CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

With the advent of a communicative approach in language teaching, there is a change from old-fashioned stance of synthetic syllabus to analytic syllabus. The former refers to analyzing the target language to form a collection of grammatical points, rules and words separately. The latter, on the other hand, puts emphasis on focus in meaning (Wilkins, 1976, cited in Long and Robinson, 1998). In agreement with this trend, some theories, namely Monitor Theory of SLA by Krashen study's (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) and noncorrective approach (Rivers, 1986) support the flow of communication and meaning rather than focus on form and accuracy.

Nonetheless, the problem of inaccuracy in language acquisition is still discussed after the appearance of communicative views of language teaching. The question arises: to what extend do teachers underline "form-focused instruction"(FFI)? Spada (as cited in Brown 2000) nicely defines FFI as "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly".

Larsen-Freeman (1986) is strongly against form-focused instruction and also points out that owing to this communicative approach, a tolerant attitude towards errors has taken place in language teaching, and the reason for it is that errors are a natural outcome of language acquisition. In addition, focusing on form and error correction deteriorate the conventions of discourse in which there is almost no error correction and, as a result, does not interrupt the flow of communication. Focus on form is usually done at the expense of meaning, which, at the same time, increases the affective filters of learners. Focusing on meaning and use, on the other hand, is more logical.

However, Han (2004) states the problem of *fossilization* which refers to interlanguage patterns which seem not to change, even after extended exposure to or instruction in the target language. This problem has existed even among fluent EFL speakers in Thailand and it cannot be ignored.

The discussion therefore arises: how can researchers and practitioners deal with the defects of focus on form and those of mere focus on meaning? The approach of dealing with form is called focus on form (FonF) which attempts to capture the strengths of an analytic syllabus and also minimizes its limitations. This approach is influenced by Interaction Hypothesis which holds that the progress of language learners lies in learners and other speakers, including proficient speakers and elaborated written texts. The other approach is called Focus on FormS which is termed by Wikipedia as the presentation of discrete items of grammar, lexis, functions, and notions one at a time, like the presentation of a grammatical point traditionally. In this independent study, the interest lies in focus on form (FonF). FonF is further categorized into explicit and implicit dichotomy. Explicit focus on form involves explicitly drawing the attention of the learner to the error with or without rule explanation, while implicit focus on form is indirect. The advantage of implicit focus on form is that it does not stop the flow of communication. In addition, it involves some techniques, namely corrective recast, repetition, clarification request, and comprehension check.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine whether explicit focus on form affects the linguistic accuracy of a group of M.5 Triam Udom Suksa students' oral production at the intermediate level of language proficiency in comparison with another group receiving corrective recast at the same level of language proficiency.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

One of the concerns of teachers, especially in communicative classes, is that they wonder if language learners' oral productions should be corrected. Of course, most teachers would love to correct errors, but the key point is that not enough knowledge is provided to teachers regarding what to correct, how to correct, and when to correct.

Providing that explicit focus on form is found more effective than corrective recasts the former will be applied to promote students' linguistic accuracy.

On the contrary, if it is found that corrective recast can improve students' accuracy, this method will be applied to correct students' errors.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. This study was done with the samples chosen from Grade11th students at Triam Udom Suksa School in the academic year 2008. The total sample was 40 students of 3 programs: science-math, math-arts and arts-languages.

2. The study aimed at comparing two ways of correcting errors: explicit focus on form and implicit focus on form through corrective recast.

Basic Assumption

The effect of explicit focus on form, and that of implicit focus on form through corrective recast influencing accuracy of oral production, are significantly different. Those who receive explicit focus on form would outperform those treated by corrective recast in the case of short-term memory retention.

Hypothesis

The one-sided alternative hypothesis is that explicit focus on form is more effective in dealing with the linguistic accuracy of Triam Udom Suksa students' oral production at the intermediate level of language proficiency, in comparison with the other group receiving corrective recast at the same level of language proficiency (p = 0.05).

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The important terms used throughout this study are as follows:

Analytic syllabus: Analytic syllabus is defined by Wilkins (1976, cited in Long & Robinson, 1998) as the organization of "purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purpose".

Clarification request: Lightbown and Spada (1999) states that clarification request is where the teacher indicates to learners that an utterance has been misunderstood or that there is an error in it and that a repetition or a reformulation is needed. A clarification request includes phrases such as 'Pardon', 'What do you mean by …?'.

Corrective recast: Corrective recast involves the teachers' reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error. Recasts are generally implicit in that they are not introduced by 'You mean', 'Use this word', or 'You should say.'

Explicit focus on form: Explicit focus on form refers to the explicit provision of the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect (for example, 'Oh, you mean…', 'You should say …').

Error: A wrong use or usage of target language, when the correct use or usage is not known to the speaker.

Focus on form (FonF): Focus on form is defined as "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly"

Focus on forms: Focus on formS refers to the presentation of discrete items of grammar, lexis, functions, and notions one at a time, like the presentation of a grammatical point traditionally.

Implicit focus on form: Doughty and Williams (1998) state that the aim of implicit focus on form is 'to *attract* learner attention and to avoid metalinguistic discussion, always *minimizing any interruption* to the communication of the meaning' (p.232). It is further added that implicit, or indirect, focus on form could be achieved by means of recast, corrective recast, repetition, clarification request, and comprehension check.

Mistake: A wrong production of the target language, when the producer knows the correct way. This usually happens due to "fossilization".

Repetition: Lightbown and Spada (1999) point out clearly that repetition refer to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance. In most cases, teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error.

Short-term memory: refers to the capacity for holding a small amount of information in mind in an active, readily available state for a short period of time. The duration of short-term memory (when rehearsal is prevented) is assumed to be in the order of seconds. Estimates of the capacity of short-term memory vary – from about 3 or 4 elements (i.e., words, digits, or letters) to about 9 elements (Wikipedia)

Synthetic syllabus: In syllabus design, when the target language is analyzed to form a pedagogical grammar, the syllabus is termed synthetic (Wilkins, 1976, cited in Long & Robinson, 1999). In this kind of syllabus, the language is broken down into words, grammar rules, etc. which are sequenced for presentation as models to learners linearly and additively.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This part reviews the literature and research studies related to focus on form, and a brief background of focus on form accompanied by the related strategies.

