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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE USEFULNESS OF GLOSSING SHEETS

Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of Glossing Sheets in Revision Process

Erin Johnson

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Teaching

Department of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

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This thesis is submitted as part of the required work in the Department of Educational Studies, K-12 and Secondary Programs, KSP 610 Scholarly Writing, at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and has been supervised, examined, and accepted by the professor.

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### Abstract

This research explores student perceptions of the effectiveness of grammar glossing sheets. Research methods included the creation of two surveys that were administered to ninth grade students at an American high school in Kuwait. The first survey sought background information on students' perceptions of their abilities when using grammar and the second asked if the students found the grammar glossing process beneficial to their writing and understanding of grammar. Research findings suggest that students do believe there are benefits to the grammar glossing process. Student response shows that grammar glossing sheets are a practical tool to help students increase their knowledge of grammar and improve their writing.

## Chapter 1

Glossing sheets are a fairly recent development in the teaching of grammar. They are discussed in Johansen and Shaw's 2003 article, yet have not inspired research into their usefulness or practicality. A glossing sheet is a list of 10 to 20 grammar rules, depending on what the instructor, department or school prefers. For each writing assignment a student hands in, the instructor chooses up to five rules to focus on and highlights *only* those errors. When the assignment is handed back to the student, they are told which error numbers have been focused on. The students then identify each error, label it, write out the rule, and then fix the error. Glossing is the process of the student identifying, labeling and correcting the errors their instructor has highlighted. By focusing on a few errors at a time, the instructor is able to conduct a mini-lesson on the errors highlighted on the writing assignment before the students begin their corrections, allowing the students to learn at their point of need.

Glossing sheets can help to contextualize grammar usage to students in their own writing when it is relevant to them. Prior to Johansen and Shaw's (2003) article, the decontextualized teaching of grammar had been slowly losing favor since Weaver's (1996a) seminal work in which she states "there is little pragmatic justification for systematically teaching a descriptive or explanatory grammar of the language, whether that language be traditional, structural, transformational, or any other kind" (p. 23). Many educators of second language learners (L2) still feel that students need to comprehend rules of grammar in order to be successful writers, but the problem that remains is how to teach it in order to fully engage students in learning grammar. English

teachers have begun to teach contextualized grammar with teacher-student conferences (Wyse, 2006) and the use of mini-lessons (Johansen & Shaw, 2003). The question that remains is, are these efforts enough? Do students feel as if they understand the concept of grammar, or is it something they do, then promptly forget? This is where the process of grammar glossing comes into play.

The grammar glossing process that Johansen and Shaw (2003, p. 98) developed involves a five-step process:

Step 1: The teacher assesses a piece of student writing as usual and marks grammatical errors.

Step 2: The teacher highlights *only* those errors he or she wants the student to gloss.

Step 3: The student receives the composition back and makes *all* corrections on it.

Step 4: The student gets a "Glossing Sheet" and writes the grammatical rules for *only* the highlighted errors.

Step 5: The student returns the "Glossing Sheet" and corrected composition to the teacher.

The glossing sheet is a list of grammar rules. Students are given the sheet at the beginning of the school year, and refer to it when making corrections to their written work as advised by their teacher. Glossing "is a method whereby the student corrects an error identified by the teacher and then states the grammatical rule that applies" (Johansen & Shaw, 2003, p. 98). This process focuses on grammar in a contextualized way and allows instructors to tailor grammar corrections for each student.

Grammar instruction is constantly evolving; it has gone from decontextualized to a contextualized way of learning. Shin's (2007) study on L2 graduate level Korean learners found that L2 students have a difficult time focusing on the content of what they are writing because they are focused on doing it "right." They want to have the grammar correct. Shin found that teacher correction marks can be particularly unclear to L2 learners because they "do not know how to implement many non-directive comments such as 'wc' (word choice) and 'unclear'" (2007, p. 363). Although Shin's study focuses on graduate level L2 students, the implications can be applied to a secondary classroom. Many L2 learners become frustrated with their own writing because the grammar instruction seldom helps them to understand *why* they have grammar mistakes. Harris and Rowan (1989) determined in their research that understanding grammar within a grammar lesson is vastly different from actually understanding the concept and being able to apply it to each student's own writing. House (2009) puts forth the idea that giving students ownership of their writing (i.e. giving them choices in what to write about) makes the learning of grammar more useful to the student because they develop a sense of ownership of what they write.

This thesis is important because there has been no research conducted on the use of glossing sheets or students' perception of the usefulness of the glossing sheet. Nancy Shaw, a co-author of the only article espousing the benefits of glossing sheets, states that her high school continues to use the glossing process and that the instructors find it to be an effective way to teach grammar to students (personal communication, July 5, 2012). Shaw and Johansen (2003) stated that they had been using the glossing process for 14 to



15 years before publishing. The lack of research on this method is a gap in the literature on the teaching of grammar. This study will explore student reaction to the grammar glossing process and its impact on their knowledge of grammar and improvement of their writing.

### **Statement of the Problem**

For years educators have been struggling to identify an effective way of teaching grammar to all levels of students, from the elementary to college to adult to L2 and English as a second language (ESL) learner. This thesis will focus on L2 language learners in a foreign country. Most educators will agree that student understanding of grammar is important; yet finding a way to teach grammar in a meaningful way remains elusive to many English teachers because the methods being used are not helping the students understand and apply the majority of the information being taught. Students can correctly do grammar exercises in workbooks when they are being taught in a decontextualized way, but the transfer of that knowledge to their own written work is lacking (Blaauw-Hara, 2006; Weaver, 1996; Wyse, 2006). Ehrenworth (2003) states that it is not necessarily the students, but the teachers, who need to find a new way to teach grammar:

if we are teaching grammar, but the students are not learning grammar from us, then there is something wrong with the way we are teaching it. This belief suggests two possibilities; namely, that there is something confusing in the way we are teaching it, a lack of clarity or definition that is not enabling the children to

become autonomous; or that the students *do not like* the way we are teaching it, and are, therefore, resisting it. (p. 90)

Students will not necessarily have to *like* the way grammar is taught, but there has to be a way to effectively teach grammar that is comprehensible to students.

