findings from this study with a group of teachers who use the TPRS method in their classrooms. This group of teachers, which I am a part of, meets informally to discuss the TPRS method and share ideas.

In the next chapter, Literature Review, I will discuss some important aspects of my study including the general procedure for the TPRS method, studies that were done on acquisition of Japanese particles, and the current suggested approaches with the TPRS and methods in grammar instruction. In Chapter three, Methods, I will discuss the method of collecting data and how it will be analyzed. I will outline the design of this study. In Chapter four, Results, I will discuss the findings. Finally in the last chapter, I will discuss the conclusions and implications to the field of teaching Japanese and other second or foreign languages and the TPRS method.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed reasons for this study, which will examine the effectiveness of using modified forms of the pop-up grammar strategy from TPRS in teaching the Japanese particle *wo(o)* to middle school students. In order to place this question meaningfully in the context of existing research, I will provide some background information on Japanese particles, TPRS, and grammar instruction. There

will be three sections: Japanese Particles, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling, and options for Grammar Instruction. I will discuss previous studies that were done and how they are related.

Japanese Particles

The use of Japanese particles is very challenging to many of my students. It seems that they cannot grasp the concept of it. They especially struggle with the direct object marking particle *wo(o)*. Why is it so hard for students to master it? How do native Japanese speakers acquire the particle *wo(o)*? Is there a natural order of acquisition of particles for native speakers that is similar to how L2 Japanese speakers acquire them? In this section, I will discuss Japanese particles in a comparison with English, the natural order of acquisition of the particles, and the possible reasons for the difficulty of learning them among learners of Japanese.

In order to show the relationship between a word and another word in a Japanese sentence, particles are used. The particles are postpositional in Japanese. There are some seventy postpositional particles in Japanese (Kuno, 1973). The particles that I teach my students in level I are only the following: topic marker *wa*, subject marker *ga*, direct object marker *wo(o)*, destination marker *he(e)*, place marker *de*, and possessive marker *no*. Particles are used in the following manner.

1. *Watashi wa, sensei desu.*

I topic marker, teacher am

(Speaking of me) I am a teacher.

2. *Watashi wa, kami ga, nagai desu.*

I topic marker, hair, subject marker, long, am

(Speaking of me) (my) hair is long.

3. *Watashi wa, ringo wo(o) tabemasu.*

I topic marker, apple, direct object marker, eat

(Speaking of me) I eat apples.

4. *Watashi wa, gakkou he(e) ikimasu.*

I topic marker, school, destination marker, go

(Speaking of me) I go to school.

5. *Watashi wa, gakkou de, benkyoshimasu.*

I topic marker, school, place marker, study

(Speaking of me) I study at school.

6. *Watashi no namae wa, Keiko desu.*

I possessive marker, name, topic marker, Keiko, is

(Speaking of my name) it is Keiko.

7. *Watashi wa, inu ga suki desu.*

I topic marker, dog, direct object marker, like

(stative verbs)

(Speaking of me) I like dogs.

As shown in the sample sentences above, the destination marker *he(e)*, place marker *de*, and possessive marker *no* are equivalent to prepositions in English, *to*, *at* or *in*, and the possessive 's (or *of*) respectively. However, the topic, subject, and direct object markers, *wa*, *ga*, and *wo(o)* respectively, do not have any equivalent prepositions in English. This is perhaps one of the reasons why it is difficult for English speaking

students to learn Japanese particles. Also Japanese is a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) language while English is an SVO language, thus the word order is opposite. This might create some difficulty in learning Japanese particles.

Another difficulty with particles is that they are often taught as a chunk with a verb to beginning students and this might interfere with learning the direct object marker *wo(o)*. One of the functions of particle *ga* has been taught in this manner in my classes. The particle *ga* has four different functions, one of which is the direct object marker of stative verbs. Earlier in the year at level I, I teach the expression ‘I like’ –*ga suki desu*. We do not separate *ga* from *suki desu* when we teach that expression even though *ga* is a direct object marker of a verb *suki desu* (like). We expect students to learn it as a chunk because we do not want students to be conscious about the particle *ga*. However, in English verbs *like* and *eat* both take direct objects and there is no preposition or postposition whereas in Japanese there are two different particles used, *wo (o)* with non-stative verbs and *ga* with stative verbs. I wonder if students are internalizing the –*ga suki desu* form subconsciously, and this internalization might be interfering with learning the direct object marker *wo(o)*.

My colleague and I agree that many of our students will have difficulty in distinguishing the difference between topic marker *wa* and subject marker *ga*. The difference between them is not so clear to even a native Japanese speaker. Therefore, at our high school, we barely teach the difference between *wa* and *ga*. I teach *ga* in a set phrase. That means students are always taught to use *ga* with certain other phrases and structure, so they are indirectly taught not to pay attention to the difference between those

two. Therefore, in my current teaching situation, the most difficult particle for students to learn is the direct object marker *wo(o)*.

There is currently a limited research on the particle *wo(o)*. Previous studies of particle acquisition seem contradictory and do not shed light on my situation. Clancy's (1985) study (cited in Sakamoto, 1993) reveals that basic grammatical particles appear between 20 months and 30 months of age in native Japanese speaking children's speech. There are some other studies done before Clancy which produced the same results (McNeil, 1966 & 1970, Okubo, 1967, Miyahara, 1974, and Noji, 1977, cited in Sakamoto, 1993). In the conclusion of those studies, it seems that the order of acquisition of the Japanese particles is the following: *wa* and *ga* appear earlier, followed by *wo(o)*.

Sakamoto conducted a study with thirty native English speakers to examine the acquisition of Japanese particles. Surprisingly, in his study, there were no errors made in the use of the direct object marker *wo(o)* among the students. However, the struggle with the difference between *wa* and *ga* was observed. In Sakamoto's study, the subjects were adults at different proficiency levels of Japanese. When the study was conducted, all the subjects were studying Japanese at a college in Japan. There are significant differences between the subjects in the above studies and the subjects in my study. My students are 13- 14 years olds whereas the subjects in the above studies were either adult learners of Japanese or infants of native Japanese speakers. The setting is also different. My students are learning Japanese as a foreign language in a classroom setting. The opportunity to use Japanese outside the classroom is very limited whereas the subjects in Sakamoto's study were living in Japan which made it possible for them to have a lot of natural exposure to the language.

Another study was done by Takeuchi-Furuya (1993) with two native English speakers who studied Japanese in a natural environment while they lived in Japan. The earlier particles to emerge were *wa* and *ga* in both subjects. One subject never used the particle *wo(o)*, but, on the other hand, the other subject started using the particle *wo(o)* at the earlier stage of the study.

These findings above seem to contradict each other. The study with native Japanese speaking children indicates that *wa* and *ga* are acquired before *wo(o)*. On the other hand, learners of Japanese, both cases are adults, seem to have problems with *wa* and *ga* and not with *wo(o)*. Also, the findings in these previous studies are not directly relevant to my situation.

There are some important questions that I will need to find answers to. What are some possibilities that make learning Japanese particles difficult for students? Does it make any difference if I change the way of teaching the particle *wo(o)*?

I had had these questions about the particles from the beginning of my teaching career. I was eager to participate in workshops and staff developments to learn different ways to teach a language. It was not long until I encountered the TPRS method. The TPRS method has significantly influenced my practice in language teaching. In the following section, I will provide an overview of the TPRS method.

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling

Ray, a Spanish teacher in California, created the TPRS method in the early 1990's (Ray & Seely, 2004). Originally, the TPRS method was called Total Physical Response Storytelling. (Now, TPRS is no longer an acronym for Total Physical Response Storytelling but is an acronym for Teaching Proficiency through Reading and

Storytelling.) TPRS was developed from Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method (Ray & Seely, 2004, Asher, 1983), which exposes students to listening to various commands and acting physically to those commands. The TPR method is intended to be used at a very beginning stage of learning to take some pressure off of students to speak when they are not ready to do so. Instead of demanding speaking, TPR enables students to have a silent period in which they just absorb the target language by listening to and acting out the commands (Asher, 1983).

Ray himself used TPR exclusively earlier in his teaching. However, he stated in his book, "If I stuck to just using commands followed by actions, before long most of my students would lose interest" (Ray & Seely, 2004, p.2). A few years later, he encountered *The Natural Approach* (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), in which he learned Krashen's claim that the language is best learned through comprehensible input. Ray combined the ideas from TPR and the ideas from *Natural Approach* and started creating stories.

In TPRS, the same technique as TPR is used at the beginning of a language course. It is called the classical TPR period (Ray & Seely, 2004). During that time, a teacher teaches some basic vocabulary which will be used in stories in class in the future, such as "Stand up!", "Stand up slowly," "Run," and "Run to the door." In this way, a teacher can teach basic verbs, colors, body parts, and other high frequency words. After this classical TPR period, a teacher starts telling stories in class using some vocabulary that was taught previously and also building more vocabulary.

There are many activities that are suggested to do with TPRS (Ray & Seely, 2004). For each story a teacher tells, students can re-tell the story, draw pictures along with the story to re-tell, come up with their own ending, and create their own stories

using the same structure and vocabulary used in the teacher's story. Also, a teacher can have students read the story in the target language or re-write the story. TPRS is more than just story telling and listening. TPRS goes beyond a storytelling level. It focuses on literacy skills, reading and writing (Ray & Seely, 2004).

The important aspect of TPRS is to provide comprehensible input repeatedly (Ray & Seely, 2004). There is a technique for doing this. First, a teacher says a statement that has a target word in it. Then the teacher asks some questions about the statement using the target word in each question. This strategy is outlined in the sample text (1). The target word for this questioning is *dog*.

- (1) T: The girl wants a dog. (statement)
- T: Does the girl want a dog?
- S: Yes.
- T: Yes, the girl wants a dog.
- T: Does the boy want a dog?
- S: No.
- T: That's right, class. The girl wants a dog.
- T: Does the girl want a dog or a cat?
- S: A dog.
- T: Yes. The girl wants a dog.
- T: Now, class. Who wants a dog?
- S: The girl.
- T: Yes, the girl wants a dog.

In this one cycle of questioning, the word dog appears nine times in the teacher's speech. After one cycle of questioning around one statement, in this case, "The girl wants a dog," a teacher can now start to add another detail, such as, "The girl lives in Japan." Then the same questioning technique continues.

For the other activities such as writing and reading, the expectation of repeated use of target words or phrases remains the same. That is, students are expected to use the target words or phrases that have been used in the story in their writing. As for the reading, the target words and phrases appear in the text. There is a clear relationship between the spoken part of a story and literacy in the TPRS method. Writing and reading activities are a reinforcement of the spoken or listening part of the storytelling.

TPRS is considered to be a narrative approach under comprehension-based methods (McQuillan & Tse, 1998). In a narrative approach, the entire L2 curriculum is organized around stories. These methods moved teachers away from a grammatical syllabus to a curriculum organized around themes and stories (McQuillan & Tse, 1998). Narrative approaches enable students to acquire the target language in an input rich, interesting, and low-anxiety setting. According to McQuillan and Tse (1998), narrative approaches have already shown some evidence for success in L2 settings for children at the beginning and intermediate levels.

One might wonder how grammar is taught in these comprehension-based methods. May and Kimura (1998) wrote a Japanese teacher's manual for TPRS. They did not even discuss how to teach the Japanese particles. They said that if students were using the particles incorrectly, it was because teacher did not provide enough comprehensible input.

According to Krashen's Natural Approach, grammar is not taught explicitly. Krashen concludes direct grammar instruction does not have a long term effect on students' learning (Krashen, 1993). Krashen argues that grammar instruction does not contribute to acquired competency. He states that the effect of grammar teaching is peripheral (Celce-Murcia & Krashen, 1992). According to Krashen's argument, the pop-up grammar strategy in the TPRS method is an explicit way to teach grammar, thus it is not necessary.

Ray states TPR Storytelling is a combination of TPR and the Natural Approach, plus unique techniques and strategies which were added to it (Ray & Seely, 2004). Even though the Natural Approach does not prescribe any types of grammar teaching, Ray and Seely (2004) suggest a strategy called "pop-up grammar" to teach grammatical features. They believe that pop-up grammar is an effective way of emphasizing the meaning of a grammatical feature in its actual context (Ray & Seely, 2004). Ray (2008) also stated in one of his workshop that pop-up grammar is about the meaning. Pop-up grammar makes the grammatical features comprehensible and therefore it leads to real acquisition of them.

Pop-up grammar is very different from traditional grammar instruction where students are explicitly taught grammatical features and do drills and exercises. After the classical TPR period, a teacher starts telling a story. As the story is being told, a teacher interrupts the story to briefly explain about a certain grammatical feature that appears in the story. For example, the third person singular form for a verb is the main focus and a teacher is telling a story about a boy who wants an elephant. The focus here is *-s* after the verb *want*. A teacher starts telling a story and as soon as the grammar that is being focused on appears, she or he stops to briefly explain, as in (2).