2.1 FOCUS ON FORM BACKGROUND

According to Long and Robinson (1999), the first syllabus design is called synthetic syllabus which refers to analyzing the target language to form a collection of grammatical points, rules and words separately. They further clarify that the second language is divided into six categories: words and collocations, grammar rules, phonemes, intonation and stress patterns, structures, notion or function. In this kind of syllabus, the learners are to synthesize the pieces for use in communication and this leads to *focus on formS*; i.e., discrete items of grammar, lexis, functions, and notions are presented one at a time.

Unfortunately, this type of syllabus does not work as it is supposed to. Many educators point out that adult and adolescent second and foreign language learners who accidentally or implicitly acquire the target language by exposure to comprehensible input (I+1) are bound to be successful since this is how young children acquire their mother tongue. (Corder,1967; Dulay and Burt,1973; Felix, 1981; Krashen, 1985; Wode, 1981, cited in Long and Robinson, 1999).

To analyze the synthetic syllabus in detail, Krashen's study (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2003) described consciously learned and unconsciously acquired language in his Monitor Model. According to this model, FonF is ignored and has no importance in language teaching. The term "noninterventionist" comes onto the scene (Long and Robinson, 1999). The two educationists point out clearly:

The crucial claim is that people learn languages best, inside or outside a classroom, not by treating the languages as an object of study, but by experiencing them as a medium of communication. These language teaching syllabi are termed *analytic*. (Long and Robinson, 1999, p.18)

To clarify the term analytic syllabus, Wilkin (1976, cited in Long and Robinson, 1999) defines it as the organization of purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes.

This kind of syllabus is seen as mere focus on meaning. However, there are many researchers arguing against this stance. The evidence from Hyltenstam, 1988; Long, 1990, 1993; Newport, 1999 indicate that the maturation brings about non-native like problem; that is to say, adults or young adults learning language do not have capacity to attain native norms in a new language merely from exposure to its use. Furthermore, referring to some other studies by Long, 1997a; Pavesi, 1986; Schmidt, 1983; Swain, 1991a; Harley and Swain, 1984, mere focus on meaning and input exposure, as in the case of *Immersion* programme, cannot make learners native-like speakers. Long and Robinson (1999) further explain, "The emphasis is on the provision of sufficient quantities of *positive evidence* about what is plausible in L2." In other words, L2 learners acquire the target language provided that they are exposed to sufficient input. The two researchers also added that the given input should be modified in a natural way, namely negotiation for meaning between teacher and learners. To illustrate this stance, the example of L2 classroom, including Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach, some content-based instruction and immersion education can be considered as focus on meaning.

However, Norris and Ortega's study (as cited in Ellis, 2001) conducted a meta-analysis of study that examined the effect of grammar instruction. Seeing the outcome of the research, the two researchers value Focus on Form instruction since it did make a positive difference for second language acquisition classroom.

Thus, the question no longer is whether some explicit teaching is beneficial, but what type of explicit teaching is more effective. Norris and Ortega distinguish between explicit and implicit instruction and between Focus on FormS and Focus on Form instruction.

They eventually concluded that the instruction treatments involving an explicit focus on the rule-governed nature of L2 structures are more effective than not including such a focus. The effects also last longer. In other words, what students have learnt explicitly is remembered over time. Nevertheless, one problem is that the

result may be on account of the type of controlled tests that are used to measure the effect (De Bot, 2005). According to Norris and Ortega (2001), even though further research is needed, they tentatively suggest that an explicit focus on form is more effective than Focus on FormS.

Another case in point opposing focus on meaning is *fossilization* which refers to interlanguage patterns which seem not to change, even after extended exposure to or instruction in the target language (Han 2003). Skehan (1998:3, cited in Han 2003) highlights L2 learners' natural inclination to focus on meaning, not on form. He further notes that as a result of the meaning priority, especially in over-communicative classes (e.g., immersion classes), a teacher usually misuses positive feedback illustrated as follows:

Student: I'm got to end. [Error]
Teacher: Very good. [Approval] We should have number one almost done. Let's see
together. [Topic continuation]

(Lyster 1998, cited in Han 2003)

This sample conversation proves that to continue the topic, the teacher unintentionally reinforces the student's error with positive feedback The teacher's approval may send a confusing message not only to that student, but also to other classmates who may notice the grammatical error in the student's utterance (Han, 2003). In Allwright (1984)'s opinion, this kind of input inhibits rather than promotes learning.

Seeing this problem, Long and Robinson made an attempt to enhance positive evidence or provide negative evidence. Focus on form was put forward with the attempt to remove its limitations and strengthen the synthetic syllabus. According to the *Interaction Hypothesis,* L2 learners better their use of the target language by negotiation for meaning with both other proficient users of that language, or by reading, especially elaborated text (Long, 1997b, cited in Long and Robinson, 1999). Negotiation is reported to elicit negative evidence including *recasts* by means of which a learner will realize how his utterance is different from that of the native norm.

Focus on Form (FonF) is put into two categories: explicit and implicit dichotomy (Long and Robinson, 1999). Explicit focus on form involves explicitly drawing the attention of the learner to the error with or without rule explanation, while implicit focus on form is indirect. The advantage of implicit focus on form is that it does not stop the flow of communication. In addition, it involves some techniques, namely corrective recast, repetition, clarification request, and comprehension check.

2.2 STRATEGIES OF FOCUS ON FORM

As has been mentioned, there are two set of strategies of focus on form: explicit and implicit. First of all, the explicit focus on form will be discussed first.

According to Ellis (2001) explicit strategies involve explicitly drawing the attention of the learner to the error with or without rule explanation.