Johansen and Shaw's (2003) article on the use of glossing sheets in order to individualize grammar instruction was the impetus for this study. They state students need to understand their grammar errors and that by giving students direct feedback we are not teaching them how to correct their grammar (Johansen & Shaw, 2003). The purpose of the glossing sheets is to do exactly that. There is no research on the effectiveness of glossing sheets, and the purpose of this thesis is to begin to address that gap and determine if students perceive glossing sheets as an effective way to help them understand the correct use of grammar in their own writing. The research questions are:

1. How do glossing sheets impact L2 students' perception of their writing abilities; significantly, somewhat, or not at all?
2. What are students' perceptions of the usefulness of glossing sheets to improve their writing?

### **Importance of the Study**

This study is an addition to the growing body of knowledge on the contextualized teaching of grammar (Ehrenworth, 2003; Weaver & Bush, 2006; Wyse, 2006). There has not yet been a study that investigates L2 students' perceptions of the usefulness of a glossing sheet in terms of improving their grammar skills. If students determine that glossing sheets are useful to improving their grammar skills, it would usher in a new way

to teach grammar that would benefit both students and teachers. Instead of the decontextualized “drill and kill” method, students would be engaging in an active role to learn grammar in a way that was effective. Instructors would benefit from this way of teaching grammar because grammar mini-lessons, which would be used when the instructor notices a pattern in student misunderstanding on various grammar rules, would be individualized and time-sensitive instruction. This way the instructor could focus on what each particular student needs additional help in instead of teaching a lesson that is not relevant to the students' needs at that point in time. Shin's (2007) research underscores the importance of this thesis because it undertakes to determine how the students perceive the grammar glossing method used when he states: “students' voices with respect to grammar correction have seldom been heard” (p. 358). This study will address that gap.

### **Methods**

The participants of this study will be a sample of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at an American college-preparatory high school in Kuwait. Students who will participate in this study come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Some of the students in these culturally diverse classrooms are: American, Egyptian, French, Italian, Korean, Kuwaiti, and Libyan. The majority of these ninth-grade students are proficient in verbal English, but nearly all struggle with their writing of English. The students are all considered mainstream, in that they are enrolled in the same courses regardless of any individual or special needs they may have, and there are no additional resources offered. Due to the lack of resources, students often look for tutors to help them with their coursework.

Student ability in the classroom ranges from struggling to high aptitude. Using glossing sheets, theoretically, the instructor should be able to tailor grammar instruction for the needs of all students.

This study will include seven regular classrooms. Two surveys will be administered to the students that will include questions on a Likert scale, as well as open-ended questions. Data collection will occur over a four-month period, beginning in the Fall semester of 2012 and continue into the Spring semester of 2013. The analysis of the Likert scale questions will look at the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the students' responses. Answers to the qualitative questions will also be collected and recorded by the researcher. This means the researcher will collect data on students' past experience with grammar instruction on the first survey, and the second survey will ask for the students' opinions on the glossing process. The personal reflections of the researcher will be included in the analysis and discussion.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study will focus on 9<sup>th</sup> grade L2 students in the Middle-Eastern country of Kuwait. The majority of these students have grown up speaking English as well as Arabic, and have a firm grasp on English oral language. There is vast cultural diversity in this sample of 9<sup>th</sup> grade L2 students and the applicability to L1 learners will be underrepresented though present.

A major limitation of the literature review will be the lack of information on the grammar glossing process, as only one article has been published on the topic. The literature that will be cited in this study focuses on what is and is not effective in

grammar instruction. The majority of the studies will refer to college students and the applicability to secondary learners is not guaranteed.

Additionally, two limitations in the research will involve the accuracy and relevancy of the questions asked in the survey. The questions asked could be too general to gather accurate data. Some of the questions could be unnecessary. Another limitation would be if students understand the questions being asked, or the terms that are used. The language in the surveys provided by the researcher could potentially confuse the students if they are terms they do not frequently encounter.

### **Definitions of Terms**

#### Contextualized

Teaching grammar using the work of the students in order to provide a meaningful learning experience that is relevant to each individual students needs.

#### Decontextualized

In this context, it is referring to the teaching of grammar as a lesson. There is no transference from the lesson to the student's own writing.

#### ESL

English as a second language. These are people who did not grow up speaking and writing in English.

#### Grammar glossing

This is a list of 15 – 20 grammatical rules that have been pre-determined by teachers to use for grammar instruction and correction. The list can be used in a variety of ways. At the beginning of the year, it is a good idea to focus on a few rules at a time in order to not

overwhelm the students. One strategy is to tell the students they're focusing on rules one through five for an assignment. When handed in, the teacher highlights grammar rules *only* found in numbers one through five on the glossing sheet. The student then goes through their paper, identifies the errors (writes them out on a separate paper) and fixes them. The instructor can then work through the rules and conduct mini-lessons on common mistakes as the year progresses. By the end of the school year, depending on the class, you can use the entire glossing sheet or focus on a few rules at a time.

L1

Students whose first written and spoken language is English

L2

Students who speak and write English as a second language.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

The correction of grammatical errors and its long-term effects on L1 and L2 student learning of grammar skills has been debated since before Truscott's 1996 article reviewing previous research (e.g., Krashen, 1992; Leki, 1990; VanPatten, 1986a, 1986b) that argues it is not helpful, and, in fact, harms students. The problem with this opinion is that there is no suggestion as to another solution for the teaching of grammar. Grammar correction takes two different forms, either direct or indirect feedback. Until this time, most teachers of English assumed that grammar correction, using either indirect or direct feedback, was the only way in which to help students improve their writing. Ferris's 1999 response to Truscott (1996) stated that she wanted to agree with Truscott, but the proof he supplied is not sufficient to completely do away with the concept altogether. Studies have shown both sides of the debate (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ellis, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Truscott & Hsu, 2008), depending on how the research methods are analyzed, but none has shown conclusively that grammar correction is or is not effective.