(2) T: There is a boy. The boy's name is Taro. Taro wants an elephant. Now, class, I said wants not want. The reason for it is because of Taro. It's one person but not I or you. If it's not Taro and if it's I, then I would have said I want an elephant. This kind of explanation is supposed to be done in a matter of a few seconds, literally. Sometimes, it is not only teacher's explanation, but the teacher can also ask a question about it to have students explain the grammatical feature, such as in (3)

(3) T: There is a boy. The boy's name is Taro. Taro wants an elephant. Now, class, why is it wants not want?

S: It's because it's Taro. Taro is one person and it is neither I nor you.

T: That's correct. Let's move on with the story.

Pop-up grammar is expected to be done every time the target grammatical feature appears in a story.

The pop-up grammar strategy is a unique way to teach a grammar feature compared to the traditional grammar instruction which requires students do drills, memorizations, and exercises. What kind of methods and approaches to grammar instruction were suggested in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) besides the traditional approach? How does the pop-up grammar fit into the existing research and suggestions? What would be an appropriate modification that I could make with the pop-up grammar strategy? In the following section, I will discuss some answers to these questions.

Options in Grammar Instruction

There have been many issues related to grammar teaching. Not only has it been controversial among SLA researchers whether grammar instruction is necessary or not,

but there also has been a lot of discussion of how it should be done. In this section, I will discuss some theories, methods, approaches, and study findings about grammar instruction. I will try to draw some insights on how I can modify the pop-up grammar strategies from this discussion.

Pawlak (2004) discusses two different major options for teaching grammar, based on previous research (Doughty & Williams 1998, Ellis, 2002). Figure 2.1 illustrates two major learner performance options and the feedback options.

Figure 2.1: Instructional Grammar Strategies.

Grammar Instruction			
Learner Performance Option		Feedback Option	
Focused communication tasks	Focusing on a language feature	Overt	Covert
Strategies: Activities --- Students convey messages through speaking and listening.	Strategies: Explicit instruction Rule explanations and drills Input oriented option (implicit) (Also known as Comprehension based instruction)	Strategies: Explicit instruction Elicitation Metalinguistic clues Repetition	Strategies: Recast (implicit)

Learner Performance Option

The learner performance option is a way to teach grammar by making students use a target grammatical feature in various activities. It is further divided into two categories: focused communication task and focusing on a language feature. Both involve having students take part in some kind of activities and tasks. The focused communication tasks can be represented in activities which engage students in conveying messages in forms of production and comprehension using the very specific grammatical target. This aims at conditions for producing the form in a real-time situation. The negative side of this is that it is hard to design the activity to keep it communicative. Also, often students try to avoid using the structures that they are expected to use. Instructional strategies featured in Figure 2.1 for focusing on a language feature option are taken from Stern's work (1992, as cited in Pawlak, 2004). This involves explicit and implicit instruction. Explicit instruction can be done in a direct (deductive) and an indirect (inductive) way. Direct instruction means that oral or written rule explanations are given to students first. Then students apply that rule in completing tasks. Indirect instruction means, on the other hand, that students are first provided with data that contains the targeted grammatical feature. Then students have to analyze the data and come to some kind of generalization. Students are expected to learn a grammar feature by discovering it.

Another type of grammar instruction focusing on a language feature is the input oriented option, a type of implicit instruction (Stem, 1992, as cited in Pawlak, 2004). Pawlak (2004) states that language is too complex to be fully described and that conscious knowledge cannot provide a sufficient basis for efficient learning. To support this, Pawlak suggests an activity which involves students listening to sentences that contain the target feature. It is usually followed by an activity which students have to

choose an appropriate picture that each sentence described. This input oriented option does not include directing learners' attention to the specific grammar feature in the hope that they will notice and acquire the feature.

Feedback Option

The feedback option refers to various different ways to give information to the learners on their use of a specific grammatical feature. It is further divided into two categories: overt feedback and covert feedback.

Overt feedback. Overt feedback is represented in explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, repetition, and clarification request which get learners to self-correct. Lyster and Mori (2006) refer to all of these as prompts. Prompts refer to elicitation of correct usage of grammar. Lyster and Mori (2006) give the following samples for each. In an explicit correction, the teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect. For elicitation, the teacher directly elicit a reformulation from the student by asking questions such as "How do we say that in Japanese?" or by pausing to allow the student to complete the teacher's utterance. For metalinguistic clues, the teacher provides comments or questions related to the well-formedness of students' utterance such as "We don't say it like that in Japanese." With repetition, the teacher repeats the student's ill-formed utterance, adjusting intonation to highlight the error. Another type of prompt is a clarification request. Covert feedback typically draws learner's attention to the specific grammatical feature.

Covert feedback. Covert feedback is defined as a way to give feedback without interfering the flow of the communication. It is done implicitly in such a way that caretakers would provide to children. One covert feedback is called recast. Ellis and

Sheen (2006) discussed important issues related to recast. Recast can take many different forms and variations; it varies whether recast is an implicit or explicit corrective strategy, and whether it presents to learners negative feedback or positive feedback. Pawlak (2004) categorizes recast as an implicit feedback option. Therefore the definition of recast is not agreed upon by SLA researchers. Ellis and Sheen (2006) present at least five different definitions of recast as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Recast

Reference	Definition
Long (1996)	Recasts are utterances that rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning.
Lyster and Ranta (1997)	Recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a students' utterance minus the error.
Braidi (2002)	A response was coded as a recast if it incorporated the content words of the immediately incorrect NNS utterance and also changed and corrected the utterance in some way (e.g., phonological, syntactic, morphological, or lexical).
Long (2006)	A corrective recast may be defined as a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more nontargetlike (lexical, grammatical, etc.) items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on meaning not language as an object.

Sheen (2006) A recast consists of the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance that contains at least one error within the context of a communicative activity in the classroom.

Note. Taken from Rod Ellis and Younghee Sheen, 2006, p.580.

Ellis and Sheen (2006) identified some types of recast based on the previous studies. Current capstone includes repetition of a learner's error with emphasis placed on the erroneous word(s), reformulation of the complete learner utterance, corrective recast, and non-corrective recast.

Ellis and Sheen (2006) also discussed the importance of the motivation behind a teacher's recast. According to their discussion, there are didactically motivated recast and communicatively motivated recast. This related to how implicit or explicit a recast could be. According to Long's recent definition of a recast (2006), a teacher should not focus on language as an object but should focus on meaning in order to make recasts implicit (as cited in Ellis and Sheen, 2006). To illustrate this point, consider the following two sets of examples taken from Ellis and Sheen (2006).

(4) L: Korean is more faster.

T: **Is** faster.

L: Is faster than English.

(5) L1: What do you spend with your wife?

T: What? (clarification request)

L1: What do you spend your extra time with your wife?

T: Ah, how do you spend? (reduced recast)

L2: How do you spend?

According to Ellis and Sheen (2006) in example (4), the teacher clearly has no difficulty understanding what a speaker was trying to say. However, the teacher offered a recast that corrected the learner's error. This teacher's reformulation still refers to the meaning; however, emphasis is given to a form, grammar as an object. On the other hand, in example (5), the teacher's reformulation is motivated by an attempt to understand what the learner meant. According to Long (1996, as cited in Ellis and Sheen, 2006), recasts must be implicit and must not interrupt the communication. If a recast is given by a motivation of correcting a learner's utterance, it interrupts the communication and contributes to the explicit knowledge of language, not to the implicit knowledge which leads to competency. Some researchers (Ellis, 1993, Swain, 1995 as cited in Ellis & Sheen, 2006) argue that explicit feedback contributes only to the explicit knowledge of language. On the other hand, implicit feedback contributes to the implicit knowledge of language, thus it facilitates learners' competency.

Regarding the aspects of being implicit or explicit, how a learner perceives each recast also plays a role (Ellis & Sheen, 2006). In some cases, a learner might simply take recast as a way of confirming a meaning and might not take it as corrective feedback. In a conversation, interlocutors take into consideration factors such as the context, intonation, facial expressions, emphasis, etc. to make meanings out of it. The same exact thing occurs when recast is being undertaken. Therefore what type of recast and intentions of it may affect how a learner perceives recast. There are some studies that looked at different types of recast.

A study done by Lyster and Ranta (1997, as cited in Pawlak, 2004) suggested that recast is the most common feedback that is used in language classrooms but least

successful. They suggested that it was because recast involves mainly positive input and there is not enough negative evidence to draw learners' attention to the error. Implicit learning of patterns similar to their native language is possible, but implicit learning of abstract rules is not (DeKeyser, 1998). Lenard (1971 as cited in Dernoshek, 1996) also said that if the rule lends itself to an inductive approach, teachers should utilize it. However, if the rule is confusing, then a deductive approach may be more effective.

There are some other studies done regarding the effectiveness of recast in different settings, subjects, and contexts (Doughty and Varela, 1998, Han, 2002, Revesz, 2006, and Ahlem and Spada, 2006). In those studies recasts were suggested to be successful in improving students' grammatical accuracy in a wide range of different settings. Doughty and Varela's study (1998) showed the effectiveness of recast in a science content based classroom. The type of recast was corrective recast which aimed to draw learner attention to problematic linguistic features and to provide a specific exemplar so that learners could make a cognitive comparison between their utterances and the teacher's recast. Han (2002) employed corrective recasts in a study with eight adult L2 English speakers who were enrolled in a college English course. The results showed considerable improvement in the subjects' oral and written performances. Revesz's study (2006) was also done with adult L2 English speakers who were enrolled in an English course. Revesz looked at how content familiarity of tasks might have an impact on the effectiveness of corrective recast. The results showed participants who received recasts through tasks with familiar content displayed greater accuracy in their L2 oral and written production. Ahlem and Spada (2006) conducted a study with French speaking sixth graders in intensive English as a second language program. They

examined the effectiveness of recast and prompt as corrective feedback. They found out that for higher proficient learners, recast was more effective than prompt.

All of these studies discussed above suggest some important implications in my situation since I intend to use recast in my research. Firstly, the definition of recast that I used in this study needs to be explained. Since I did not want to break down the flow of the communication about a story, recast needed to be implicit and focused on the central meanings. However, since this is a beginning level class and students are not equipped with high level language, I usually understand what my students mean to say. Therefore, recast that I will use in this study will be didactically motivated. Secondly, the setting in my study will be a foreign language classroom which differs from three of the four studies discussed above. It is still relevant to see if recast in a foreign language classroom setting also yields positive impact on students' performances. Thirdly, Han (2002) identified four conditions that may be necessary for recasts to facilitate learning, which are individualized attention, consistent focus, developmental readiness, and intensity. Han identified individual attention as one of the factors that students benefited from recast. His study was carried out in a small group setting. In my situation, I have only 15 students. Therefore, in that regard, I have a good condition which enables me to give individual attention. As to consistent focus, Han means that there should be one grammatical feature on which to be focused on. I am going to investigate only the use of *wo(o)*. Therefore, this also meets one of the requirements which facilitate learning according to Han's suggestion. As to developmental readiness, Han suggests that recasts should not be used as a way to teach a new form but to heighten the subjects' awareness. My participants have some knowledge of Japanese particles. The particle *wo(o)* will not

be something totally brand new to them. They know that they need to work on it. Therefore, my participants are at an appropriate phase of developmental readiness for learning the particle *wo(o)*. As to intensity, Han means the frequency. In the TPRS method, one of the key components is repeated input and questioning. I will find out from my study on how frequently I recast students' errors.

Focus on Form

It is important to discuss the kind of effect that focusing on form has. In this study, this will be done as two different modifications to the TPRS pop-up grammar. Recast is one of several different ways to give students feedback on forms in their speech. Even though there are some different definitions and different types of recast, recast is a rephrase of an erroneous utterance with focus on either meaning or form. Studies in immersion settings found that students were able to understand and get their meaning across well in their second language, but they often did not produce target like accuracy in grammar even at a higher level (Swain, 1998). As reasons for naturalistic learners failing to achieve high levels of grammatical competency, Ellis (2002) pointed out four factors: age, communicative sufficiency, limited opportunity for pushed out (production), and lack of negative feedback. Recast can be used to provide negative feedback which focuses on form.

Long (1991) defines focus on form as drawing students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication (as cited in Doughty & Williams 1998). When one focuses on meaning in a conversation, negotiation for meaning occurs. This elicits negative feedback including

recasts (Inagaki & Long 1999). Long states that negative feedback is essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts (as cited in Inagaki & Long 1999).

There have been many studies published which demonstrate some kind of focus on form is beneficial and effective for second and foreign language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Celce-Murcia, 1992; Carroll, Swain, and Roberge, 1992; Spada and Lightbown, 1993; Carroll and Swain, 1993; and Lando, 1998).