The example of explicit focus on form is shown below:

Explicit focus-on-form

Student 1: was anything found by his body

Student 2: pardon

Student 1: was anything found. fou, fou

Teacher: watch me. watch me. found

Student 1: found

Teacher: found

Student 1: found

Teacher: found

Student 1: found

Teacher: ow, ow, found

Student 1: found

Teacher: found

Student : found

T: found yeah

S1: found by his body

To explain this strategy in detail, explicit negative evidence is the input in which an error is explicitly referred to, and the learner is directly told that *It is not X* but *It is Y*. On the other hand, implicit, or indirect, strategies range from giving facial signals to paraphrase, and recast (Ellis, 2001). Implicit strategies in detail involve recast, corrective recast, repetition, clarification request, and comprehension check.

Among implicit strategies, recasts are seen as the most frequent kind of feedback in communicative classes, as demonstrated in a study by Doughty and Williams (1994) in a French class where in 60 % of feedback by the teacher opted for recast. Recast is the teacher's reformulation of all or part of the learner's utterance (Nicholas et al., 2001 (cited in Matsumura, 2001). Lightbown and Spada (1999) define recast as the corrective feedback where the teacher repeats a student's utterance, using correct forms where the student has made an error, but does not draw attention to the error and maintains a central focus on meaning. The two educators further explain that recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of students' utterances. Recasts are not introduced by "You mean", "Use this word", or "You should say". To illustrate corrective feedback, an example is shown below:

S1: When you're phone partners, did you talk long time?

T : When you phoned partners, did you talk for a long time?

S2: Yes, my first one I talked for 25 minutes.

S1: Why you don't like Marc?

T : Why don't you like Marc?

S2: I don't know. I don't like him.

The next implicit strategy is repetition. Lightbown ad Spada (1999) clarify that repetition refers to the teacher's repetition of the student's incorrect utterance. Teachers usually adjust their intonation in order to highlight the error.

Another implicit strategy is clarification request which indicate to students either their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that it is in an incorrect form. A clarification request includes phrases namely "Pardon me…", "What do you mean by…".

T: How often do you wash the dishes?

S: Fourteen.

T: Excuse me? (Clarification request)

S: Fourteen

T: Fourteen what?

S: Fourteen times a week.

The other strategy is comprehension check which involves asking a comprehension question from learners in order to make them repeat what they said (Ellis, 2001). It is believed that after asking for clarification or a comprehension check question, the learners are given a second chance to state what they had said. This make them rethink about their production and, probably, change the error in the production especially if the learners are given a clue that the teacher is focusing on form, not the meaning (Matsumura, 2001)

2.3 RELATED ISSSUES

2.3.1 What Form Is to Be Focused on?

After the advent of FFI (form-focused instruction), a question arises: what form is to be focused on? DeKeyser who takes cognitive perspectives emphasizes the relevance of Universal Grammar and the need for negative evidence. He points out clearly, "If a structure is part of Universal Grammar (UG), and UG is accessible to the second language learner, then all that is needed is sufficient input to trigger acquisition, unless L2 is a subset of L1. In the latter's case, negative evidence is required" (Doughty & Williams,1998, p. 43). In this regard, Doughty and Williams further explain, "in this sense, forms need not be taught because they do not have to be learned; they simply emerge as appropriate data interacting with UG, in a process similar to the one of grammar development in children learning their first language" (p. 201).

On the nature of this triggering evidence, Doughty and Williams (1999) further pose the question whether positive evidence i.e. information about the possibilities in the target language is the driving force, or negative evidence i.e. information about the impossibilities in the target language may help in this regard.

Further, Schwartz adds that negative evidence does not have much impact on forms within UG, while positive evidence plays a significant role in this regard. Consequently, Doughty and Williams conclude that this means explicit instruction and corrective feedback should be neglected. It is added that if the structure does not relate to aforementioned condition, then rule teaching and error correction will be needed. In agreement with Mackey and Philp (1998), they mention that negative evidence is beneficial if the L2 structure is a subset of L1.

2.3.2 When and How to Correct

As for the right time to use the strategies of focus on form, it should be remembered that malformed utterances by L2 learners fall into two categories: error and mistake. The former should be treated by explicit correction, the latter, on the other hand, should be corrected by implicit strategies. In this regard, Hendrickson (1980, cited in 2000) introduces the matter of local and global errors. He explains that local errors need not be corrected since the message is clear and the correction by teacher may interrupt the flow of communication. Contrastingly, global errors should be treated since the speakers cannot make themselves understood owing to that malformed utterance.

Regarding error correction, it is reported that the most effective method of error correction has not been concluded yet. Krashen and Terrell's study (as cited in Brown, 2000) strongly believe that there should be no direct treatment of errors since it is not authentic in a real life situation. Nonetheless, learners have always wanted direct correction by the teacher. Brown, therefore, suggests that regarding these two opposite views, a balanced view should be taken in terms of error correction. In order to establish such a balance, Bailey's study (as cited in Brown 2000, p. 238) suggests seven error treatment options, while each option could possibly have eight features. These options and features are outlined below:

1. To treat or to ignore

2. To treat immediately or to delay

3. To transfer treatment or not

4. To transfer to another individual, a subgroup or the whole class

5. To return or not to the original error maker after treatment

6. To permit other learners to initiate correction

7. To test for the efficacy of the treatment

Possible features:

1. Fact of error indicated

2. Location indicated

3. Opportunity for new attempt given

4. Model provided

5. Error type indicated

6. Remedy indicated

7. Improvement indicated

8. Praise indicated

Regarding these options, Brown adds that teachers need to develop a kind of intuition to choose the best option or combination of options at the right time. This intuition could be formed through experience, as well as considering the principles of optimal affective and cognitive feedback in Reinforcement Theory and Communicative Language Teaching (Brown, 2000).

In addition, teachers should first recognize the type of error, that is, whether the error is lexical, phonological, etc. Next, teachers should make an intelligent guess about the source of that error; in other words, the source of error might be L1 interference, teacher induced, etc. If the teacher wants to explain the error, recognition of linguistic complexity also plays a crucial role. After this stage, teachers should distinguish between global and local error, as well as mistake and error.