What is known is that if teachers use corrective feedback, there needs to be a way to do it that is more effective than simply giving students direct feedback, which is when teachers write in the corrections on student papers. Students seem to appreciate direct feedback over indirect feedback (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Indirect feedback is when teachers circle or highlight errors but do not correct them. While students realize that indirect feedback is more helpful to their learning, generally, between direct and indirect feedback, they appreciate the latter more. Students want to be able to correct their own

mistakes, but want to be able to do it in a way that is focused, not just the teacher returning their paper and saying “fix this” (Ferris, Liu, Sinha & Senna, in press). Ferris and Roberts (2001) are careful to point out that the success of direct or indirect feedback depends on the individual learner, i.e., what their preference might be or what their ability level is. This is where the grammar glossing process comes into play.

The grammar glossing process as introduced by Johansen and Shaw (2003) is a process in which students are given a set list of grammar rules. After they have completed a writing assignment, the teacher focuses only on those grammar rules and highlights the corresponding mistakes. Then the students focus on those rules and correct their mistakes by writing out the rule that was broken and correcting their errors. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima (2008) point out that “learners are more likely to attend to correction directed at a single (or limited number of) error types(s) and more likely to develop a clearer understanding of the nature of the error and the correction needed” (p. 356). The process of grammar glossing sheets does exactly what Ellis et al. suggest by limiting students’ focus to specific errors. Grammar glossing also allows the teacher to focus a mini-lesson on the grammar rules in the students’ writing at their point of need. Teachers are then providing contextualized grammar instruction instead of rote, decontextualized grammar instruction, which has not shown benefits to students’ learning of grammar (Weaver & Bush, 2006; Wyse, 2006). The grammar glossing process is a strategy teachers can utilize to make corrective feedback on student writing more effective because students can then take their prior knowledge and new knowledge from the mini-lesson and apply it to their writing.



The grammar glossing strategy as developed by Johansen and Shaw (2003) involves indirect, corrective feedback for students' writing. Glossing is indirect feedback, as the teacher only highlights the student's errors and does not actually correct them for the student. The student is responsible for identifying what each mistake is and correcting it based on the list of grammatical rules all students receive. Glossing can be utilized as a way to differentiate the types of feedback given to individual students. For example, teachers can highlight errors that are unique to an individual student's writing, so that if student A is always making comma errors and student B needs help with verb tense, the instructor can highlight only those errors for the student to correct (or they can highlight multiple errors and ask the student to look for specific instances of verb tense or commas). In this way, students are able to see the areas in which they make the most errors, and should then be able to better identify them in future writing assignments.

### **Types of Corrective Feedback**

In order to be clear on the types of feedback being discussed, the two types of feedback will be reviewed. Indirect and direct feedback are the two ways in which Language Arts teachers offer written (and/or verbal) corrective feedback to a student's writing. Direct feedback is when the teacher corrects the student's text by writing in the corrections on the student's paper (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). In this style of feedback, the student simply takes the instructor's corrections and ideally is able to apply them to subsequent writing. There is no instruction per se regarding any grammar errors; the errors are simply corrected on the assignment and returned to the student.

Conversely, indirect feedback is given when a teacher identifies that an error exists in the student's text by highlighting it, but does not explicitly state what is grammatically incorrect in the student's writing (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). There are some options as to how the teacher provides this feedback, as it could be identified by "underlining or circling the error; recording in the margin the number of errors in a given line; or using a code to show where the error has occurred and what type of error it is" (Bitchener, 2008, p. 105). An example of a code would be when an instructor writes something like "VT" to signify an issue with verb tense, or "C" to signify a comma error. When indirect feedback is given, students must figure out what the error is, and, in some cases, where the error is located on a given line. Indirect feedback engages the students in determining what is wrong in their writing, and then revising it. Guénette's (2007) research shows that "correcting students' errors and asking them to recopy their essay [direct feedback] is quite different, cognitively, from only pointing out the errors and asking them to self-correct [indirect feedback]" (p. 49). If there is no revision done by the student after receiving feedback, then there is no improvement in students' writing (Chandler, 2003).

An interesting point about student response to indirect and direct feedback is that they actually prefer the direct feedback because it was the easiest way for them to see their errors (Chandler, 2003). However, students felt that indirect feedback truly helped them to look at their writing and understand what types of errors they frequently made and that it was more useful to them in the long run (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

### **The Case Against Grammar Correction**

John Truscott's 1996 article discussing the ineffectiveness of grammar correction sparked a surge in research on the effectiveness of grammar correction. Truscott stated that grammar correction is ineffective and, in fact, does more harm than good to students. He cites Hendrickson's study (1978) as the basis of his evidence on the negative effects of grammar correction. Interestingly, Hendrickson's (1978) study states, "correcting every error is counter-productive to learning a foreign language" (p. 396). This is the only point in the study that would appear to support Truscott's claim that corrective feedback is ineffective to student learning retention. In fact, Hendrickson (1978) is not advocating *against* corrective feedback as Truscott claims, but is rather advocating for teachers to be selective in their corrections of student work, as too many corrections could be overwhelming and thus detrimental to students' learning retention. Truscott (1996, 2007) goes on to look at more recent research in addition to conducting his own study on the effectiveness of error corrective feedback on students' writing. In his opinion, his results show that corrective feedback, both direct and indirect, is ineffective and, in some cases, detrimental to students improving their writing skills, but does not offer an alternative solution.