The study done by Lightbown and Spada (1990) with 100 second language learners in grade five and six in Quebec shows that form focused instruction within a communicative instruction of the second language helps learners achieve higher levels of proficiency. The results show a close relationship between students' performance and teacher's style on how to respond students' errors. Somehow all the teachers in the study were incorporating communicative activities into their lessons; however, the total amount of time spent on focusing on form varied. Forms were always dealt with in responding to students' errors and none of the teachers presented grammatical features explicitly in class (Lightbown and Spada, 1990).

Carroll, Swain, and Roberge (1992) conducted a study with 79 subjects whose native language is Canadian English. They were tested on word formation using suffixes of *-age*, *-ment*, *-ir*, and *-er* in French. All of the subjects were university students and intermediate or advanced learners of French. The result in this study was that students who received corrective feedback performed significantly better on the test.

Carroll and Swain (1993) conducted another study with 100 adult Spanish speaking subjects on dative verb alternation. In this study, they divided subjects into five groups in which each group received one of four different types of feedback, both explicit

and implicit. The fifth group did not receive any feedback at all. The result was all the four groups that received some kind of negative feedback outscored the group which did not receive any feedback. This study clearly indicates any kind of feedback is effective for students to learn the target language.

Lando (1998) did a study with 60 advanced learners of Italian on past tense in their writing. Lando found that grammar instruction with contextual meaning not only has a positive impact on students' performance but also helps students learn a related feature of the structure that was focused on.

Ellis (2002) reported a review on 11 studies done in the past. His attempt was to investigate to see if form-focused instruction (FFI) is helpful in facilitating the development of implicit L2 knowledge on free production. Overall, Ellis concludes seven out of 11 studies were in favor of form-focused instruction.

The most important factor which relates to my study is negative feedback as a way to focus on form. One of the components of TPRS is to provide repeated comprehensible input (positive evidence). Ellis (2002) further states that some grammatical structures cannot be acquired from only positive input. Negative feedback is needed to acquire "difficult" structures. Earlier in this section it is also stated that negative feedback is essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts (as cited in Inagaki & Long 1999). The topic of my study is the Japanese particle *wo(o)* which does not exist in English; that is a L1-L2 contrast. It is appropriate that there will be a component in which we give our focus on form in my TPRS lessons.

Conclusion

From the readings of the recommendations above from SLA researchers, I came up with the following options to include in the pop-up grammar strategy in my action research.

1. Explicit instruction – In order to make the L1 and L2 contrast of the direct object marking particle *w(o)* clear, I will incorporate a pocket chart activity into TPRS lessons.
2. Recast – This is an implicit feedback focusing on a form which is context and meaning embedded. It does not interrupt the communication.

Explicit instruction such as the use of pocket chart is appropriate in order to draw students' attention to the direct marking particle *wo(o)* which does not exist in English. Implicit learning of patterns similar to their native language is possible, but implicit learning of abstract rules is not (DeKeyser, 1998). White (1998) also concluded from the study that implicit focus on form instruction may not be adequate in cases involving L1-L2 contrast.

I chose to incorporate recast because recast is more frequently used in language classrooms as a way to provide implicit feedback. It is appropriate in TPRS lessons because recasts do not interrupt communication. In the TPRS lessons, all the communication between teachers and students is regarding the content of the story; therefore, recast is appropriate because it does not interrupt that communication of meanings in a story.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the participants and the setting for the study. I will also present information on the method of collecting data and how they will be analyzed. In chapter four, the results will be presented. Finally, in chapter five,

conclusions will be drawn. I will also discuss some implications for my future teaching and options for future research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I am studying the effectiveness of modified forms of the TPRS pop-up grammar strategy in teaching the particle *wo(o)*. In order to find answers to the question, I will

conduct action research.

Action research is appropriate for my study because I need to find out what exactly is happening in my classroom when I use the pop-up grammar strategy. Reflective teachers analyze the students' behaviors, identify potential problems, modify their teaching practices, and evaluate the results (Chamot, Barnhardt, and Dirstine, 1998). By observing my students systematically and reflecting upon what I find out, I will be able to find a way to modify how I use the pop-up grammar strategy. This whole process of this study will assist me in improving and refining my practice in teaching the direct object marking particle *wo (o)*.

In this chapter, I will outline the study and discuss the participants and background information in this project. Also, the method of collecting data and information on how to analyze the data will be presented.

Study

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of modified forms of the pop-up grammar strategy from the TPRS method in teaching the Japanese direct object marking particle *wo(o)* to middle school students. Action research with four data sources was conducted. First, interviews were conducted to find out what students' perspectives were on the pop-up grammar strategy. Then two cycles of TPRS lessons followed. The first cycle of two weeks of TPRS lessons was taught with a pocket chart activity in addition to the pop-up grammar. The second cycle of two weeks of TPRS lessons was taught with recasts in addition to the pop-up grammar. Each TPRS lesson lasted one week. A picture description task was conducted prior to the data collection in order to compare the results before students learning without any modifications and after students

learning with modifications. At the end of each cycle, interviews with students and picture description tasks were conducted. Throughout the data collection, a journal was kept in order to record informal observations. One class session from each TPRS lesson was video taped. This is the overview of the study. The details will be provided under each section: setting, participants, TPRS lessons, and data collection TPRS lesson cycles. In this chapter the details will be provided under each category.

Setting

This study was conducted at a K-8 school which is located in a relatively affluent neighborhood in a large metropolitan city. The student body consists mostly of Caucasian students. The family involvement with school and education is generally at a higher level than other schools in the district. There is high expectation for students to perform academically well in school. A high percentage of students in this school pass The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Test (MCA) in reading and math. This is a school that is meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards under No Child Left Behind (Minnesota Department of Education, 2008).

Participants

Participants in this study were eighth grade students in the second year level I Japanese class. The class met everyday for 45 minutes. There were 15 students in the class. Thirteen of them participated in this study. All the students chose to take this Japanese class as their elective option. There was one Hmong student. The rest of the participating students were Caucasian. The students were generally very interested in Japanese culture and language. Some of them were influenced by Japanese comics called *manga* which are readily available and popular among teenagers in this country.

This was their second year learning Japanese. They learned the first set of Japanese symbols called *Hiragana* in the first year. They could communicate some basic information about themselves, their families, and their surroundings in Japanese. At the end of the first year, they were introduced to the direct object marker *wo(o)* briefly when they learned the word eat *-tabemasu* and drink *-nomimasu*. They were never taught the concept of the direct object and its marker *wo(o)* explicitly.

In their second year, they learn the second set of symbols called *Katakana*. They developed communicative skills further in expressing basic ideas about themselves, families, schools, and daily lives. They learned more basic verbs which lead to learning more particles.

TPRS Lessons

This is a brief overview of the TPRS lesson plan without any modification to the pop-up grammar.

1. Pre-teach the vocabulary. (There are usually three to five new words.)

Use gestures and visuals to teach them and put them into questioning.

2. Start telling a story. Each time the particle *wo(o)* appears in a sentence, I did the

pop-up grammar.

3. Reading passage was passed out. Students read them quietly by themselves first and read it together with their partners. True or False comprehension quiz and some questions about the story followed.

4. Students re-told the story. They quickly drew pictures that showed the sequence of the story. They practiced retelling the story with their partners. Then we

re-told the whole story as a class.

5. Students re-wrote the story.

Data Collection TPRS Lesson Cycles

This is the outline of TPRS lesson cycles with modifications to the pop-up grammar. Each cycle lasted one week. See Figure 3.1 for the weekly schedule.

Figure 3.1: Weekly Schedule

	Lesson	Data collection
Day 1	1. Pre teach vocabulary	Journal
Day 2	2. Tell a whole story	Journal Video taping
Day 3 & Day 4	3. Reading (Students read by themselves and answer T or F questions.) 4. Students' retell (Students draw a quick pictures. Practice retelling to a partner. Re-tell to the whole class.)	Journal Journal
Day 5	This day was set aside for me to do the picture description task.	5. Picture Description task
Day 5	Outside the class.	Interviews

TPRS lesson 1. (Cycle 1: Pop-up grammar + pocket chart.)

The normal sequence of the lesson was followed as described in the section TPRS lessons except step 2. Each time the particle *wo(o)* appeared, I did the pop-up grammar

and then referred to the pocket chart. I placed a subject in a sentence, if any (sometimes in Japanese a subject is omitted in a sentence), and then placed a verb that had appeared in a story, and then placed an object at the end of the sentence with one letter space between the verb and the object. I asked the whole class what should have gone in that space. Then, I pointed out that in Japanese, the direct object marking particle *wo(o)* needs to be there unlike English.

TPRS lesson 2. (Cycle 2: Pop-up grammar + recasts.)

The normal sequence of the lesson was followed as described in the section TPRS lessons. I did the pop-up grammar normally each time the particle *wo(o)* appeared. In the questioning to students about the story, I did recasts when students answered incorrectly in the use of the particle *wo(o)*. The option that was the most appropriate to use in my classroom was teacher repetition of a learner's error with emphasis placed on the erroneous word(s) with rising intonation at the end. This elicited students to reformulate the complete utterance with the correct particle.

Typically, when a student uttered a statement in Japanese, there was hesitation at the place of a particle because they were searching for a correct particle. First, when a student used the direct object marking particle incorrectly, I gave them a chance to self correct by repeating the student's utterance with emphasis on the error. This way it was implicit, which did not disturb the communication. Then, after a student's correct statement, I repeated the correct statement. This way I could provide the positive evidence at the same time the negative feedback. See below for an example.

S: *Ringo wa tabemas.* (Apple eats.)

T: *Ringo wa tabemas?* (Apple eats?) --- recast

S: *Ringo wo(o) tabemas.* (Eat apple.) --- student's uptake

T: *Hai, ringo wo(o) tabemas.* (Yes, eat apple.) --- positive evidence

In the example above, the first exchange between a student and a teacher is categorized as a teacher repetition of a learner's error with emphasis placed on the erroneous word. In the second exchange is a reformulation of the complete learner utterance. If a student did not reply with a correct form or he or she hesitated, then I needed to say the statement in a correct form. See below for the example.

S: *Ringo wa tabemas.* (Apple eats.)

T: *Ringo wa tabemas?* (Apple eats?) --- recast

S: *Ringo ni tabemas?* (Eat apple.) --- student's uptake – incorrect or hesitation

T: *Ringo wo(o) tabemas.* (Eat apple.) --- positive evidence

In my situation, any recasts that I used in my classroom are categorized as didactically motivated. The setting for students to learn the particle *wo(o)* was very limited in a foreign language classroom especially at a lower level. When a student uttered an erroneous utterance, I usually knew what a student meant. Therefore, any recast in my classroom was didactically motivated.

Reflection time was given at the end of each TPRS lesson cycle in order to draw meaningful insights and data. Data sources will be discussed in the next section.

Data sources

I broke down my research question into three ACR questions (Sagor, 2005) in order to guide my study. “A” stands for action: what did I or we actually do? “C” stands for change: what changes occurred regarding performance on the achievement target? “R” stands for relationship: what were the relationships, if any, between the action taken and the changes in performance (Sagor, 2005)? I came up with a question for each part of the ACR. Then, I decided on multiple sources of data so that I would be able to collect comprehensible, credible, valid, and reliable answers to my research question (Sagor, 2005). I used four different sources of data. See Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: ACR Questions and Data Sources

	A: Action	C: Change	R: Relationship
Questions	1. What is happening in my classroom when I use the pop-up grammar strategy?	3. What changes occurred in my teaching of the particle $w(o)$?	4. What is the students' performance on the direct object marking particle $wo(o)$ and how did the changes impact the students' performance?
Data sources	Recording of my lessons Journal Interviews	Recording of my lessons Journal	Oral performance task (Picture description task)

The first question was: What was happening in my classroom when I used the pop-up grammar strategy? I came up with two sources of data in order to answer this question. They were the recordings of my lessons and a journal in which I noted any of my informal observations on students, myself as a teacher, and any other factors related to what was going on in my classroom. The second question was: What were the students' perceptions of the pop-up grammar? I conducted interviews with all students who participated in this study. This interview was conducted before the two cycles of TPRS lessons. The third question was: What changes occurred in my teaching of the particle *w(o)*? The sources of data which answered this question were recordings of my lessons and a journal. Data was collected in a very similar way to find answers to question 1. Finally, the fourth question was: What was the students' performance on the direct object marking particle *w(o)* and how did the modifications impact the students' performance? I conducted an oral performance task which asked students to describe five pictures.

In the following I discuss the four different data sources and how they were collected. See Figure 3.3 for the schedule.