Regarding affective filter, Gregersen (2003) warns that some learners find correction distracting, demotivating and stress-generating, as well as the fact that learners are also inhibited by some error corrections. Another matter to take into account is the pedagogical focus which includes the task, lesson, or course objectives. Communicative context, that is, group work, pair work or student-student, student-teacher exchange, as well as the teacher's style in correction should also be taken into consideration. By teacher style, it means whether the teacher is an interventionist, direct or indirect corrector.

In the case of correction and feedback, the question arises: whether correction should only be done by teachers or there is also another source of correction. In this

regard, peer correction is introduced by many scholars, such as Brown (2000), Harmer (2001), Hadley (2003), and Murphy (1986). Among these scholars, Murphy strongly recommends peer feedback and urges teachers to give the responsibility of correction and feedback to learners. But, in order to do so, according to his personal experience, he suggests that first the function of feedback should be explained to learners. Moreover, some discourse and communication-related matters, such as turn taking, and the appropriate gambits to correct, should also be taught to learners. In this regard, Hadley (2003) suggests that teachers can give a kind of checklist including grammatical features, discourse features, vocabulary, and pronunciation matters so that the learners get to know what to look for in the speech of their peers.

As for studies regarding peer correction, one study has been held by Morris (2002), in which the effect of explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, confirmation checks, and repetition by peers on the learner repair, as well as the relation of these strategies with special errors, have been checked. By tape recording the conversation among these learners, the researcher has found that 70% of the errors by peers have received corrective feedback but the rate at which lexical errors have been corrected has been higher than that of syntactic errors; therefore, the tolerance of these learners has been low for lexical errors.

Moreover, in his study, syntactic errors are mostly cured by recasts, whereas lexical errors received negotiation moves. According to the researcher, these learners negotiated lexical errors because recasting might have confused their peers since they might think that it was just the repetition or another way of speaking correctly.

2.3.3 Feedback during Oral Work

Harmer (2001) pointed out clearly that non-communicative activities are intended to better the accuracy of learners. Communicative activities, on the other hand, are to enhance the fluency of learners. Thus, during accuracy work, the teacher is expected to correct the learners' mistake. Teachers should bear in mind that during communicative activities, they should not interrupt the flow of communication by underlining grammatical, lexical or pronunciation mistakes. According to Lynch's study (Harmer, 2001), teacher's intervention should be as late as possible. Nonetheless, Harmer contends that it depends on the situation. Suppose that the

teacher notices that learners cannot make themselves understood and the communication is going to fail, or it is the right time to do the correction according to the teacher's experience, the teacher should go ahead and correct the error. Despite these situations, intensive correction should not taken place.

As mentioned before, correction depends on how it is done, who it is done to, and when it is done. In addition, correction is a very personal matter that draws much on the rapport between teachers and learners; in other words, correction must not be offending and demotivating at all. Kyriacou (1991) introduces supportive feedback in this regard, which refers to constructive and helpful feedback, which should be provided to support and encourage progress. Such feedback shows the learners not only their problems with language but also points out their progress. This supportive feedback is actually a non-threatening feedback which is constant, and the teacher makes a balance among individuals, groups, and peer feedback.

2.3.4 Feedback during Accuracy Work

Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992) define accuracy as "the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently." Harmer (2001) points out clearly that, in general, correction during accuracy work consists of two stages. In the first stage, the teacher somehow shows that there is something wrong with what the learner just said, and in the next stage, the learner is told to do something about his statement.

Regarding the first stage, Harmer emphasizes that teachers should enjoy the techniques to show incorrectness, that is to say, the implicit techniques of corrective feedback are underlined. In short, Harmer is referring to the implicit strategies of focus on form as the techniques which are used in the first stage of correction by the teacher. In addition, Harmer also refers to this fact that implicit strategies should be used to correct mistakes, and not errors. In the case of the implicit techniques of correction, Harmer refers to *hinting*. By hinting, Harmer means that whenever the learner makes a mistake, for instance, about the tense of a verb, the teachers can very quietly give the hint by just whispering *tense*.

The next stage is concerning correction. Teachers should take part in this stage when the learner is unable to correct himself/herself. The teacher is to repeat the

statement correctly, and if necessary, he should explain the grammatical rule or word choice. Another measure to take could be peer correction. At this point, it could be concluded that both implicit and explicit correction should be applied at the appropriate time.

2.3.5 Short-term Memory Retention

It is believed that memory plays a crucial role in language use (Ma, 2005). According to Myers (2006), memory can be divided into three stores: sensory store, short-term store and long term store. Information first comes into the sensory store for classification; those that are paid attention to are stored to be further processed in short-term memory (working memory). The information is finally stored in long-term memory after processing. In this independent study, only short-term memory is underlined.

According to Cook (as cited in Ma, 2005), short-term memory plays a vital role in mental activities. First, short-term memory is very helpful for focusing on and predicting the material. Second, it helps humans form a complete picture of input information by retelling, encoding and retrieving. Third, it functions as a temporary register when people think or solve problems. Short-term memory has three main characteristics. First, it can contain at any one time seven, plus or minus two, "chunks" of information. But information which is stored in short-term memory is quite brief and is usually forgotten. Second, items remain in short-term memory around twenty seconds. Third, information is usually stored in short-term memory in the form of sound. There is evidence from Sperling and Darwin's experiment on listening (as cited in Ma, 2005) indicating that people's listening comprehension is mostly based on their short-term memory in that it can store and at the same time process certain information in a short time.

Ways to Improve Short-Term Memory

Referring to Ma (2005), many psycholinguists value the function and effect of short-term memory in second language acquisition. They have also made suggestions on improving short-term memory. Such advice is proved to be effective by teaching practice.

<u>1. Repetition</u>

According to Baddeley (cited in Ma, 2005), since short-term memory retains information for only a limited amount of time and disappears rapidly, information must be periodically repeated or rehearsed. By doing so, the information will re-enter the short-term store and be retained for a further period. It is also reported that the faster learners can repeat things, the more they can remember.