Truscott argues that grammar correction does not result in students becoming better writers, but that it is still used because teachers feel it helps students (1996). In fact, he believes that because teachers believe in the idea that corrective feedback is beneficial, students will as well, making it a cyclical process, in which there is no actual data validating that indirect or direct feedback is useful (1999). Truscott examined

studies (Fatham & Whalley's, 1990; Lalande, 1982) and debunked the idea that grammar corrections makes students better writers. He claims that improvements shown in student writing in these studies only looks at the short-term effects of grammar correction, not long term. As such, he states corrective feedback is ineffective.

Truscott goes on to state that there are no long-term benefits for students in providing them with indirect or direct feedback. He does not deny that the revision process is useful to students on a single piece of writing, but that "no relation was found between success on the revision task and learning as measured by performance on a new writing task" (Truscott & Hsu, 2008, p. 299). This study showed that corrective feedback does not provide long-term solutions for helping students improve their writing. Truscott noted that if corrective feedback on one writing assignment is not transferred to subsequent writing assignments, then the feedback was ineffective, and therefore should not be used anymore since the students are continuing to repeat the same mistakes on subsequent written assignments (Truscott, 1996; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Truscott also believes that providing students corrective feedback likely has more negative side effects than positive ones on any possible improvements shown in students' writing (2007). He cites the results of Fazio's (2001) study where 5<sup>th</sup>-grade French students were broken into three groups for different types of corrective feedback. One group focused on two aspects of French grammar, the second received comments on content, and the third received a combination of treatments one and two, and all three groups declined in grammar accuracy (Fazio, 2001). He stated that results of this study are evidence that "students who more carefully attended to the corrections harmed their

learning by doing so” (Truscott, 2007, p. 261). Truscott stated “corrections harmed their learning” (2007, p. 261) because all of the students in this particular study decreased in grammar accuracy. Fazio (2001) believes that the decrease in grammar accuracy could be attributed to students’ admittance of not paying attention to the corrections or the nature of the class, but Truscott (2007) does not agree with this assessment.

Truscott (1996, 2004) firmly believes that the potential benefits of corrective feedback are few, and that the potential for harmful results is small. He feels that teachers should not be wasting their time in offering this feedback, as students’ ability to transfer their knowledge from one writing assignment to another is minimal because they are likely to forget what they have just learned. Truscott is the main proponent in the case against the effectiveness of direct and indirect grammar corrective feedback claiming it is unnecessary and not useful, yet he fails to offer an alternative solution. There are many who disagree with his view of the topic.

### **The Case for Grammar Correction**

Truscott (1996) sparked resurgence in the research on the effectiveness of grammar correction. Teachers have continued to use grammar correction to help students improve their writing abilities despite Truscott’s (1996, 1999, 2004, 2007) claims that it is ineffective. Students continue to be receptive to corrective feedback, however, not all students will value the feedback or benefit from it, as is the case with all instructional approaches (Bates, Lane & Lange, 1993; Ellis, 1998; Ferris 1995; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Reid, 1997). Simply because some students do not benefit from feedback is not to say that all students will not benefit from corrective feedback.

It may appear that the continued use of corrective feedback has become a teacher's tool that they use simply because they have always used it. Ferris (1995) states teachers "feel that such response is a critical part of their job as writing instructors" (1995, p. 34). Bruton (2009b) points to a main flaw in Truscott's case against corrective feedback when he states that Truscott gives no suggestion on how to help students improve their writing if there is no corrective feedback offered. When writing in a multi-draft setting, students are much more likely to take their teacher's corrective feedback and apply it to their writing. Studies suggest (Bruton, 2009a; Chandler, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) that corrective feedback is useful to students and that it should continue to be used until there is concrete proof that it is not effective, as Truscott claims.

Besides teachers valuing and believing in corrective feedback, one should consider what the students prefer. Students do appreciate both indirect and direct corrective feedback, and they find it particularly useful when writing multiple drafts (Ferris, 1995). They can then apply feedback from first and second drafts to the final paper, continuously improving their writing. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008) concluded that it did not matter whether or not students received indirect or direct feedback, but that student writing improved due to either type of corrective feedback offered by teachers. Students then used that feedback to improve their writing.

When students correct their errors, it does lead to significantly better writing, despite what Truscott has claimed (Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1999). Researchers and teachers need to focus on ways to improve indirect and direct corrective feedback to make it meaningful for students, because when feedback is given in ways students can

understand and learn from, they are able to improve their writing skills (Ferris, 1999). Teachers should continue to work on new ways to improve the corrective feedback they offer students, and one approach is the grammar glossing process as introduced by Johansen and Shaw (2003). Chandler (2004) states in her study that when teachers offer either indirect or direct corrective feedback, students show “significantly more correct subsequent writing in just 10 weeks” (p. 346).

Most researchers still agree that corrective feedback is valuable to the development of student writing abilities. They also agree that more research needs to be done as to the types of feedback that are the most valuable to students, as well as the long-term effects of corrective feedback (Chandler, 2004; Ferris, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Do students improve *because* instructors provide direct or indirect feedback? Do they improve without it? In what ways does corrective feedback actually help students? Since there has been no definitive proof to debunk Truscott's claims as to the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback, most researchers believe that it should continue to be used in order to help students improve their writing skills because the alternative of offering no corrective feedback is not a choice. They are open to new instructional approaches to help students improve their writing, and the majority of research has shown benefits, not harms, from using indirect or direct corrective feedback.

### **The Case for Grammar Glossing Sheets**

Grammar glossing sheets are a possible option for providing effective feedback for the development of student writing. Glossing sheets utilize indirect feedback as the teacher will highlight grammar mistakes rather than correct them. Teachers can also

focus students on a select number of grammar rules that they may have broken, so they do not have to go through an entire list (*Appendix A*) trying to identify their errors and potentially increase their frustration levels. Conversely, students who have an extensive understanding of grammar could be given more rules to focus on, or even the entire list. The glossing sheet can be utilized to differentiate grammar help to all levels of student performance.