Figure 3.3: Data Collection Schedule

Date	Lesson	Data Collection
Cycle 1 & Cycle 2: Pop-up grammar + pocket chart.		
Day1 Mon.	1. Pre-teach vocabulary	Journal
Day2 T	2. Telling a whole story	Journal Video tape

Day3 Wed.	3. Reading (Students read by themselves and answer T or F questions.)	Journal
Day4 Th.	4. Students' retell (Students draw a quick pictures. Practice retelling to a partner. Re-tell to the whole class.)	Journal
Day5 Fri.	No lesson.	5. Picture Description task 6. (End of the Cycle 2) Interview on pocket chart
Sat. Sun		Analyze video tape.
Cycle 3 & Cycle 4: Recast + pocket chart.		
Day1 Mon.	1. Pre-teach vocabulary	Journal
Day2 T.	2. Telling a whole story	Journal Video tape
Day3 Wed.	3. Reading (Students read by themselves and answer T or F questions.)	Journal
Day4 Th.	4. Students' retell (Students draw a quick pictures. Practice retelling to a partner. Re-tell to the whole class.)	Journal
Day5 Fri.	No lesson.	5. Picture Description task 6. (End of the Cycle 4) Interview on recast
Sat. Sun		Analyze video tape.

Recordings of my lessons

I videotaped a class session during each cycle of TPRS lessons. The TPRS lesson could go over a period of more than one session which covers from pre-teaching

vocabulary until telling the end of the story. After that, activities such as retelling the story, reading, and writing followed. I videotaped a lesson of me telling a story to the class. I did not videotape pre-teaching vocabulary and reading and writing activities. From these recordings, I found out the following information from each of the lessons.

TPRS lesson 1. (Cycle 1: Pop-up grammar + pocket chart.)

1. The frequency of the use of the pop-up grammar.
2. Any evidence of the following: students' engagement with and comprehension of the pop-up grammar such as nodding, taking notes, answering my questions correctly, and asking for a clarification.
3. Any evidence of the following students' engagement with the pocket chart activity and comprehension of the use of the direct object marking particle *wo(o)* such as nodding, taking notes, answering my questions correctly, and asking for a clarification.

TPRS lesson 2. (Cycle 2: Pop-up grammar + recasts.)

1. The frequency of the use of the pop-up grammar.
2. Any evidence of the following students' engagement with and comprehension of the pop-up grammar such as nodding, taking notes, answering my questions correctly, and asking for a clarification.
3. The frequency of recast.
4. Students' reaction to recasts. How are they responding to recasts? Are they self correcting after a recast?

Journal

I kept a journal at least a few days during each of the cycles. This gave me time to reflect on the day and record what had happened in the class that day. I focused on students' behaviors and overall energy level as well as reactions especially toward learning particles the pop-up grammar strategy, pocket chart activity, and recasts. I came up with the following four guiding questions in keeping a journal.

1. What kind of student behaviors did I see toward each of the different strategies, the pop-up grammar, pocket chart activity, and recast?
2. When I asked a question about a particle, how did students react? Did they raise their hands eagerly to answer? Were there the same students who tried to answer the question every time I asked? Were there any students who seemed to be confused with the concept of the particle?
3. What was my observation regarding students' engagement in activities around a story?
4. Did students ask questions about something that they did not know or were not sure about?

I contrasted the recording of my lessons and journal to see if there were any relationships among what happened in class.

Interviews

Three interviews were conducted with all the participating students in total: before the data collection began (pre interview), at the end of 2nd TPRS lesson (end of the first cycle, pocket chart interview), and at the 4th TPRS lesson (end of the second cycle,

recast interview). Interviews were conducted at the same time the picture description tasks were conducted. Interviews were done individually. I found out how students were feeling about learning particles and the pop-up grammar strategy as well as pocket chart activity and recasts. This interview helped me to better understand students' perspective besides what I already knew about the difference between English and Japanese syntax and post and pre positions. See Appendix I for the questions being asked to students.

Picture Description Task

Five oral picture description tasks were conducted with all the participating students: prior to the two cycles of TPRS lessons and at the end of each TPRS lesson. Each task had 5 simple pictures such as a boy eating an apple or a girl listening to music. Each picture had some suggested words that they could use such as “a boy”, “apple”, and “kitchen” in Japanese to avoid confusion of what items might have been. The language to be used for describing such pictures was something like, “A boy eats an apple in the kitchen.” or “A man reads a book in the library.” See Appendices C to G for the detailed pictures.

Students' performance was scored by points. I only looked at the accuracy of particle use. There was only a simple sentence to describe a picture. I also anticipated that there were two or three particles at most used in one sentence, topic marker *wa*, object marker *wo(o)*, and place marker *de*, such as in a sentence like “A boy drinks milk in the kitchen.” For a correct use of particle *wo(o)*, a point was given. There also was given a point to the correct use of other particles; however, it was for reference purposes. I compared the total points that were earned by students for each question and made a chart. See Appendix H for the scoring rubric.

In this chapter, I discussed how I collected data and analyzed it. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this capstone project, I am studying the effectiveness of modified pop-up grammar strategy in teaching the Japanese particle *wo(o)* using the TPRS method. The modifications were pocket chart activity and recast. I conducted action research collecting four different types of data: recordings of my lessons, a journal, students' interviews, and picture description tasks.

Picture Description Task

Results

A picture description task was administered before the action research began as a pre test (Task 1), and at the end of each TPRS cycle (Tasks 2-5). See Appendices for the picture description tasks. Students were asked to say a sentence which described each of five different pictures. Vocabulary was provided in writing beside each picture. Students were allowed to ask to clarify what the vocabulary meant or what the picture was. They were not allowed to ask for help in constructing a sentence. Students' responses were recorded. Pictures were arranged so that all the different particles such as subject marker *wa*, time marker *ni*, location marker *de* were evenly distributed in each picture task. In Task 1, there was no sentence which required the use of the destination marker *he(e)*. That meant all the five sentences required the use of *wo(o)*. 13 students participated in all the picture description tasks. Therefore, the total number of possible correct uses of *wo(o)* in Task 1 was 65. However, after administering Task 1 and conducting interviews, I realized that all the sentence structures were in the same pattern, (subject) + object + *wo(o)* + verb. In order to find out if students knew *wo(o)* was an object marker and that it was not used as a destination marker, I needed to include a sentence which required the use of the destination marker *he(e)*. This idea was prompted by many of my students' answers to questions in the pre-interview: "What do you know about the particle *wo(o)* and when do you use it?" Many of my students answered that you say *wo(o)* right before a verb. Since I put a picture which required use of the destination marker *he(e)* in the picture description tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5, there were four occasions to use *wo(o)* in each task. The total number of the possible correct uses of *wo(o)* in Tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5 was 52 for each task.

Percentages were calculated under the following categories: correct usage without any hesitation, correct usage with some hesitation, correct usage after self correcting, and incorrect usage as shown in Table 4.1. The details of incorrect usage are discussed in the next section.

Task 1 was administered as a pre test. Students had been exposed to the particle *wo(o)* prior to the task, but they were never explicitly taught what the particle *wo(o)* was. Task 2 and Task 3 were administered after implementing pocket chart activities in the TPRS lessons. There was a one week break between Task 3 and Task 4 because the state

Table 4.1: The Results of the Picture Description Task-The use of Wo(o)

Tasks	Date	Percentage of correctness without any hesitation	Percentage of correctness with some hesitation	Percentage of correctness after self correction	Percentage of incorrectness
Task 1 (Pre test)	March 25	52 out of 65 80%	2 out of 65 3%	2 out of 65 3%	9 out of 65 13.8%
Task 2	April 11	44 out of 52 84.6%	0 out of 52 0%	1 out of 52 1.9%	7 out of 52 13.4%
Task 3	April 18	49 out of 52 94.2%	0 out of 52 0%	0 out of 52 0%	3 out of 52 5.7%
Task 4	May 2	45 out of 52 86.5%	1 out of 52 1.9%	2 out of 52 3.8%	4 out of 52 7.6%

Task 5	May 9	50 out of 52	0 out of 52	0 out of 52	2 out of 52
		96.1%	0%	0%	3.8%

standardized testing interfered with the original research schedule. Task 3 and Task 4 were administered after implementing recast in the TPRS lessons.

The percentage of correct usage of *wo(o)* in Task 1 was 80%. After the first week of implementation of the pocket chart activity, the percentage rose to 84% (Task 2). After the second week of implementation of the pocket chart activity, the percentage rose to 94% (Task 3). After the first week of implementing recast, the percentage was 86%. It was still high, but decreased from Task 3. After the second week of implementation of recast, the percentage rose to 96% (Task 5). In both cases of the modifications, pocket chart activity and recast, students' correct usage of the particle *wo(o)* steadily increased by 10%: 84% to 94% in Task 2 to 3, and 86% to 96% in Task 4 to 5. Meantime, the percentage of incorrect usage of the particle *wo(o)* steadily decreased.

Details of Incorrect Answers

The most common mistake that students made was simply omitting the particle *wo(o)*. As shown in Table 4.2, the percentage of omission in Task 1 was 7 out of 65 or 10.7%. In Task 2, the percentage was five out of 52 or 9.6%. The percentage decreased after two weeks of pocket chart activities to only one out of 52 or 1.9% in Task 3. The percentage increased from Task 4 to Task 5: one out of 52 or 1.9% to 2 out of 52 or 3.8%. However, the overall percentage for mistakes including omitting and using *wa*, *he*, and *ni* decreased from Task 4 to Task 5: 4 out of 52 or 8% to 2 out of 52 or 3.8%.

The next common mistake was using *wa* instead of *wo(o)*. See Table 4.2. In Task 1, the percentage of this mistake was one out of 65 or 1.5%, in Task 2, 2 out of 53 or 3.8%, in Task 3, one out of 52 or 1.9%, and in Task 4, 3 out of 53 or 5.7%. There was none in Task 5.

There are very few occasions which students used the destination marker *de* and the time marker *ni* instead of the object marker *wo(o)*: one out of 65 in Task 1 and one out of 52 in Task 3. This mistake is rather sporadic compared to the other types of mistakes such as omitting and using *wa* instead of *wo(o)*.

The total percentage of incorrect answers kept decreasing except for Task 4. The one week break between Task 3 and Task 4 might be the reason for that increase.

Table 4.2: Details of Incorrect Answers and Percentages

Tasks	Dates	Types of mistakes and the percentages			The total percentage of incorrect answers
		Omitting	Used <i>wa</i>	Used others (<i>he, ni</i>)	
Task 1	March 25	7 out of 65 10.7%	1 out of 65 1.5%	1 out of 65 1.5%	9 out of 65 13.7%
Task 2	April 11	5 out of 52 9.6%	2 out of 52 3.8%	0 out of 52 0%	7 out of 52 13.4%
Task 3	April 18	1 out of 52 1.9%	1 out of 52 1.9%	1 out of 52 1.9%	3 out of 52 5.7%
Task 4	May 2	1 out of 52 1.9%	3 out of 52 5.7%	0 out of 52 0%	4 out of 52 7.6%

Task 5	May 9	2 out of 52	0 out of 52	0 out of 52	2 out of 52
		3.8%	0%	0%	3.8%

Journal

I kept a journal two or three days per week. I recorded what we did, what happened, and something I noticed during class. A few absences changed the dynamics of class. The energy levels were different every day depending on what was going on in other classes and what was happening in school. I recorded all of those variables which made some differences in students' participation, motivation, behavior, and attitude. I was very anxious about conducting this research in spring. My students were eighth graders and they already knew which high school they were going next year. I was afraid that they were not motivated to respond well to my requests and directions. Another reason that I was anxious was their behavior. This class has been so small since they were seventh grade. They have known each other so well since many of them were in kindergarten. I had two or three students that were really close friends and sometimes their energy level could take over the whole class. Sometimes they behaved in a manner of hanging out with their friends at their own room or a house, which was undesirable in a classroom setting. Therefore, I decided to lay out expectations on the first day after they came back from spring break. I told them that they were the best candidates for the study in order to encourage them. I told them my expectation was that they perform the best they could. I told them that we were preparing them for high school in advanced courses. I emphasized the importance of getting ready for high school.

TPRS Lesson 1 (Week 1)

We started the class with warm-up activities as usual and then we usually moved on to the content that would be the focus that day. We had been doing this for a long time, so students were accustomed to the routine. I taught students new vocabulary by using personalized questions and answers and gesturing. Students had no trouble learning new vocabulary. They were also eager to answer my questions in Japanese. They were very motivated. I could see in their stern looking faces that they have taken this study very seriously. I was very pleased that we could start out week one in this manner.