<u>2. A good command of the language</u>

Baddeley neatly explains, "Short-term memory is known for its limited capacity and rapid decay. Thus, the less information is stored in it, the better the memory will be, the better the language skill will easily achieve." Regarding listening and speaking skill, what an L2 learner will do first in the process of listening is to decode and then encode the material he hears. Then he may match the information he retrieves with the schemata which is already stored in his long-term memory (ibid). Referring to Davis and Rinvoluci (as cited in Ma, 2005), a successful match means a good use of language, and it will speed up the retrieving of information as well (This speed-up can reduce the work of short-term memory and also enhance its efficiency). However, if the information input cannot be used in time or is beyond the capacity of short-term memory, some messages will be lost, causing great trouble in the use of language. In line with this belief, Deveau (2003, cited in Ma, 2005) cites that the input from short-term memory plays a significant role of being schemata. Rich schemata come from a good command of knowledge, including the language (Deveau, 2003). Language learners should be informed of the correct use of language in order to gain schemata and their language proficiency will be developed.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This study is designed to compare the effectiveness of explicit focus on form and that of implicit focus on form through corrective recast influencing accuracy of oral production of M.5 students at Triam Udom Suksa School.

In this chapter, some variables, namely subjects, instruments, procedure, research design and data analysis are clearly explained.

3.1 SUBJECT

To meet the objectives of this research, the researcher interviewed grade 11 students at Triam Udom Suksa School in the academic year 2008. The total sample was 40 students of 3 programs: science-math, math-arts and arts-languages.

3.2 INSTRUMENT

To carry out this study, a valid teacher-made achievement oral test was used. This test consisted of various grammar points which were in the format of open-ended questions. Thirty questions were posed to forty students. The instrument used in this study was a structured interview so as to elicit the required structures from the subjects.

Since the purpose of this study is to compare the effectiveness of implicit focus on form through corrective recast and that of explicit focus on form, these two types of treatments are applied in this study.

3.3 PROCEDURE

This study requires 40 homogeneous learners who are taught six grammatical structures: *present perfect*, *I wish*, three forms of *causative clause*, *conditional sentences*, *should have + past participle* and *reported speech*. Despite their familiarity with these targeted structures, learners always make mistakes in written production.

In the case of the experimental group, everything was similar to that of the comparison group, except that there was no corrective recast. The members of the

experimental group were merely given correct form, for instance, by saying *It is not X,* but *It is Y*, as soon as they made a grammatical error in oral production,

Regarding the comparison group, the participants were provided with corrective recast. In order to gain maximum benefit from recasts, the subjects should be familiar with the nature of recasts; i.e., the learners should be taught that the use of recasts by the teacher are reactions to erroneous forms.

3.4 TEST CONSTRUCTION

This study focuses on the following question:

Does explicit focus on form affect the linguistic accuracy of a group of M.5 Triam Udom Suksa students' oral production at the intermediate level of language proficiency in comparison with another group receiving implicit focus on form through corrective recast at the same level of language proficiency?

The study consists of two independent variables (two techniques of focus on form, i.e., explicit focus on form and implicit focus on form through corrective recast,), and a dependent variable (linguistic accuracy). The research designed to carry out this study was experimental, two different treatments for experimental and comparison groups. There were thirty interview questions which were divided into three sets. Each set contained ten questions of the same grammatical features. In the first two sets, the researcher applied the two treatments to react to erroneous forms. The last set of questions was considered the test to measure which approach is more efficient in correcting students' error in oral production.

The thirty questions are shown below:

1. Have you ever joined any club since you were in Triam Udom?

(present perfect simple)

2. What would life be like if your parents sent you to boarding school?

(second conditional)

3. What kind of person would you be if your parent had spoiled you when you were a little kid? *(mixed conditional)*

4. You get stuck in traffic and you may be late for your final exam. Suddenly a person passes you by on a motorbike in a very relaxed way. What do you wish?

(wish + past simple)

5. My brother was charged with drunk driving last night. Make a suggestion on what he should have done. *(should have + past participle)*

6. Who do you usually have repair your computer? *(causative: have sb do sth*)

7. When did you last have your hair cut? *(causative: have/get sth done)*

8. I am to say a direct speech. Please convert it into indirect speech. Galileo said, "The Earth is round." *(reported speech)*

9. "I will do whatever you want me to do. Please feel free to tell me what you want", said Alex to his beloved wife. *(reported speech)*

10. "Did you go to see the concert last week?" , my friend asked me. *(reported speech)*

11. Have you ever had a pen friend?

12. If you were eligible to vote, who would you vote to be Bangkok governor?

13. How would you feel now if you had not slept last night?

14. You are supposed to hand in your final project tomorrow, but you have done only fifty per cent of it. What do you wish?

15. I lost my laptop because I left it in the taxi last night. Make a suggestion on what I should have done?

16. Who do you have mend your clothes?

17. How often do you have your hair cut?.

18. Convert this sentence into reported speech. "There is a ring around the moon," states Aristotle.

19. Claire said to her roommate, "I have to cram for chemistry test. Please leave me alone"

20. Did the teachers have a welcoming party yesterday?" , Paul asked Jane.

21. Have you ever tried the French food, escargot?

22. If you were Barak Obama, what problem would you solve first?

23. What would life be like if you had been raised by an American family when you were a child?

24. You really want to study aboard but your parents cannot afford it. You have heard about a full scholarship granted to a Thai student. What do you wish?

25. One of my friends went to Europe and was caught traveling on a train without a ticket. Make a suggestion on what he should have done.

26. Who do you normally have check your computer?

27. Have you ever had your teeth braced?

28. Newton points out clearly, "There is gravity in the world."

29. "I am so hungry. Please go get me something to eat.", said Sarah to her younger sister.