A benefit of the glossing sheets for instructors is that the glossing sheets offer a faster correction time on the teacher's part because they are simply highlighting errors. By highlighting only the errors for the student, the instructor is engaging students in the corrective process because they have to figure out which grammar rule they broke, and then correct it in subsequent drafts (Chandler, 2003). This process reduces teacher correction time and engages students in evaluating and improving their writing at the same time. Another benefit is that by only highlighting errors, it "reduces the possibility that instructors themselves will make errors while correcting" (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, p. 177).

Johansen and Shaw's (2003) article on the use of glossing sheets in order to individualize grammar instruction states:

'fixing' papers doesn't teach much about using grammar. It just breeds dependence. We need to take an opposite course and help our students seek independence from teachers, and help create our own irrelevance to their writing lives. One of our most important means of attaining irrelevance is to help



students learn to diagnose, understand and independently revise their own convention and style errors. We want them to be their own mechanics. (p. 93)

Students are able to realize the benefits of improved grammar in their own writing when grammar is taught in a contextualized way that has meaning for them, i.e. fixing their own writing, particularly if it is on a topic in which they are interested. If students are simply filling out worksheet after worksheet on grammar topics, they are not learning how to apply that knowledge to their own writing. When students are able to transfer their knowledge of grammar and see its effectiveness on their own writing, they are more likely to retain that information (Chandler, 2003; Weaver & Bush, 2006).

Grammar glossing sheets provide a consistent system of marking that offer clear, focused feedback. Students do not have to guess at the number and types of errors they have made. Instructors can tailor the sheets to be effective for each individual student without increasing the correction time. This allows teachers to focus on student's individual grammar needs in a concentrated way. Ferris & Roberts (2001) state, "it is possible that using a consistent system of marking and coding errors throughout a writing class...might yield more long-term growth in student accuracy" (p. 177). When the student is a part of the grammar correction process and the instructor tailors the corrections to each individual student's point of need, the zone of proximal development fully functions (Powell, 2008). By having students, "diagnose, understand and independently revise their own convention and style errors" (Weaver & Bush, 2006, p. 93) teachers are helping the students at their point of need, and are indirectly telling them that they need to take an active approach to improving their own writing.

Grammar glossing sheets allow teachers to see where the majority of students are struggling in their writing. Teachers can then develop grammar mini-lessons in the areas that a particular group of students need to improve. Since grammar instruction is determined by student writing, teachers are no longer instructing on concepts that may have little direct relationship to the students' needs (Johansen & Shaw, 2003; Powell, 2008). When teachers use mini-lessons "to enrich their students' writing" (Weaver & Bush, 2006, p. 91), they are supplying the grammar concepts and rules that students need at that particular time. By tailoring grammar instruction based on what the students need, it will help develop student understanding at their point of need. Instructors are then helping students see the relevancy of grammar in their own writing, which they can then apply to subsequent writing.

There has been no research conducted on the strategy of glossing. The studies referred to in this section show that there is a need for a new process in grammar correction, and glossing could fulfill those needs. Glossing is a clear, consistent, indirect grammar correction strategy that can be focused on individual student's needs. It also allows for a faster correction time for the teacher, as well as the opportunity to see where a group of student's grammar needs lie, allowing the teacher to develop mini-lessons in order to help strengthen student understanding of a grammar structure before they begin their correcting. Glossing also enables a teacher to challenge students individually. While a teacher may find that they need to focus on a particular rule for the majority of a class, instructors can also focus on a different rule for students if they need additional help in another area.

### Summary

There are two highly divided camps on the usefulness of corrective feedback on student writing. Truscott (1996, 1999; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) is the main proponent against the use of indirect or direct corrective feedback and even goes so far as to state it could be harmful to the development of student writing abilities. On the other side of the issue are researchers like Chandler (2003, 2004), Ellis, Murakami and Takashima (2008), Ferris (1995, 1999), Ferris and Hedgecock (1998), Ferris, Liu and Sinha (in press), and Ferris and Roberts (2001) who advocate for the use of indirect and direct corrective feedback. One could conclude that all of these authors have an agenda and are interpreting their research and the research they study in such a way that advocates for their particular side of the issue. Chandler (2004) does exactly that when she discusses Truscott's (1996) opinion of research conducted by Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986) in which there was no control group, yet Truscott found the corrections to be harmful to the students, when (according to Chandler) the researchers state there were "positive changes for all groups in accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity" (Chandler, 2004, p. 347). What needs to be taken into account when looking at the studies is the research design, as the implementation and methodology used in the studies affect the results (Gu nette, 2007).

The possibility that researcher-bias could influence results is shown in Truscott's (1996, 2007) own work, where he is arguing for the abolishment of indirect or direct corrective feedback. He could be evaluating studies looking for a lack of improvement and missing any positive results, as shown by Chandler's (2004) assessment of Truscott's

conclusions on the research conducted by Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1996). There is no conclusive evidence that indirect or direct corrective feedback is ineffective or harmful, while there are numerous studies conducted by researchers that show it at least has the potential to benefit students without harming them (Bruton, 2009b; Chandler, 2004; Ellis et al, 2008; Ferris, 1995, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

The grammar glossing process has not been studied as a potential tool for giving students indirect corrective feedback. It engages students in their own writing, involves them in the revision process, tailors the revision process to them individually, and allows for instruction in the areas where they need it. Grammar glossing is a potential solution to the corrective feedback debate. There is not enough information about the topic to make any definitive statements as to its usefulness, but by looking at student perceptions of its usefulness, teachers and researchers can look at it as a potential tool to help students improve their writing.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