The modification to the pop-up grammar this week was the pocket chart activity. I discovered the following two things. One, pop-up grammar could break down the flow of a story and get annoying to students if it was done every time that the grammar feature appeared in the story. I also felt redundant doing pop-up grammar because if I tried to do it every time it appeared I had to do it with almost every single utterance that came out of my mouth. One student complained out loud in class in the second day of this week that there were too much pop-up grammar in which we talked about the object marker *wo(o)*. Secondly, it was very difficult to do the pocket chart activity within a story because it breaks down the flow of a story more than the pop-up grammar. As I told a story, I went to where the pocket chart was hanging on the wall and I placed the right cards with the right words that I had just uttered in the story. Sometimes, I couldn't find the words that I was saying so I had to make a card quickly right there. It was almost impossible to prepare the exact cards of words that I would be using in utterances in lessons beforehand. It was a hustle to do it because it broke down the flow of a lesson and it was a lot of down time when students' attention could be taken away somewhere else while I was trying to find the cards. I concluded it was better to be done separately such as at the beginning of

the class before telling a story or after the story telling was done. The pocket chart activity is rather prescribed whereas storytelling in the TPRS method is a process of spontaneous communication between a teacher and students. Therefore, the pocket chart activity does not fit well into storytelling. I changed when I was going to do pocket chart activity after the Cycle 1. I decided to do it separately either beginning of the class or after storytelling was done.

Students were confused with the differences between *wa* and *wo*. One student said *wo(o)* appeared after a subject and before an object. I realized that many of them may not know what a subject was. This was also reflected on the results of the picture description tasks 1 and 2. There were a few mistakes of saying *w(o)* where it was supposed to be *wa*, and saying *wa* where it was supposed to be *wo(o)* in both tasks as was shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Percentage of Saying Wo(o) Where it is Supposed to be Wa

Tasks	Dates	Saying <i>wo(o)</i> where it supposed to be <i>wa</i>		Self correction: Said <i>wa</i> after self correction	
Task 1	March 25	6 out of 26	23%	2 out of 26	7.7%
Task 2	April 11	1 out of 39	2.6%	2 out of 39	5.2%
Task 3	April 18	0 out of 26	0%	0 out of 26	0%
Task 4	May 2	0 out of 26	0%	0 out of 26	0%
Task 5	May 9	0 out of 39	0%	0 out of 39	0%

Therefore, I decided to review the difference between a subject and an object in the TPRS lesson 2 (cycle 2).

TPRS Lesson 2 (Week 2)

I had many absences in the second week that were unusual in this class. I felt it affected students' motivation and attitude somehow. I felt very awkward as if something wasn't quite right this whole week. A few students who were usually very vocal and participate actively were absent. I felt that students were not responding to me as well as they had been. I felt that the volume of choral response was weak. They seemed to be less energetic. Also, there was a standardized test on Wednesday so I had changed the plan a little. I decided to teach new vocabulary and tell a story at the same time. I realized that I was not used to teaching new vocabulary at the same time as telling a story. Of course then students were not used to it either. These factors I believe played a role in something was not quite going well.

I taught the difference between *wa* and *wo(o)* using the pocket chart activity this week. I was surprised that students could not say when *wa* was used. *Wa* was one of the first particles that they learned in a form of *A wa B des* (A is B). I thought they knew when *wa* was used. We did the pocket chart activities focusing on *wa* and *wo(o)* every day. On the second day this week, one student answered that a subject was what the sentence was about in a response to the question "What is a subject?" I thought this was a pretty good understanding.

When I did the pocket chart activity, I placed some words with open space for particles. I did the pocket chart activity with the new words that were taught this week. Therefore, sentences might have sounded familiar to students. Students seemed to place correct particles in appropriate spaces with no trouble. The pocket chart activity was done separately from telling a story. I did it right after the warm-ups and before telling a story. When I had some time left at the end of class, I did the pocket chart activity to review.

In the picture description task 1 (Pre test), the percentage of saying *wo(o)* where it was supposed to be *wa* was 23%. See Table 4.3. If you add the self corrected answers, which means that a student said *wo(o)* first then realized the mistake and fixed it by himself and said *wa*, the percentage was a little over 30%. In the picture description task 2 (end of week 1), the percentage decreased to 2.6% or almost 8% if self corrected answers were included. In the picture description task 3 (end of week 2), the percentage decreased to 0%. In the rest of the picture description tasks 4 and 5, the mistakes of saying *wo(o)* where it supposed to be *wa* were not observed at all. This showed that explicit teaching of *wa* and *wo(o)* using the pocket chart activity helped students perform accurately.

TPRS Lesson 3 (Week 3)

The modification to the pop-up grammar in Week 3 was recast. Students were doing so well on *wo(o)*, I did not have much chance to do recast. There were four occasions that I did recast. Two of them were on *wo(o)* and the other two were on *de* and *he(e)*. One student said *-wa tabemas*, where it was supposed to be *-wo(o) tabemas*. I said the same utterance with an emphasis on *wa* and the rising intonation at the end of the utterance, then the student said *-wa tabemashita*. He thought he had said it in a wrong tense. He did not understand that he had made a mistake with a particle after I did recast with emphasis on the particle. Another occasion was very smooth. A different student said *-wa tabemas*, where it was supposed to be *-wo(o) tabemas*. I did recast in the same way I did to the previous student, then he self corrected right away and said, *- wo(o) tabemas*.

There were not many occasions that I had to do recast. I thought it was because students were learning the particle *wo(o)* very well. So I decided to teach a new particle, the transportation marker *de* and make sentences a little longer and a little more complicated in the following week.

TPRS Lesson 4 (Week 4)

I taught a new particle, the transportation marker *de*, in this week. Along with the particle, I taught new vocabulary such as airplane, ship, train, bus, bicycle, etc. I also taught some particular nouns and proper nouns such as *okonomiyaki* (Japanese style pan cake), *heiwakoen* (Peace Park), *Hiroshima*, and *Osaka*, which would be used in a story. I used pictures and a large map of Japan to teach those words.

The sentence structure got a little longer and complicated. I noticed that many students were having trouble saying a sentence with a new particle and a new word in it. There were not still much chance for recast on *wo(o)*. On the day that I did the storytelling I had three situations of recast. The first situation was on *de*. I asked what the hippo wants to do in Tokyo. One student said, “*Dezuni-rando wo asobitaides.* (wants to play Disneyland.)” So I repeated the part of her utterance with emphasis on *wo* and rising intonation, “*Dezuni-rando wo asobitai...?*” Then the student thought that she did not end the sentence properly so she said, “*asobitaides* (wants to play).” So I had to do recast again in the same manner. There was a little pause until she finally said “*Dezuni-rando de...yeah, yeah...*” with her own expressions of confirmation.

The next situation was when I asked what the hippo wants to see in Kyoto. One student said, “*Kyoto wa otera wa mitaides.* (Kyoto, temple, wants to see.)” There were two mistakes in the use of the particles. One is the first *wa*; it should be *de*. The other is

the second *wa*; it should be *wo*. My recast ended up with the only second *wa*. I said, “*Otera wa mitaides?*” with rising intonation and emphasis on *wa*. Then the student kept guessing by saying the following rapidly, “*otera wa mitaides, de mitaides.*” Then someone else shouted “*wo.*” Then the student said, “*wo mitaides. Didn’t I say wo* (referring the first time he answered the question.)?” Someone said, “No, you said *wa.*” In this recast, the first mistake *wa* was totally ignored.

The last situation of recast was when I asked where the hippo had a job. A student said, “*Doubutsuen ni shigoto wo arimas. (Zoo, job, there is.)*” The *wo* after *shigoto* was wrong. It should have been *ga*. So I said, “*wo arimas?*” with emphasis on *wo* with rising intonation. Then the student corrected it right away and said “*shigoto ga arimas. (There is a job.)*” “*-ga arimas. (There is...)*” was taught as a chunk and was a frequently used expression. Therefore, it was easy for him to correct right away. Since the sentences were getting longer, some students needed time to correct themselves. They also corrected each other as you could see in the second situation. Sometimes students got competitive and point out each other’s mistakes.

Interviews

Three interviews were conducted. The first interview was conducted before the TPRS lesson cycles started. The purpose of this interview was mainly to find out what students knew about the particle *wo(o)*. The second interview was conducted after the end of TPRS lesson 1 and 2. That was two weeks after the first interview was conducted and the pocket chart activities were implemented as a modification during the two week period. The purpose of this interview was mainly to find out what students learned about the particle *wo(o)* and what they thought about the pocket chart activity in a comparison to

the pop-up grammar strategy. The last interview was conducted three weeks after the second interview. That was at the end of TPRS lesson 3 and 4 in which recast was implemented as modification to the pop-up grammar. The main purpose of this interview was to find out what students thought about recast in a comparison to pocket chart activity.

The First Interview

For question one, “How do you like learning about Japanese particle *wo*? Are you confident in it? Why or why not?” 11 out of 13 students answered that they were confident in using *wo(o)*. I was little surprised with the number, but I thought that they were confident because they knew when to use it, rather than explaining how to use it. For question two, “What do you know about the particle *wo*? What helped you learn it?” 12 out of 13 students answered that *wo(o)* came before actions. Only one student said that he didn’t know when to use *wo(o)*. Three students, however, said that *wo(o)* was not used with all the verbs, for example, *-ikimas* (to go) did not take *wo(o)*. I was surprised that 12 out of 13 students could actually say that *wo(o)* came before a verb. Seven students said that storytelling and hearing it over and over helped them learn it. Two students even said that saying *wo(o)* before a verb sounded so natural and it flowed naturally in their heads. Four students also said that being given a chance to practice such as warm-ups, questionings in TPRS lessons, reading a story, answering questions, re-telling, and re-writing a story helped a lot to learn how to use *wo(o)*. For the questions three, “What do you think is hard to learn about the particle *wo*?” seven students did not think there was anything particularly hard about learning *wo(o)*. Two students specifically said that they did not know the exact function of the particle *wo(o)*. This answer even sounded like they

had a strong desire to know the function of it. Two other students said that it was conscious effort to use *wo(o)* because there was no equivalent thing in English. On the other hand, two students said that using *wo(o)* naturally flowed in their head. This may relate to what kind of learning style each student is strong at.

The Second Interview

The second interview was conducted after the TPRS lessons 1 and 2. During the two week period, the pocket chart activities were implemented as modification.

For question one, “What do you know about the particle *wo(o)*? Did you learn anything new during the two week period?” 11 out of 13 students answered that they learned the particle *wo(o)* was an object marker. In the first interview, 12 out of 13 students answered that *wo(o)* comes before verb, but they could not say what the exact function the particle *wo(o)* had. Eight out of the 11 students elaborated in their own words about what function the particle *wo(o)* was and how we use it. Three students just said that *wo(o)* was an object marker and did not further explain the function of it or how to use it. It did not tell me if their understanding of *wo(o)* was accurate. One student said *wo(o)* connects a noun and its verb. Another student said that *wo* was an object marker and the object was the subject and what it was doing with the verb, which made me think that he did not have accurate understanding of the particle *wo(o)*. Even though a very high percentage of students could say that the particle *wo(o)* was an object marker, they may have not held the accurate understanding of the function of it. They might have simply said that it was an object marker because they had heard it so much in a lesson.

For question two, “What do you think about the pop-up grammar? How do you like it?” 10 out of 13 students responded very positively. Five students said that the pop-

up grammar kept reminding them about the particle *wo(o)*. Two students said that it brought their awareness to the particle *wo(o)*. They said that they were usually not thinking about the particle *wo(o)* when they were saying a sentence. Three students said the pop-up grammar was helpful. Only one student responded negatively saying that pop-up grammar was too much. Two students did not state anything particular specifically about the pop-up grammar. I believed that they did not quite understand what the question meant or simply were not aware of the pop-up grammar at all in class.

For question three, “What do you think about the pocket chart activities? How do you like it?” all the students responded very positively saying the pocket chart was very helpful. The main reason was that pocket chart activities were visual. Seven students said that the pocket chart activity helped them visualize a sentence and they could clearly see where the particle *wo(o)* came. The benefit of the pocket chart was not limited to learning the particle *wo(o)*. Four students mentioned that they could compare with other particles such as *wa*, *he(e)*, *de*, and *ni*, which helped them learn the differences among them and how to use them. Three students said that it helped them with the word order. Three students said that hearing at the same time as seeing them in the right order helped them learn. Two students said that the pocket chart activities helped them in writing.

For question four, “Which one is more helpful, the pop-up grammar or pocket chart activities?” eight out of 13 students thought the pocket chart activities were more helpful; three out of 13 said the pop-up grammar was more helpful; two out of 13 said that both of them were helpful. I thought that it maybe just depended on what kind of learning style that each student had. It may not have anything to do with what effectiveness each modification had.

The Third Interview

The third interview was conducted after the TPRS lessons 3 and 4. During the two week period, recast was implemented as a modification. Students were not made aware of recast in the lessons. It was explained individually at the interview. The following questions were asked.

For question one, “What do you think about recast? Do you like it? Do you think it’s helpful?” nine out of 13 students said that recast was helpful. Four students did not recognize recast in class. Seven students said that recast gave them a chance to realize a mistake they had made and fix it. They thought it was better that a student fixed a mistake rather than the teacher corrected a mistake.