30. Alex asked Sandra, "Did you see Mr.Paddington at the Party last night?"

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

With regard to the aforementioned research question and the one-tailed hypothesis, as well as the design of the study, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine the effect of two techniques of focus on form (i.e., explicit focus on form vs. implicit focus on form through corrective recast), in comparison to each other, on the linguistic accuracy of participants' oral production. Further, ANOVA, as well as *t*-test, was used again to have more in-depth analysis of the data in terms of the effect of the two focus-on-form techniques on the accuracy of oral production of each aimed structure.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Table 1. General Background of the subjects.

No. of Students	Gender		Program*			Average Grade of English						
	M	F	S-M	M-A	A-L	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D
40	17	23	13	13	14	38	2	-	-	-	-	-

This table represents the general background of the subjects. To meet the objectives of this research, the researcher interviewed grade 11 students at Triam Udom Suksa School in the academic year 2008. The total sample was 40 students of 3 programs: 13 students from science-math program, 13 from math-arts and 14 from arts-languages with 17 boys and 23 girls. These students are considered homogeneous since their average English grade was more or less the same, being A or B+.

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* There are three programs in Triam Udom Suksa School:
 S-M stands for science - mathematic program,
 M-A stands for mathematic - arts program, and
 L-A stands for languages – arts program.

After interviewing the subjects, the data were then computed by SPSS/PC 16 (the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Personal Computer, Version 16). The findings are as follows:

$$H_A : \quad \mu_1 > \mu_2$$
$$\alpha \ = \ 0.05$$

Table 2: The difference Between the Scores of the Experimental Group and Comparison Group While Being Interviewed

Groups	N	X	SD.	df	T
Experimental Group	20	26.2	9.66	39	2.449519
Comparison Group	20	22.95	25.5475		
Total	40				

Table 2 shows that $_{.05}$ t $_{39}$ > 2.449519 and the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, on average the score of the experimental group (X = 26.2, SD.= 9.66) and that of the comparison group (X = 22.95, SD. = 25.5475) were significantly different. This means that, on average, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group.

$$H_0 : \quad \mu_1 = \mu_2$$
$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Table 3: The Difference Between Persons Who Answered Grammatically Correctly from the Experimental Group and Comparison Group While Being Asked Questions 1-10

Groups	N	X	SD.	Df	t
Experimental Group	10	14.30	4.572	9	-.514
Comparison Group	10	14.50	4.428		

Table 3 shows that $_{.05}$ t $_9$ = -.514 and the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, on average the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from the experimental group (X = 14.3, SD.= 4.572) and that of the comparison group (X = 14.5, SD. = 4.428) are more or less the same. This means that, on average, the experimental group and the comparison group had the same level of language performance in the first set of question.

$$H_A : \quad \mu_1 > \mu_2$$
$$\alpha > 0.05$$

Table 4: The Difference Between Persons who Answered Grammatically Correctly from the Experimental Group and Comparison Group While Being Asked Questions 11-20

Groups	N	X	SD.	Df	T
Experimental Group	10	18.80	1.398	9	2.924
Comparison Group	10	15.20	4.050		

Table 4 shows that $_{.05}$ t $_9$ > 2.924 and the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, on average the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from the experimental group (X = 18.8, SD.= 1.398) and that of the comparison group (X = 15.2, SD. = 4.050) were significantly different. This means that, on average, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in questions number 11-20.

$$H_A : \quad \mu_1 > \mu_2$$

$$\alpha > 0.05$$

Table 5: The Difference Between Persons Who Answered Grammatically Correctly from the Experimental Group and Comparison Group While Being Asked Questions 21-30

Groups	N	X	SD.	df	T
Experimental Group	10	19.50	.707	9	3.398
Comparison Group	10	16.40	3.134		

Table 4 shows that $_{.05}$ t $_9$ > 3.398 and the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, on average the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from the experimental group (X = 19.5, SD.= 0.707) and that of the comparison group (X = 16.4, SD. = 3.134) were significantly different. This means that, on average, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in questions number 21-30.

Table 6: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Question Number 1, 11 and 21 Which Focus on Present Perfect Tense

Group * Present Perfect Crosstabulation

			Present perfect	
			Correct	Total
Group	Experimental	Count	60	60
		% within Group	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Present Perfect	50.0%	50.0%
	Comparison	Count	60	60
		% within Group	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Present Perfect	50.0%	50.0%
	Total	Count	120	120
		% within Group	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Present Perfect	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6 represents that all the questions focused on present perfect tense were answered grammatically correctly. All subjects from both the experimental and comparison group produced grammatical sentences using present perfect tense.

Table 7: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Questions Number 2, 3, 12, 13, 22 and 23, Which Focus on Conditionals[*]

Group * Conditional Crosstabulation

			Conditional sentences			
			Correct	Incorrect	No answer	Total
Group	Experiment al	Count	98	22	0	120
		% within Group	81.7%	18.3%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Conditional sentences	56.6%	33.8%	.0%	50.0%
	Compariso n	Count	75	43	2	120
		% within Group	62.5%	35.8%	1.7%	100.0%
		% within Conditional sentences	43.4%	66.2%	100.0%	50.0%
	Total	Count	173	65	2	240
		% within Group	72.1%	27.1%	.8%	100.0%
		% within Conditional sentences	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 represents that the experimental group produced 98 grammatical and 22 ungrammatical sentences using conditionals, which can be converted into the percentage of 81.7 and 18.3 respectively. Regarding the comparison group, there were 75 grammatical (62.5%) and 43 ungrammatical hypothetical sentences (35.8%).

[*] See appendix A: Examples of students' errors on conditionals

Table 8: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Questions Number 4, 14 and 24, Where the Targeted Structure was Wish + Past simple[*]

Group * Wish + past simple Crosstabulation

			Wish + past simple		
			Correct	Incorrect	Total
Group	Experimental	Count	52	8	60
		% within Group	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
		% within wish+ past simple	57.1%	27.6%	50.0%
	Comparison	Count	39	21	60
		% within Group	65.0%	35.0%	100.0%
		% within wish+ past simple	42.9%	72.4%	50.0%
	Total	Count	91	29	120
		% within Group	75.8%	24.2%	100.0%
		% within wish+ past simple	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8 shows that the experimental group produced 52 grammatical and 8 ungrammatical sentences using "wish" + past simple, which can be converted into the percentage of 86.7 and 13.3 respectively. Regarding the comparison group, there were 39 grammatical (65%) and 21 ungrammatical unreal present sentences (35%).