This research was conducted to analyze students' perceptions of the usefulness of grammar glossing sheets at an American college-preparatory high school in Kuwait during the 2012-2013 school year. The students received two surveys, one in November and one in February. The survey questions focused on three areas: 1) the types of grammar instruction students have had, 2) their perception of how skillful they are with English grammar, and 3) how they felt about the use of grammar glossing sheets. The surveys were administered to 170 ninth grade students. The demographic information gathered from the surveys will provide insight to the English department on the students' background in grammar instruction, help guide the department's decisions about further implementation of the glossing sheets, as well as address any revisions that might be done to improve their effectiveness. Questions one through six asked for student background in grammar, as well as their comfort levels with grammar, punctuation, spelling and writing in English. Question seven asked if English was their native language, and question eight asked what that language was if their response to seven was no. The second survey focused on the glossing sheets themselves. Question one asked if they felt glossing sheets helped them improve their grammar, and question two asked if they were helpful in improving their writing. The last question asked for student's opinions on the glossing sheets. The questions that guided the research were:

1. How do glossing sheets impact L2 students' perception of their writing abilities; significantly, somewhat, or not at all?

2. What are students' perceptions of the usefulness of glossing sheets to improve their writing?

The following sections will describe the methodologies used in the research and are divided as: participant characteristics, sampling procedures, sampling size, measures, and research design,

### **Participant Characteristics**

The participants of this study were a convenience sample of the ninth grade student population at an American college-preparatory school in Kuwait. There are 190 students in the ninth grade class. Students that participated in this study come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Some of the students in these culturally diverse classrooms are American, Dutch, French, Italian, Korean, Kuwaiti, and South African. The majority of these ninth grade students are proficient in oral English, but the bulk struggle with writing in English, particularly with grammar. The students in this school are all considered mainstream, and there are no additional resources offered. Due to the lack of resources, i.e., no resource teachers, speech pathologists, etc., students often look for tutors to help them with their coursework. Tutors are teachers from the school who respond to tutor requests sent out by the school secretaries stating the student's grade level and the content area(s) in which they would like to have additional instruction. Student performance in the classroom ranges from low to high aptitude. Theoretically, by using glossing sheets, the instructor should be able to tailor grammar instruction for the needs of all students.

### **Sampling Procedures**

Participation in this research was voluntary and open to all ninth grade students. Because this research was not conducted in the United States, and due to administration policies at the school where the research was being conducted, consent forms were not sent out to parents. This is allowed by the Institutional Review Board's (Minnesota State University, Mankato) regulations due to the research being conducted in a foreign country. The students were told upon receipt of the survey that it was voluntary. If they decided to participate, they were reminded to not put their names on the two surveys. The two surveys included a disclaimer at the top that stated the purpose and indicated that by completing the survey the students were providing their consent. The first survey was given to the students in November 2012. The second survey was handed out in February 2013. Students received the survey from their English teacher. There were a total of three English instructors, and one was the researcher.

### **Sampling Size**

The first survey was given to the ninth grade students in November 2012. Out of 190 students, 141 responded. The second survey was conducted in February 2013 and 85 were completed and returned to their instructors. One response to survey number one was only filled out on one side, so it was removed from the results. There were two that appeared to cause students confusion when answering. On one, a student said they never make spelling, punctuation or grammar errors, but was very comfortable writing in English. Another student circled the words, "*I feel very comfortable,*" for the question asking how they felt about writing in English, yet circled the one denoting they were not

comfortable. Two students stated that English was their first language, but then wrote Arabic as the answer to the question asking them what their native language was. This could be due to cultural confusion, which sometimes happens when a child is raised in an Arabic home, when their first spoken language is English and their native language is Arabic. All student answers were calculated using what they said, but perhaps not what they might have meant.

### Measures

Students' perception of the grammar glossing process data was collected through the use of two surveys; one in November after their introduction to the glossing process, and one in February. This was done to determine what student opinions on the glossing process after using the glossing sheets twice: once for their original short story, and once for their four-paragraph essay.

The first survey (*Appendix B*) included questions on the students' backgrounds in learning grammar, as there had been no collection of this information previously at the school. The majority of the questions used a Likert scale; two questions asked students to circle all that applied, and one asked if the grammar glossing sheets were useful for their comprehension of English grammar and included why or why not to invite student opinion. One question asked if English was their native language, and if not, to write in what their native language was. This was used in the data analysis.

The second survey (*Appendix B*) focused on the grammar glossing sheets. Questions one and two used a Likert scale and asked how helpful the sheets were for the improvement of their grammar and how helpful they were for improving their writing.



Question three asked for the students to give a yes or no answer and elaborate on whether or not they found the grammar glossing sheets helpful for their comprehension of English grammar.

### **Research Design**

This research is both quantitative and qualitative, because the purpose was to determine how the students felt about the effectiveness of a glossing sheet in grammar instruction. The quantitative questions utilized the Likert scale. The main qualitative piece of information collected was the last question on survey two where students were asked to explain why they felt the glossing sheets were or were not helpful. Research design includes the creation and administration of two surveys for ninth grade students at an American college-preparatory school in Kuwait. Participation in both surveys was voluntary.

Students took the survey on the same day in their ninth grade English classes, the first in November 2012 and the second in February 2013. To ensure student understanding, the disclaimer at the top of the form was read to all students prior to taking the survey. Participants finished their surveys in approximately five minutes.

Once completed, students handed their surveys to their instructor, who placed them in an unmarked envelope. The researcher collected them at the end of each class period. No other persons viewed the survey results, which ensured the anonymity of the participants. After the surveys were collected, the researcher entered the data from both surveys into an Excel spreadsheet. The participants were not identified in any way, so there was no tracking individual student response.