For question two, “What is the difference between pocket chart activities and recast? Which do you think is helpful?” students had their own perceptions to each modification. I thought whether it was helpful or not depended on individual’s learning style. One student said that the pocket chart was visual and recast was auditory. One student thought that the pocket chart was separated from the context and it was a waste of time. Two students said that recast was something that happened naturally in people’s conversation; it was in a context and was a part of conversation. One student said that the pocket chart was an overview of the particles; on the other hand, recast was about a mistake that a student had made. One student liked recast particularly because it was a way to tell students that there was an error in their speech without saying so. Another student liked the pocket chart because he could see the words and at the same time could hear them.

From the interviews I realized that the pocket chart activity and recast are fundamentally different in a spectrum of language acquisition. The pocket chart activity

is not a way to give a feedback to students in a natural way within a context. Recast is a way to give the feedback instantly when there is an error within a context. Therefore it may be more meaningful to students than the pocket chart.

Recordings of My Lessons

TPRS Lesson 1 – Tuesday, April 8

The class was structured into four parts: warm-ups, reviewing new vocabulary from the day before which also included review on Kanji characters, telling a story which also involved questioning, and reading the story.

The first thing I observed in the video was the frequency of pop-up grammar. I did not observe many situations of pop-up grammar. I did one during warm-up and three of them during telling a story. For each instance of pop-up grammar students responded very well. Sometimes I required students to raise their hands to answer. Sometimes I requested students to say the answer chorally. I noticed that when I required students to raise their hands, the same students tended to do so. I also noticed when I requested them to answer chorally, there were only a few students saying an answer. I observed one time after one student said the correct answer, a few students repeated that answer under their breath as if they were confirming it.

I did not observe any other evidence of students' engagement especially on the particle *wo(o)* such as taking notes and nodding. These behaviors were not something that I see regularly in my classroom except when I introduce new vocabulary and when we talk about Kanji characters that they were particularly interested in. Therefore the content of pop-up grammar may have not been something that they were really interested in learning. It may have been something that they knew they had to learn so many of them

did not show the strong interest in it. However, this class was usually very open about their opinions and tended to challenge each other a lot. Nobody questioned someone's answer to the pop-up grammar, which meant that most of them agreed with it.

I noticed that sometimes I did not do pop-up grammar when the particle *wo(o)* appeared. I think it was because as I recorded in journal that I felt doing pop-up grammar every time the particle *wo(o)* appeared seemed to be redundant and I did not want to break the flow of storytelling and communication. I realized that telling a story at the same time as drawing students' attention to a grammar feature by doing pop-up grammar was very challenging. First, conveying the meanings was more important to me than talking about a grammatical feature in a storytelling. I sometimes felt that I did not want to do pop-up grammar because I sensed that students were really into listening to a story and did not want to break that flow. Secondly, sometimes I totally forgot about the particle *wo(o)* in a sentence I just said. I think it was because the particle *wo(o)* is a really small syllable in a speech. Some students said in interviews that when they say a sentence or hear a sentence with the particle *wo(o)* in it, they were not aware of the existence of the particle *wo(o)*. Therefore in a situation like conveying the meanings such as storytelling, people's attention may not generally go to a small grammatical feature.

When I did the pocket chart activity, an interesting thing happened. Students spontaneously engaged themselves with a discussion of whether there was any equivalent in English to the object marker *wo(o)* in Japanese. We were doing a story about a boy who was born from a peach (*Momotato* (Peach Boy), a classic folktale in Japan). The part of the story was that a grandmother who was washing clothes in a river picked up a big peach that came floating down the river. In order to teach the particle *wo(o)* explicitly

using the pocket chart, I first placed cards of *momo* (peach) and *hiroimashita* (picked up) with a space between those two cards. Then I asked students what should have come in that space. Students answered chorally that *wo(o)* should have gone there. Then I said *wo(o)* was an object marker of *hiroimashita* (picked up), which I realized later was wrong. The *wo(o)* was the object marker for *momo* (peach). I continued asking students if there was any such thing as *wo(o)* in English. One student said no. So I said that in English they did not have something between a verb and a noun to show this (pointing to a card *momo*) was an object. Then someone said “is” can be something like *wo(o)* in a sentence like “Dog is running.” Then I clarified saying “is” is not an object marker because “dog” is not an object of “running”. Then someone said “a” in “a peach” can be something like *wo(o)*. Then another student responded giving an example of a sentence “I picked up peaches,” to contradict what the other student had said.

At that point I started preparing other cards to clarify what I said about the object marker *wo(o)* and what students might have confused about *wo(o)* and other markers. First I placed cards *toshokan* (library) and *ikimas* (go/goes) with a space between those words. I also placed cards *buta no uchi* (pig’s house) and *yomimas* (read) with a space between those two words. Previously we did a story of a rabbit, a turtle and a pig. They were all friends and a rabbit and a turtle went to the pig’s house to play. In that story, the sentence structure of *-wa buta no uchi de ---- wo shimashita* (They did --- at the pig’s house) appeared many times. I just happened to have the card *buta no uchi* (pig’s house) at that moment. I also told students that I was expecting a sentence that meant ‘read at a pig’s house.’

I asked what I should have put into the spaces between *toshokan* (library) and *ikimas* (go/goes) and *buta no uchi* (pig's house) and *yomimas* (read). For the first set a student answered *he(e)* should have gone there. I clarified that by asking what marker we called it and labeled *he(e)* clearly with a card as the destination marker. I also made sure that students knew its equivalent in English was *to*. For the second set a student answered *de* should have gone there. I clarified again by asking what marker we called it and labeled *de* clearly with a card as the location marker. I also made sure that students knew its equivalent in English was *at*. Then I pointed at another set of cards in the pocket chart that had been placed earlier, *momo* (peach) *wo(o)* and *hiroimashita* (picked up) and gave a few different sentences in English such as "I picked up peaches," "I picked up a big peach," and "I picked up a pink peach." Then I asked students if there was any word that comes between pick up and peach. One student said "a" came between. Then I said "a" was a part of the noun peach and concluded that there was no such thing as object marker in English. Only one student said "All right."

What I wanted to show students was that in English there were equivalents to the destination marker *he(e)* and the location marker *de* whereas the object marker *wo(o)* did not have any equivalent. I also realized that I could have explained a noun peach as an idea, therefore a peach, peaches, a big peach, and a big pink peach all could function as an object in a sentence.

I noticed something very interesting in a comparison of pop-up grammar and pocket chart activity. There was one student who all of sudden started raising his hand to answer when I did the pocket chart but he did not raise his hand to pop-up grammar nor say an answer chorally. I remember from the interview this same student said that he did

not like storytelling and he liked pocket chart activities better than pop-up grammar. This student obviously reacted positively to the pocket chart activities. This might be related to individual student's learning style.

I also noticed that after warm-up and reviewing new vocabulary when I told them that I was going to tell a story, some students started having a difficult time paying attention to me. I needed to say something to draw their attention back to me at least a few times during storytelling. One student was lifting a desk up and down. Another student was looking around the room from side to side and front to back. Some students had their heads down and were looking at something on the floor, notebooks, and maybe something in their hands. During warm-up time, I usually did not have such problems. They had something to look at such as a warm-up packet in front them. Also they were expected to write correct answers or fix the mistakes they had made. Therefore, when I started telling stories, they all of sudden behaved as if they got lost.

The class continued to the next part in which I did repeated questioning on the new expression *-umaremashita* (was born) in order to put as many repetitions as possible. At the end I did a whole class retell and passed out sheets that have the story written with true or false questions and comprehension questions. The class ended as students finished answering true or false questions.

TPRS Lesson 2 – Monday, April 14

The modification of the pop-up grammar strategy in this week was pocket chart activity.

The class did not go well. There were numerous factors that contributed to it. Some students did not behave well. There were a lot of disruptions throughout the class

such as blurting out, talking amongst themselves, making noises, saying inappropriate things, and standing up without permission. A few students were absent. Many students also seemed to be tired and I saw a few students yawning.

My plan, which was to teach new vocabulary at the same time as telling a story, did not work well either. I made that decision because of the time constraints. If I had been more careful about what kind of story I would do in that week, I could have chosen a little simpler story which would not have had too many new expressions and words. However, the story was a continuing story from the previous week. When I found out about the schedule for that week, I thought it was too late to change anything.

Two situations of the pop-up grammar were observed. The first one was during a review of the story part 1 from Week 1. I asked “*Darega ookii momo wo hiroimashitaka* (Who picked up a big peach?)” Then before I waited for students to answer, I paused a little bit and said “When I said *darega ookii momo wo...* what is this *wo(o)*?” One student immediately said that was an object marker followed by several students’ choral answer. Then I affirmed his answer and returned to asking the question again. During that interaction nobody questioned nor disagreed. This pop-up grammar went smoothly.

The second pop-up grammar was during a storytelling of part 2. I said the sentence “*Oni wa waruikoto wo(o) shimashita.* (Goblins did bad things.)”, then I asked what the *wo(o)* was and students answered chorally it was the object marker *wo(o)*. This time a fewer students said the answer chorally. I right away went back to the story. This pop-up grammar also went smoothly.

There were three occasions of the pocket chart activities. I did the first pocket chart activity with a sentence *Oni wa waruikoto wo(o) shimashita.* (Goblins did bad

things.) I placed cards *Oni* (goblins) and *shimashita* (did) with a space between those two words. I asked students what should have come in that space, they said *wo(o)* was supposed to go there. Then I asked what this *wo(o)* was. One student said it was a subject marker that came before action. I did not correct that answer, but instead, I asked for a different answer from the class. Then another student said that it was an object marker. The same exact thing happened in the Week 1 lesson with the student who answered first that was a subject marker. This student said the *wo(o)* came after a subject and before an action, in a response to a question “Why do we need *wo(o)* there (referring to a sentence Animals drink water.)?” I did not correct the student, but I asked for a different answer from the class. This indicated that the student did not understand the reason that I asked a different answer from another student was because he was wrong. This might be an indication that some students need their mistakes to be pointed out very clearly and explicitly.

Right after this whole interaction, the student who answered that it was an object marker pointed out that “bad thing” was not an object. I realized that many of my students were concrete thinkers like he was. I tried to explain that bad thing was an object of ‘did’. I did not explain that part well. I could have explained that object as being an idea in that case rather than a tangible object. I also thought the pocket chart activities elicited more discussions and questions. There seemed to be none of those reactions from students when I do pop-up grammar.

The other two occasions of the pocket chart activities went smoothly. In both situations students were able to answer correctly. In the first situation a student who answered did not only give me a correct answer but further elaborated his answer by

identifying which word was an object of a verb (action). In both situations, not many of them raised their hands. It seemed the same students were always raising hands to answer. Other students were just sitting and did not seem to be particularly eager to answer. I felt even some of them were not paying attention to pop-up grammar at all.

There was one situation in which I used the pocket chart to discuss the subject marker *wa*. I did this because I realized that students were confused with the difference between *wa* and *wo(o)*. The sentence I used for this purpose was “*dango wo agemashita* (gave dumpling.)” My first question was “Who gave *dango*?” Then students said it was *momotaro*. Then I asked what I needed to say before *dango*. Students said *wa* chorally. I restated the sentence with a subject “*Momotaro wa dango wo agemashita* (Momotaro gave dango.)” Then I asked why we needed to have *wa* there. One student said that it was *wa* because *Momotaro* had something and was doing something with it. I actually liked his answer but I was looking for an answer that *Momotaro* was a subject in the sentence. I told the class that I liked how he put it in his words, but that I was still looking for a different answer. Then I asked what *momotaro* was in the sentence. Students were responding to the question saying things such as noun, proper noun, predicate, things, name, and is. I could not get students to say that *momotaro* was subject in that sentence. I concluded that the person doing things in a sentence was a subject and we put *wa* after a subject. I realized that students are lacking in grammar knowledge of their native language. It interfered a lot when I tried to discuss grammatical features explicitly.

There was another interesting thing observed that was related to other particles. In an expression “*Momotaro wa inu ni aimashita* (Momotaro met a dog.),” the object of the verb “*aimas*” does not take the marker *wo(o)*, instead, it takes *ni*. Also in another

expression “*Momotaro wa inu ni dango wo agemashita* (Momotaro gave the dog a dango.)” the indirect object *inu* (dog) does not take *wo(o)*, instead, it takes *ni*. Each of these *ni* has a different function. These *ni* had never appeared in class before. I was curious how they were going to react to this. Students did not ask about this at all. However, I noticed one student used *ni* correctly in a response to a question “Who did Momotaro meet next?” I had put as many repetitions of the expression *aimashita* (met) and *agemashita* (gave) as possible during storytelling. I think this indicates that hearing over and over may have helped him internalize phrases, vocabulary, and other expressions.

The class ended with review of the new vocabulary. I had students show me the gestures and tell me the meanings of the words. We were not able to read the story that day.