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[*] See appendix B: Examples of students' errors on unreal present.

Table 9: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Question Numbers 5, 15 and 25 of Where the Targeted Structure was Should Have + Past Participle [*]

Group * should have + past participle Crosstabulation

			Should have + past participle		
			Correct	Incorrect	Total
Group	Experimental	Count	45	15	60
		% within Group	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Should have + past participle	55.6%	38.5%	50.0%
	Group B	Count	36	24	60
		% within Group	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within Should have + past participle	44.4%	61.5%	50.0%
	Total	Count	81	39	120
		% within Group	67.5%	32.5%	100.0%
		% within Should have + past participle	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9 shows that the experimental group produced 45 grammatical and 15 ungrammatical sentences using "should have" + past participle, which can be converted into the percentage of 75 and 25 respectively. In the case of the comparison group, there were 36 grammatical (60%) and 24 ungrammatical sentences (40%).

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[*] See appendix C: Examples of students' errors on *should have + past participle.*

Table 10: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Question Number 6, 7, 16, 17, 26 and 27 Where the Targeted Structure was Causative[*]

Group * Causative Crosstabulation

			Causative		
			Correct	Incorrect	Total
Group	Experimental	Count	116	4	120
		% within Group	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Causative	49.6%	66.7%	50.0%
	Comparison	Count	118	2	120
		% within Group	98.3%	1.7%	100.0%
		% within Causative	50.4%	33.3%	50.0%
	Total	Count	234	6	240
		% within Group	97.5%	2.5%	100.0%
		% within Causative	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 represents that the experimental group produced 116 grammatical and 4 ungrammatical sentences using causative, which can be converted into the percentage of 96.7 and 3.3 respectively. Compared to the comparison group, there were 118 grammatical (98.3%) and 2 ungrammatical causative clauses (1.7%).

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[*] See appendix D: Examples of students' errors on *Causative.*

Table 11: The Percentage of Correct Answers for Questions Number 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 28, 29 and 30 with the Targeted Structure Reported Speech[*]

Group * Reported speech Crosstabulation

			Reported speech		
			Correct	Incorrect	Total
Group	Experimental	Count	153	27	180
		% within Group	85.0%	15.0%	100.0%
		% within Reported speech	55.4%	32.1%	50.0%
	Comparison	Count	123	57	180
		% within Group	68.3%	31.7%	100.0%
		% within Reported speech	44.6%	67.9%	50.0%
	Total	Count	276	84	360
		% within Group	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Reported speech	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11 represents that the experimental group produced 153 grammatical and 27 ungrammatical sentences using reported speech, which can be converted into the percentage of 85 and 15 respectively. In the case of the comparison group, there were 123 grammatical (68.3%) and 57 ungrammatical sentences (31.7%).

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[*] See appendix E: Examples of students' errors on reported speech.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The first part of this chapter comprises conclusion. The discussion will be presented in the second part and recommendations for further research will be discussed in the last part.

5.1 CONCLUSION

This research study was conducted to examine explicit focus on form corrective recast. According to the review of related literature and the real situation happening in the language classroom, the controversial issue of how to correct students' errors was underlined and discussed. This question, therefore, arises:

Does explicit focus on form affect the linguistic accuracy of a group of M.5 Triam Udom Suksa students' oral production at the intermediate level of language proficiency in comparison with another group receiving implicit focus on form through corrective recast at the same level of language proficiency?

The hypothesis to that question is a directional alternative hypothesis:

The directional alternative hypothesis is that explicit focus on form is more effective in dealing with the linguistic accuracy of Triam Udom Suksa students' oral production at the intermediate level of language proficiency, in comparison with the other group receiving explicit focus on form at the same level of language proficiency (p = 0.05).

So as to test this one-sided alternative hypothesis, 40 participants of the same level of language proficiency from eleventh grade, Triam Udom Suksa School were put into experimental and compared groups. The former received explicit focus on form as the reaction to erroneous form while the latter were exposed to corrective recast whenever they made grammatical errors in a structured interview. The interview emphasized six targeted grammatical structures which are *present perfect*, *I wish*, three forms of *causative clause*, *conditional sentences*, and *should have + past participle* and *reported speech.*

In order to compare the accuracy gains of experimental and comparison group, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. On account of the research findings, the one-sided alternative hypothesis is accepted. The experimental group significantly outperformed the comparison group.

5.2 DISCUSSION

This part falls into two sections: the significant points of the findings, and the teaching implications.

Significant points of the findings

The research findings can be interpreted in the light of Norris and Ortega (2001). These two researchers value explicit focus on form as effective error reaction since in their research study, this treatment was beneficial and durable. Despite the fact that numerous educators, namely Nicholas et al (2001), are against this stance, the explicit focus on form turns out to be advantageous, resulting in better effects, at least in this independent study.

To analyze the data in detail, students' performance on the question one to ten will be discussed first. On average, the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from experimental group and that of the comparison group were more or less the same. As it has already been mentioned that the subjects are homogeneous, their language performance was at the same level.

Regarding the next set of questions, eleven to twenty, the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from the experimental group and those of the comparison group were significantly different. This means that, on average, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in questions number eleven to twenty. The research findings support the hypothesis. The experimental group receiving explicit focus on form outperformed the compared group who were treated with implicit focus on form through corrective recast.

The results of questions number twenty-one to thirty are in accordance with the previous set of questions. After receiving the targeted treatments twice, both groups perform better. However, the number of persons who produced grammatical sentences from the experimental group and that of the comparison group were

significantly different. This means that, on average, the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in the last set of questions. Thus, the explicit focus on form is more effective, leading to better result whereas implicit focus on form through corrective recast is somehow beneficial, but it is not as effective as the other strategy.