The grammar glossing process that the students used in this thesis was similar to that of Johansen and Shaw's (2003). There were three main differences in place during this study from Johansen and Shaw's (2003) description of the grammar glossing process. The first was that the students received a glossing sheet with twenty rules that the high school English department developed at the beginning of the school year. Johansen and Shaw (2003) gave out glossing sheets when corrections were being made. The second difference was that students were asked to correct 10 errors, not five. The third was that this study focused on L2 learners in a foreign country, while Johansen and Shaw focused on L1 learners in the United States.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The research was conducted in order to help the English faculty at a Kuwaiti high school find out whether or not the students felt the grammar glossing sheets aided them in their comprehension of English grammar and help them to improve their writing. This research will provide the high school with data in order to gauge student perceptions of the glossing process, as well as look for ways the instructional process can be improved upon based on the students' feedback. The research that was conducted is the beginning of baseline data for the high school English department on student background in grammar instruction, as well as the effectiveness of the glossing process on students' retention of grammar rules and improving their writing. This chapter explains the data analysis process and results of the study, which were guided by the following research questions:

1. How do glossing sheets impact L2 students' perception of their writing abilities; significantly, somewhat, or not at all?
2. What are students' perceptions of the usefulness of glossing sheets to improve their writing?

### **Data Analysis**

Once the research was collected, the researcher entered all of the data into an Excel spreadsheet. The first step of the analysis involved all questions that used the Likert scale, which were tabulated to find the mean and the standard deviation (SD). The questions were placed in the columns of the spreadsheet. Answers on each survey were

entered in the rows, making sure the answers corresponded to the question. The number the student circled was entered into the proper column and row cell. The second step of the analysis of questions three and six, in regards to strategies students use in their writing and their prior grammar instruction, were assigned a one when circled. The results of these two questions considered the totals of the responses. The percentage of students who had either used that strategy or received that type of grammar instruction was determined by adding up each column's numbers and dividing by the total number of students, 141. The third step was conducted to determine the percentage of students who spoke English as a second language. Lastly, students' answers to the question asking them to describe how helpful or unhelpful they found the glossing process to be were entered into the spreadsheet exactly as they appeared on the survey. The results will be discussed in order: the questions from survey one and then survey two.

The first step of the analysis looked at students' background in grammar instruction and their perception of how well they comprehend English grammar. Question one asked what they would say their knowledge of English grammar was on a scale of one to five, with one being, "*I am not knowledgeable.*" The results show a mean of 3.67, with a SD of .786, indicating students feel somewhat knowledgeable of English grammar. Question two asked students to rate their comfort level in using English grammar, with five being, "*I am very comfortable.*" The mean showed an average of 3.50, with a SD of 1.008, indicating students were somewhat comfortable in using English grammar.

Question three looked at the strategies students identified they employed to help improve their writing. Table 1.1 shows the number and percentage of students who use each strategy. The results show that students use examples the most often, with a 62% response. The lowest response was the use of a checklist at 24%.

Table 1.1

| <i>Strategies Students Use to Improve Their Writing</i> |                     |            |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Strategy  | Number of Responses | Percentage |
| Conferencing  | 57                  | 40%        |
| Examples  | 87                  | 62%        |
| Peer Review   | 61                  | 43%        |
| Prewriting  | 40                  | 28%        |
| Proofreading  | 53                  | 38%        |
| Reading Good Writing                                    | 52                  | 37%        |
| Rubrics   | 51                  | 36%        |
| Checklists  | 34                  | 24%        |

Question four included three parts. It asked students to rate their comfort level with grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with a five meaning, “*I always make grammar (or spelling or punctuation)*” errors. Students responded with a mean of 2.92, with a SD of .986 for grammar errors, indicating a significant range of student reactions to this question. A mean response of 2.47 occurred for spelling, with a SD of 1.160. There is a large range of opinion on this question, showing a substantial difference of opinion amongst the students. Students were more confident in their grammar than in their spelling. Punctuation had a mean of 2.62, with a SD of 1.090, placing it firmly between grammar and spelling.

The fifth question asked students how comfortable they felt writing in English, with five being, “*I feel very comfortable.*” Students responded with a mean of 4.08, and

a SD of 1.190, showing that while the vast majority of them feel very comfortable writing in English, there is a significant gap in student response.

The last two questions of survey one looked for personal background information on the students. They were asked if English was their native language. If it was not, they were asked to write in what it was. Students responded at 61% that English was not their native language, and 37% indicated that English was their native language. One student did not enter an answer as to whether or not English was their native language, and one student answered with the word, "partially." Neither of these answers was included in the calculations. Table 1.2 shows student replies as to what their native language is. It does not add up to 100% since the students who speak English as their native language were not included on the table.

Table 1.2

| <i>Students' Native Languages</i> |    |     |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----|
| Arabic                            | 65 | 46% |
| Chinese                           | 2  | 1%  |
| Dutch                             | 1  | .7% |
| French                            | 2  | 1%  |
| German                            | 1  | .7% |
| Greek                             | 1  | .7% |
| Indonesian                        | 1  | .7% |
| Italian                           | 1  | .7% |
| Korean                            | 3  | 2%  |
| Kuwaiti Arabic                    | 2  | 1%  |
| South African                     | 1  | .7% |
| Spanish                           | 4  | 3%  |
| Turkish                           | 1  | .7% |
| Urdu                              | 2  | 1%  |
| Zulu                              | 1  | .7% |

Survey two asked students to indicate how helpful they found grammar glossing sheets to be in their learning of grammar, with a five being, "*very helpful.*" Students showed a mean of 3.38 and a SD of 1.107. It also asked how helpful they thought the glossing sheets were for the improvement of their writing, with a five being, "*very helpful.*" A mean of 3.59 and a SD of 1.143 were shown. These results indicate that student response to the usefulness of the grammar glossing sheets in improving their grammar and writing was diverse.