TPRS Lesson 3 – Tuesday, April 29

The modification of the pop-up grammar strategy in this week was recast. The class was divided into several parts: warm-up, reviewing recently learned verbs, reviewing new vocabulary, storytelling, retelling, and reading.

No pop-up grammar on the particle *wo(o)* nor recast on the use of *wo(o)* was observed in this lesson. The first ten minutes was spent on reviewing recently learned verbs, new vocabulary, new expressions, and other grammar feature, *-takattades* (wanted to do...). Those new expressions and grammar features did not involve the use of the particle *wo(o)*.

About 20 minutes was spent on telling a story. About half of it was spent on a statement, *Wani wa amazon no ookii kawa ni sundeimashita*. (An alligator lived in a big

river in Amazon.) and some new expressions such as *Nanimo imasendeshita*. (Nothing was there.) There were many important grammatical features and expressions were presented in this lesson such as, *onakagasukimashita* (became hungry), *onakagasuiteimas* (was hungry), *-takattades* (wanted to do...), *-ko* (a counter for general objects), *Nanimoimasendeshita* (Nothing was there.), and *mo* (a particle which in this case meant neither). These expressions were not totally new to students. Sometime in the past some expressions appeared in lessons. It was nevertheless important to revisit the expression to reinforce them. In order to do so I got off track from the story and asked personalized questions. I also just had students tell me the right expressions using *-takattades* (wanted to...) such as wanted to drink, wanted to buy, wanted to sleep, wanted to play a videogame, and wanted to swim out of context. When I revisited some grammatical features like described above, I did not get into the content of the story too much. This seemed to lessen the focus on the particle *wo(o)* in this lesson.

In the part of asking a series of comprehension questions about the story, students answered correctly using the particle *wo(o)*. The first question was if the alligator ate fish. A student answered the question “*Iie, sakana wo tabemasendeshita* (No, did not eat fish.)” I was a little surprised because this student gave me a complete sentence with an object in it. Students tended to answer without using an object in it. I expected that the student might have just said “*Iie, tabemasendeshita* (No, did not eat.)” The second question was if the alligator ate a bird. Another student just answered “*Iie, tabemasendeshita* (No, did not eat.)” which was the way I had expected students to answer. However, this time I encouraged him to use the word *tori* (bird) in his answer. Then he restated his answer “*Iie, tori wo tabemasendeshita* (No, did not eat a bird.)” The

third question was if the alligator ate any *sushi*. A student answered “*Hai, sushi wo tabemashita* (Yes, ate sushi.)” Then, another student shouted adding to it “*Rokko sushi wo tabemashita* (Ate six sushi.)” I was impressed because this student was able to use the counter *-ko* in a sentence correctly. The fourth question was what else the alligator ate. A student answered “*Nijuuikko dango wo tabemashita* (ate 21 *dango*.)” This student answered correctly but slowly. He was probably thinking about how to say the sentence in a right way. The last question was what other thing the alligator ate. A student answered “*Kawaii kobuta wo tabemashita* (Ate a cute piglet.)” This student also answered correctly, but there was a little pause right before he said *wo*. During this whole interaction I observed two different things. First, the questions fell into a pattern. Therefore it was easy for students to form correct utterances because the first answer was set as a model. I also always repeated students’ answers to confirm. Second, not very many hands got up for each question. However, each of the students who answered the questions was a different person. I think it was because students knew that I tried to give opportunities to answer evenly; therefore, once they were called on they refrained from raising hands again so soon. It may not be an indication of students’ engagement whether they raised hands to answer.

I noticed that one student had his head down almost entire time when I was telling a story. I was not sure if he was listening. However, he raised his hand all of sudden when I said a sentence “*Wani wa kobutaga tabetakattades* (Alligator wanted to eat the piglet.)” That part may have been interesting to students. The alligator was still hungry after eating six *sushi*, eight *mochi* (rice cake), 11 *onigiri*(rice balls), and 21

dango(dumplings) in a Japanese restaurant and there a little cute piglet came. In fact I asked him if he was listening and he said yes.

It is difficult to tell if students were paying attention, listening, or being engaged from students' behavior. It was common from my experiences and recordings that as soon as I started telling a story, students became restless. When I did gesturing for new vocabulary and expressions, most of them followed along and did the gestures. Then while a storytelling was in process, I observed that they were moving their bodies, doing something with their hands, looking around, making repeated noises with a desk or a chair, writing something, and putting their heads down. I realized that these behaviors did not necessarily mean that they were not listening.

TPRS Lesson 4 – Wednesday, May 7

The modification of the pop-up grammar strategy in this week was recast. The class had three parts: warm-up, review of new vocabulary, and storytelling. The new particle, the transportation marker *de*, was introduced for the first time in this lesson. When it was introduced, I made sure to talk about the different function between the location marker *de* and the transportation marker *de*. Even though it was the first time the transportation marker was introduced, I did not do any pop-up grammar on it at all during the rest of the lesson. Since it was just newly introduced, I should have done some pop-up grammar on it to reinforce it in the lesson.

Pop-up grammar on the particle *wo(o)* was not observed at all in this lesson. As I recorded in the journal, students were performing very well on the use of the particle *wo(o)* by the third week, so I did not feel the need to do pop-up grammar.

Three recasts were observed during the storytelling. The first one occurred when I asked a question “What does Hippo want to do in Tokyo?” A student answered “*Dezuni-rando wo asobitaides* (wants to play Disneyland.)” Then I said “*Dezuni-rando wo asobitai...?*” with an emphasis on *wo* and rising intonation at the end. I did not finish the sentence. Then she restated the part of the sentence “*-asobitaides.* (wanted to play...)” She thought I was expecting to end the sentence correctly with *des*. Then I did the recast with only a part of the sentence, “*-wo asobitai?*” with an emphasis on *wo* and with rising intonation at the end. She said *yea, yea*. I kept looking at her. Then she said *wa*. Then someone else said something that prompted her to say “*de, dezuni-rando de* (at Disneyland.)” There was a little pause between the words *dezuni-rando* and *de*. The student seemed to be thinking during that pause. Once she restated the part of the sentence correctly, she expressed her confidence by saying “*Yeah!*” This indicates that she knew the rule but could not utter correctly first time. Also this showed that she needed some time to think about what particle she needed to say. In the same situation another student asked why it was *de*. I had an impression that other students were not questioning it. Therefore I quickly explained to him that *de* in that case meant “at” or “in” in a sentence like Hippo wants to play in Disneyland.

The second situation was when I asked what the hippo wants to see in Kyoto. A student answered “*otera wa mitaides* (temples want to see).” I did the recast with an emphasis and rising intonation on *wa*. The student said “*otera de mitaides* (wants to see in the temples).” Then someone else shouted “*wo mitaides* (want to see ...)” Then the first student repeated the sentence “*Otera wo mitaides* (wants to see the temples).” In this case the first student knew what he had made a mistake on when I did recast. He knew

that I was correcting the particle *wa*. He could not reach to the correct answer, which was *wo*, by himself until someone else shouted the correct particle.

The third recast occurred when I was telling the whole story from the beginning and asking comprehension questions. The question was where the job was. A student answered “*Dobutsu kouen ni shigoto wo arimas* (There is a job in an animal park).” I did recast with an emphasis and rising intonation on *wo*, *-shigoto wo arimas?* Then the student restated the part of the sentence “*shigoto ga arimas* (There is a job).” The expression *-ga arimas* (There is/are...) was taught as a chunk last year and appeared in TPRS stories numerous times in class. Therefore he did not have any trouble restating it.

In this lesson I observed a few interesting things. First one was during the warm-up. We were reviewing a sentence that used “was born.” A student was to say a sentence “Where were you born?” in Japanese. He said “*Doko wo umaremashitaka* (where were you born?)” Another student shouted “*doko de!* (where at).” The second student did not give me any second to respond to the first student’s answer. Students corrected each other and the first student also did not argue nor question it.

Another thing I noticed was that students might have been avoiding the use of *wo(o)* by answering my question with a word rather than saying a whole sentence. There were four such situations. Each time my question was formed as a complete sentence such as “*Kaba wa hiroshima de nani wo mitaideska* (What does the hippo want to see in Hiroshima?).” and “*Kaba wa Osaka de nani wo tabetaideska* (What does the hippo want to eat in Osaka?).” Just answering a question with a word or two seems to be natural as a conversation between two people. That might be the reason for it. The TPRS method also has a tendency that requires one word answers especially at the beginning level.

Therefore my students had been accustomed to answering a question with just a word. In a response to a student's one word answer, I restated the whole sentence so that students could hear the complete utterance with the particle *wo(o)* in it.

As I observed in the previous three lessons during the storytelling, many students were restless. Some did not raise hands at all. It seemed that the same students were raising hands to answer. There were a few students who constantly caused disruption. Also students tended to get off track when we were talking about *okonomiyaki* (Japanese style pancake), hippo's trying to get a job, and traveling in Japan. Sometimes I felt it was difficult to keep students' attention to the story; however, I understood that my students were curious about a lot of things in Japan.

Conclusion

Pocket chart activities and recast as modifications to the pop-up grammar strategy in the TPRS lessons were equally effective. This was indicated by the 10% increase in the accuracy of the use of the particle *wo(o)* in both cycles (TPRS lesson 1 and 2, TPRS lesson 3 and 4.) The percentage of the incorrect use of the particle *wo(o)* also decreased steadily at the same time period. This is another indication of the effectiveness of the modifications. Earlier in the study period I noticed that one of the students' major mistakes was saying *wa* where it was supposed to be *wo*. I clarified the difference between them using the pocket chart activity in TPRS lesson 2 and 3. Then that mistake decreased to zero by the end of the TPRS lesson 4. This is particularly an indication that pocket chart activity might have played a role. Many students said in an interview that they liked the pocket chart activities better than pop-up grammar. Also a few students mentioned that they finally learned what exactly the particle *wo(o)*'s function was in an

interview. They sounded like knowing it was a kind of relief to them. They were taught the explicit function of the particle *wo(o)* using the pocket chart activity. This also shows that some students might need some explicit attention to grammatical features because it may match their learning styles.

I discovered that there were numerous factors which had to be considered when I used the pocket chart activities. Students' lack of grammatical knowledge of their native language interfered when I wanted to discuss the particle's functions. I could not use the pocket chart activities totally integrated into the story. I had to do it separately from the story. Some students preferred visual presentation to just being told about it. I also noticed that pocket chart activities elicited discussion among students about the particles. Also using the pocket chart to teach the particle *wo(o)* did not end up just teaching only the particle *wo(o)*. Some students said that they could compare the differences among the particles that they were learning. Some other students also mentioned that pocket chart activities helped them with a correct word order.

There were also numerous factors which should be considered when I do pop-up grammar. Too much frequency of pop-up grammar might break down the flow of natural communications. Some students complained about the frequency of pop-up grammar openly. I myself felt redundant and tired of saying "What is this *wo(o)*?" I noticed pop-up grammar did not elicit discussions and questioning about the particle like pocket chart activities did. I also felt sometimes students were not paying attention at all because it was just aural.

The modification recast also needs to be given some considerations. Sometimes students did not know what exactly I was expecting them to correct. Then sometimes

students were saying an answer randomly and I finally gave up and gave them a correct statement or someone else said a correct statement. Many students said that recast was a part of conversation and helped them to realize a mistake that they made. They also thought that being given a chance to correct rather than having a teacher correct it helped them to learn.

In the next chapter I will discuss the overview of the study and findings, implications of the findings, limitations to this study, and future possibilities in teaching grammar in TPRS storytelling.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

My research question for this capstone was what the effectiveness was of two different modifications to the pop-up grammar strategy in the TPRS method in teaching the direct object marker *wo(o)* in Japanese to beginning level middle school students. The two modifications, pocket chart activity as an explicit instruction and recast as an implicit feedback to students' speech, yielded very positive results in students learning the direct object marker *wo(o)*. Oral picture description tasks which were conducted throughout the study, from pre test to the post test, revealed overall consistent score gain in using the particle *wo(o)* correctly.

There were numerous factors to be considered in discussing the effectiveness of those two modifications in the TPRS method. I will list the factors and discuss each in

turn. First, those two modifications were two totally opposite types of strategies. The pocket chart activities were a very explicit way of teaching the particle *wo(o)*, meanwhile, recast was an implicit way to give feedback to students' erroneous speech without breaking down the communication. It needs to be examined how those two different modifications might have had positive impact and what the difference between those two. Students' preferred learning styles are related to a language teaching approach. It may have had a large impact on their learning. Some students were very visual learners; some were auditory, and some liked the both ways of approach. Secondly, other factors in my classroom need to be looked into more. Dynamics of students, behavior, and motivation have a great impact on learning. Thirdly, the various activities in class also need to be given some considerations. The TPRS method does not prescribe warm-ups; however, a warm-up activity might have played some positive role in students' learning. Also, reading and writing activities that went with TPRS lessons need to be considered. Reading is another way besides listening to gain comprehensible input and it reinforces language proficiency (Ray & Seely, 2004). On the other hand, writing is not a way to gain comprehensible input; however, as some students mentioned at the interviews, it helped them to practice the production of the particle *wo(o)*. Lastly, how the two pillars of TPRS, comprehensible input and repetitions (Ray, 2008 workshop) influenced students' learning needs to be considered.