To examine the targeted structures, the first one was the use of present perfect. All subjects did not have difficulty using this tense despite the fact that they made grammatical errors in the written paper (midterm examination).

Regarding the other structures, the experimental group overwhelmingly goes one better than the compared group, except in the case of causative clauses. The comparison group did better than the experimental one. Nevertheless, both groups did not have much trouble in producing this target structure. Referring to the findings, 96.7 percent of the answers from the experimental group were grammatically correct and 98.3 percent from the compared group were produced without errors.

Teaching Implication

This independent study aims to examine the effectiveness of form-focused instruction by underlining the gain after explicit focus on form in comparison with that of implicit focus on form through corrective recast. It is vital that a language teachers know when and how to correct students' errors. The result of this study conveys the message that explicit focus on form is required in dealing with grammatical errors. Nonetheless, implicit focus on form would be more effective provided that students realized the teacher was trying to correct their English. According to the experimental research, it is plausible that students think that corrective recast was just the repetition or another way of saying the words correctly. Teachers, therefore, need to be familiar with focus on form techniques. It is worth spending time on correcting students' error to promote accuracy of oral production.

At present, the Education Ministry tries to put forward the communicative approach. It is suggested that syllabus material developers emphasize task-based instruction so that students have a chance to use real language. While producing the target language, students should be corrected when erroneous forms take place. The teacher himself should not neglect errors; otherwise, the learners may encounter the

problem of fossilization. However, teachers should be in trained how to use focus on form techniques in a way that they neither stop the flow of communication nor increase the affective filter.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As this research study is rather specific in terms of the subjects, the aimed structures and the techniques of focus on form, some further research is suggested to be conducted as below:

1. Since this study narrows the focus to only corrective recast and explicit focus on form, it is recommended that duplicated research should be conducted in order to examine the effectiveness of other types or focus on form, namely comprehension checks and clarification requests.

2. This study merely compares the outcome of the two techniques in terms of short-term memory retention. It is suggested that similar research be done so as to see how each technique works for the whole semester or the whole academic year.

3. This research study narrows down to only six grammatical structures; thus, a similar study could examine the accuracy gains in other structures in English or other languages.

4. It is suggested that other research be done to study the effectiveness of focus on form techniques on the other productive skill, i.e. writing skill.

5. The replicated research study could be conducted with advanced learners of English, or learners of a lower level of language proficiency.

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APPENDIX A

Examples of Students' errors on Conditionals

T: What life would be like if your parents sent you to a boarding school?

S: Life *will* be different from now

T: If you were eligible to vote, who would you vote for being Bangkok Governor?

S: I *will* abstain for sure.

T: If you were Barak Obama, what problem would you solve first?

S: If I was him, I ***would have solved*** the economic recession.

T: What kind of person you would be if your parent had spoiled you when you were a little kid?

S: If that *happened*, I would be a person who cares no one.

T: How would you feel now if you had not slept last night?

S: If I ***didn't have*** enough sleep last night, I would be sleepy and in a very bad mood.

T: What life would be like if you had been raised by American family when you were a child?

S: I must be a confident girl, with self-reliance as well.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Students' errors on unreal present (wish + past simple)

T: You get stuck in traffic and you may be late for your final exam. Suddenly, a person passes you by on a motorbike in a very relaxed way. What do you wish?

S: He ***must have been*** very lucky. I wish he ***would give*** me a ride.

T: You are supposed to hand in your final project tomorrow, but you have done only fifty percent of it. What do you wish?

S: I wish my teacher ***would be*** so sick and hospitalized.

T: You really want to study aboard but your parents cannot afford it. You have heard about a full scholarship granted to a Thai student. What do you wish?

S: I wish I ***can get*** that scholarship. Life would be beautiful if I ***get*** that scholarship.

APPENDIX C

Examples of students' errors on *should have + past participle*

T: My brother was charged with drunk driving last night. Make a suggestion on what he should have done.

S: Again please. I can't catch up.

(Teacher repeats)

S: He ***had better stop*** his car and take a nap.

T: I lost my laptop because I left it in the taxi last night. Make a suggestion on what I should have done.

S: I ***should have been rechecked*** before getting off the taxi.

T: One of my friends went to Europe and was caught traveling on a train without a ticket. Make a suggestion on what he should have done.

S: He ***shouldn't get*** on a train without any ticket.

APPENDIX D

Examples of students' errors on causative

T: Who do you usually have repair your computer?

S: Normally, my brother ***does repair*** my computer.

T: When did you last have your hair cut?

S: I ***did*** it last month.

T: Who do you have mend your clothes?

S: My mom ***has*** my clothes mended.

(This student intended to state that he had his mother mend his clothes.)

T: Who do you normally have check your computer?

S: My dad ***checks*** it once every two months.

T: Have you ever had your teeth braced?

S: No, I ***hate having braced*** my teeth.

APPENDIX E

Examples of students' errors on reported speech

T: I am to say a direct speech. Please convert it into indirect speech. Galileo said, "The Earth is round."

S: Galileo said the Earth *was* round.

T**:** "I will do whatever you want me to do. Please feel free to tell me what you want", said Alex to his beloved wife.

S: Alex said that he would do whatever his wife wanted him to do. ***Please feel free*** to tell him what she wanted.

T: "Did you go to see the concert last week?" , my friend asked me.

S: My friend ***asked*** me if I went to the concert ***last week***.

T: Claire said to her roommate, "I have to cram for chemistry test. Please leave me alone"

S: Claire told her roommate that she ***have had*** to cram for chemistry test. She asked her to leave her alone.

T: Did the teachers have a welcoming party yesterday?" , Paul asked Jane.

S: Paul asked Jane if the teacher ***had*** a welcoming party ***yesterday***.

T: "I am so hungry. Please go get me something to eat.", said Sarah to her younger sister.

S: Sarah told her younger brother that she was hungry and told her younger sister to ***have gone to get*** her something to eat.

T: Alex asked Sandra, "Did you see Mr.Paddington at the Party last night?"

S: Alex asked Sandra whether she *saw* Mr.Paddington at the Party the previous night.