Explicit Instruction and Implicit Feedback

According to students' answers to the question if they liked pocket chart activities and reasons for it, students appreciate some kind of explicit instruction. There were more students who said that they liked the pocket chart activities better than just the pop-up

grammar because it helps them visualize. As many of the studies suggested, (Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Celce-Murcia, 1992; Carroll, Swain, and Roberge, 1992; Spada and Lightbown, 1993; Carroll and Swain, 1993; and Lando, 1998) natural approach only instruction does not contribute to a high level of proficiency in accuracy of language skills such as the use of grammar. On the other hand, regarding recast, many students thought that was a natural part of conversation which informs them of their erroneous speech. It was also beneficial for them because it was an implicit way of reminding them of their mistakes. I feel that both explicit and implicit approaches need to be balanced in our teaching. Lyster and Mori's study (2006) demonstrates this point. They suggested *counterbalance hypothesis* which assume the opposite way of giving feedback from the nature of instruction is more effective. For example, if an instruction is communicative which focuses on meanings, feedback should be focusing on form rather than meanings in order to be effective in acquiring a second language. My classroom instruction which based from the TPRS method is communicative approach, therefore; incorporating an explicit way of teaching the particle *wo(o)* using pocket chart activity and giving feedback to students which focuses on form by recast is appropriate.

Learning Environment and Various Activities

It is not an easy job to teach language to a group of students, especially middle school students. They bring in so many different attitudes, emotions, and behavior from things happening in their personal lives, from home, from outside the classroom. If one thing does not go right, it can destroy a whole lesson. If I do not plan carefully, it can cause chaos. Therefore, I give them structures. A warm-up activity at the beginning of class is one way to give them a structure that they need, to get them settled, and to set

them up for learning. Warm-up activities were usually translating sentences into either Japanese or English. I tried to create warm-up assignments so that those sentences were from a story we had read recently and provide review on vocabulary and expressions. I think this kind of activity had some benefit on students' learning because sometimes we discussed grammatical features, such as the use of the particles during warm-up time.

Comprehensible Input and Repetitions

Ray emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input and repetitions in TPRS lessons (Ray, 2008 workshop). In this study, it was not a focus whether students understood what I was saying during story telling. However, I always made sure for every single sentence I uttered, they understood by having students translate into English. I also provided them with as many repetitions as possible by circling techniques and personalized questions. Some of my students stated in the interviews that hearing over and over helped them learn. The use of the particle *wo(o)* just started floating naturally in their head. There is no way for me to tell while I am teaching if students are really listening. However, making stories interesting and appealing to them help them engage with listening. Questioning also help them engage with listening. Those are a few things that I can do to promote students' engagement with listening so that they have access to comprehensible input as much as possible.

Implications

There are a few implications that might help TPRS teachers in teaching grammar. That is we need to consider students' individual learning styles and their needs. Some students want clear explanations of grammatical features as I found out in one of the interviews. Some students expressed their reliefs for knowing what exactly the particle

wo(o) was. Especially, if a grammatical feature is something totally opposite of students' native language or simply does not exist in their language, students tend to feel relieved by explicit instruction. This does not mean that they do not need some kind of implicit way of approach either. The pop-up grammar is rather implicit compared to the pocket chart activities, but some students said that it kept reminding them about the particle *wo(o)*. Recast is also an implicit way of giving feedback to their speech. Students recognized it as a natural part of conversation. The findings from this study imply to me that I need to keep a balance between providing explicit instruction and implicit approach which provide comprehensible input. I will keep using the three ways of teaching grammar in my classroom. The pop-up grammar will be used in a storytelling so that it will remind students about the functions of it. However, I will observe carefully so that I am not using it too much and end up breaking the flow of the communication. I will keep using the pocket chart activities because I believe some students need that kind of explicit explanation. Recast is a great tool to give students feedback that is implicit, but focuses on meanings without breaking a flow of communication. The pop-up grammar and recast are easily integrated into TPRS lessons. I need to be clear and be purposeful when I do the pop-up grammar and recast in lessons in terms of what grammatical features are being targeted. I will utilize the pocket chart activities to reinforce the grammatical features being focused in TPRS lessons. It is difficult to integrate the pocket chart activities in TPRS lessons; therefore, I will use them at the beginning of each TPRS lesson or at the end to review.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, the number of participants was small. Therefore, it is hard to generalize this into all the learners of Japanese. Secondly, the participants are beginning learners of Japanese; therefore, the findings might be different with learners of intermediate or advanced level. Thirdly, I, as a Japanese language teacher had very limited experience teaching Japanese. I had only taught beginning levels at middle schools and high schools in my teaching career. Lastly, my bias on the TPRS method needs to be considered. My students knew that I enjoy TPRS. They also heard me say numerous times since the very beginning of learning Japanese that listening and understanding what is being said is very important to learn a new language. Their answers to some questions might have been influenced by it. I felt sometimes that students were trying to please me since I had worked with them for two years. Students' answers to the questions might not be totally honest answer.

Future Research

Further study with a larger population and with various levels recommended. A study with the participants with different learning styles might shed some lights to how much balance between explicit instruction and implicit feedback needed in order to be effective.

Professional Practice

I plan to share the findings with many of my colleagues who use the TPRS method. Especially, I feel it is beneficial for those teachers of less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. I started working with new Arabic and Chinese teachers in the district this year. I noticed that emphasis on characters and non

Roman alphabet was tendency of those new teachers. I also would like to know what Spanish and French TPRS teachers think about this finding. The findings of this study might present a way for non TPRS teachers to explore the TPRS method. I believe these conversations will sharpen our practice as language teachers and I hope this study contributes in ever evolving language teaching of the TPRS method.

APPENDIX A

Consent letter

March 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student completing master's degree at Hamline University in education. As part of my graduate requirement, I am planning to conduct action research from March 24 to May 2, 2008. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission for your child to take part in my research. The final product will be a printed, bound thesis that will be shelved in Hamline's Bush Library, and it will be published on the web.

My research will address students' learning Japanese particle, *wo (o)*. I would like to find out how I can improve my teaching so that students will learn particle *wo (o)* more effectively. I am also hoping to gain insights so that I can apply what I learned from this research into other grammatical aspects of Japanese teaching.

All the activities in Japanese class will be conducted normal manner. Students will not be asked to do anything special beyond normal expectation during the class time. However, students will be interviewed at the beginning and twice in the middle of the study period. Students will also be asked to perform picture description tasks in Japanese five times during the study period. I will be observing my students who participate in this study and record my findings in a journal. Also, four lessons will be videotaped. The results will be reported in my thesis.

If your child participates in my research, her or his identity will be protected. No real names or identifying characteristics will be used. Participants' grades will not be affected by my analysis of their performance on the tasks. All results will be confidential and anonymous. This eliminates risks for your child and other participants. All the recordings will be used only for my capstone purpose. Video tapes will be secured so that no one has access to it. All the viewing of the videotapes will be conducted privately at my house. Also, you or your child may decide not to participate at any time without any negative consequences.

Permission to conduct this research has been received from Lake Harriet Community School, the district Research Evaluation and Assessment department as well as Hamline University Graduate School of Education.

Please return the second copy of this letter with your signature on the back by March 10. If you have any questions, please call me at 612-668-2000 between 8:00 and 8:30 or e-mail me at Ayumi.Stockman@mpls.k12.mn.us. You may also contact at Ann Mabbott, Ph.D at below. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ms. Ayumi Stockman
Japanese teacher
Learning Lake Harriet Community School
4912 Vincent Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410

Ann Mabbott, Ph. D
Director, Center for Second Language Teaching and
Learning Hamline University
651-523-2446

Consent Form for Ms. Stockman's research

March 2008

Dear Ms. Stockman

I have received and read your letter about conducting research on teaching Japanese particle, *wo(o)*. I understand that your goal is to improve your teaching.

I give permission for my child, _____, to participate in the research project that is part of your graduate degree program. I understand that all results will be confidential and anonymous and that my child may stop taking part at any time without negative consequences.

Signed,

(Parent/Guardian)

Please print

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Picture Description Task Directions

Directions:

Please look at each picture. State what the person does or what action is taken using the words provided.

The large X over a picture means that you need to use a negative form of a verb. (-masen form.)

You can ask questions if you don't know the meanings of the words. You can also ask questions to clarify what is going on in the picture. I am not able to help you with constructing sentences in Japanese.

APPENDIX C

Picture Description Task 1

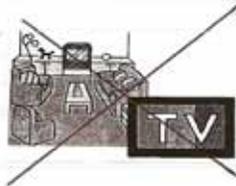
Picture Description Task 1.

Picture 1.



6:00
あさごはん
たべます

Picture 2.



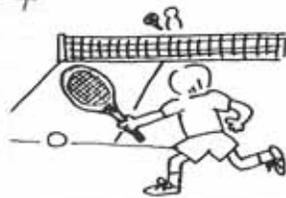
いま
テレビ
みます

Picture 3



とよかん
本(ほん)
よみます

Picture 4



おにいさん
テニス
します

Picture 5



女の子(おんなのこ)
CD
ききます

APPENDIX D

Picture Description Task 2

Picture Description Task 2

Picture 1.



男の子 (おじこのこ)

すし

たべます

Picture 2.



まいにち

いきます

がっこう

八時 (はちじ)

Picture 3



本 (ほん)

本や (ほんや)

かいます

Picture 4



わたし

おちゃ

まいにち

のみます

Picture 5



女の子 (おんなのこ)

します

ダンス

APPENDIX E

Picture Description Task 3

Picture Description Task 3

Picture 1.



わたし
ききます
おんがく

Picture 2.



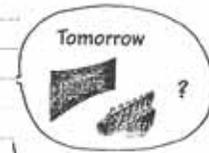
ケーキ
お母さん (おかあさん)
かいます

Picture 3.



ヒキヒキ
いきます
コーヒー

Picture 4



1時 (いちじ)
あした
えいか

Picture 5



みます
ステーキ
たべます
うち

APPENDIX F

Picture Description Task 4

Picture Description Task 4

Picture 1.



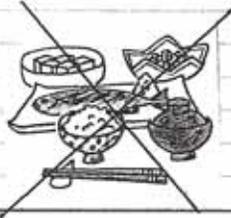
てがみ
ぼく
よみます

Picture 2.



かきます
まいにち
かんじ

Picture 3



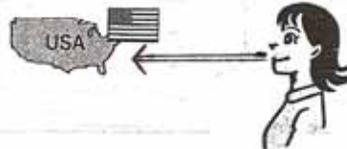
ばんごはん
四時(よじ)
たべます

Picture 4



かいます
くつ
デパート

Picture 5



アメリカ
お姉さん(おねえさん)
いきます

APPENDIX G

Picture Description Task 5

Picture Description Task 5

Picture 1.



スープ

のみます

男の子 (おとこのこ)

Picture 2.



わたし

よみません

まんが

Picture 3.



まいにち

うち

三じはん

かえります

Picture 4



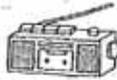
七時 (しちじ)

まいにち

ゲーム

します

Picture 5.



ラジオ

ききます

お父さん (おとうさん)

APPENDIX H

Scoring Rubric for Picture Description Task

	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Picture 4	Picture 5
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

Use of particle <i>wo(o)</i>					
No hesitation: Correct					
Incorrect					
Self-correct					
With hesitation: Correct					
Incorrect					
Self-correct					
Use of other particles					
Subject marker <i>wa</i>					
Correct					
Incorrect					
Place marker <i>de</i>					
Correct					
Incorrect					
Time marker <i>ni</i>					
Correct					
Incorrect					
Destination marker <i>he(e)</i>					
Correct					
Incorrect					

*For any incorrect use of a particle, a note of what error a student made will be recorded, for example, Incorrect ✓ --- *wa* (Students used *wa* instead of *wo*)

APPENDIX I

Interview Questions

Pre Interview Questions

1. How do you like learning about Japanese particle *wo(o)*? Are you confident in it? Why, why not?

2. What did you learn about the particle *wo(o)* today? What helped you learn it?
3. What do you think it is hard to learn about the particle *wo(o)*?

Pocket Chart Interview Questions

1. Did you learn anything new in last two weeks? What do you know about the particle *wo(o)*?
2. What do you think about pop-up grammar? Do you like it? Do you think it is helpful?
3. What do you think about pocket chart activities? Do you like it? Do you think it is helpful?

Recast Interview Questions

1. How do you like recast? Do you think it is helpful?
2. What do you think differences between pocket chart activities and recast?

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