The last question on the survey asked for students' opinions on the grammar glossing sheets. Table 1.3 shows a sample of student responses, written exactly the same way the students wrote them. There were a consistent number of students who found them helpful and unhelpful. The results imply that some students might have been confused on the question, particularly the student who answered, "They are not helpful because people write inaccurate comments and we just write it because it is required to do so." The researcher assumes this is a reference to a peer review sheet that was done in class in the time frame of the second survey. Another student answered, "I think they help me when you do peer editing so that your peers can edit the story, and occasionally [sic] I will catch my own mistakes. However, other than that I never really use it." This statement is interesting, because it could have two different meanings. One, it might reference the peer review sheet like the previous student. It could also mean that the student could actually be using the grammar glossing sheet in the revision process in addition to the peer review sheet. It is difficult to tell based on this statement, but it shows the possibility of an additional use for the grammar glossing sheet.

Table 1.3  
*Students' Response to the Glossing Sheets*

| Positive  | Negative   | Off-Topic, or Misunderstood Responses   |
|---|--|---|
| Yes, because it explains the grammar rules. It helps me understand those rules and apply them to my writing, which will obviously improve my writing. | No, because I find them a little confusing. If we could go over the glossing sheets before handing them out, it would be a little useful.  | They are not helpful because people write inaccurate comments and we just write it because it is required to do so.   |
| Yes. They show me what I do wrong and they have a rule that verifies my error. I learn new things with the sheets.                                    | I think the grammar glossing sheets aren't really helpful for my comprehension of English, because even though I fix my mistakes multiple times, I still get the wrong mistake again and again and again.  | I think they help me when you do peer editing so that your peers can edit the story, and occasionally I will catch my own mistakes. However, other than that I never really use it. |
| Yes, it is it makes us understand our mistakes and how to avoid it next time.   | Not really, if we do it before our writing assignments it would be better because we wouldn't lose as much points and we would actually remember our mistakes. If we do it after the assignment has been graded, I really don't care about my mistakes. I think the grammar glossing sheets aren't helpful for comprehension of English grammar because we're expected to know exactly what errors you made, in contrast to getting errors we aren't familiar with, which would help us learn. |   |



|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| I think the grammar glossing are helpful for my comprehension of English grammar because then I see my mistakes and I'm able to correct them.   | I think that the grammar glossing sheet isn't that helpful because it's just a sheet that shows you examples. I think that we should do exercises. |  |
| Yes, I think the grammar glossing sheets are helpful for my comprehension of English grammar because they make me practice and get better.  | Kind off but not really because I don't really learn anything from it. I just rush through it  |  |
| The grammar glossing sheets are helpful for my English comprehension because it helps me memorize what I need to memorize, it also helps me not to forget it in the future.                   | Not really, just do some exercises from notes. No one likes them   |  |
| Yes because it helps me see what I've been doing wrong in my writing.   | I do not think so because students don't care what are they writing and just want to finish.   |  |
| I think they are helpful, because people learn from their mistakes, and when we red our mistakes we learn something new.  | No cause you don't get back the points.  |  |
| They're okay, but sometimes, in my experience, I just kind of answer and correct my errors. I rarely pay attention. When I do, it helps and then that helps me keep it in mind for next time. |  |  |

### **Summary**

In this study, the data collected was used to determine student backgrounds in grammar and their perception of how well they utilize grammar in their writing. The data shows that students have used a variety of strategies to improve their writing, with 62% saying they use examples to help improve their writing. The results also show that the majority of students are comfortable writing in English, and they feel they do a good job at it. Students' knowledge of English grammar, and their level of comfort with applying it, shows their confidence in their abilities. The students were also confident in their handling of grammar, spelling and punctuation. They were the most confident in spelling, and the least in grammar usage.

The main function of this study was to determine what student opinion on the grammar glossing sheet was. The mean response of 3.38 indicates that although unused to the glossing sheets, students are beginning to understand the concept and find them useful. Student responses on the usefulness of grammar range from students finding them very useful to utilize and to learn from their mistakes, to not being useful at all. Some students indicate by their response that they may be thinking about the peer review process based on their answers to the survey question asking them if they think the grammar glossing sheets are helpful to their comprehension of English grammar, and to include why or why not.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

Two main research questions guided the design and execution of this research. Data were compiled and analyzed based on student survey results. There are three sections in this chapter: the first addresses the research conclusions, the second is a discussion of the limitations of the study, and the last describes areas for further research.

#### **Research Conclusions**

Students' perception on the usefulness of the grammar glossing sheets is not a simple answer. Students did find the grammar glossing sheets to be somewhat helpful to them in improving their grammar, a mean of 3.38, and for writing, a mean of 3.59. There were a number of students who did not like them, but their reasons could be that they were not able to make the connections between the highlighted errors and the grammar rules they were told to look at. Also, the students may not have liked them simply because it was an extra assignment, as indicated by the student's comment that read, "I do not think so because students don't care what are they writing and just want to finish." Some students will look at the grammar glossing sheet as one more thing that needs to be done, while others will utilize the grammar glossing sheet to try and fully comprehend their errors in order to do better on their next assignment, such as the student who responded, "Yes, I think the grammar glossing sheets are helpful for my comprehension of English grammar because they make me practice and get better." Other students may be apathetic to the grammar glossing process, or to school in general, and that may influence how they view the assignment, as this student demonstrates, "They're okay, but

sometimes, in my experience, I just kind of answer and correct my errors. I rarely pay attention. When I do, it helps and then that helps me keep it in mind for next time.”

Students do not have a fully negative view of the grammar glossing sheets, as seen by the comments and the mean scores of 3.38 and 3.59 on improvement in grammar and writing, respectively. Students are seeing benefits, particularly when they work hard at trying to understand their mistakes in order to improve their writing. The difficulty in truly assessing whether or not the glossing sheets are helpful to students lies in the fact that some students will work hard at everything you give them, while there will be others who barely look at an assignment and just do it to get it done. Student attitude towards school could impact their perception of the usefulness of the grammar glossing sheets.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on ninth grade L2 students in Kuwait. The majority of these students have grown up speaking English as well as Arabic, and have a firm grasp on the oral English language, both listening and speaking. They are, however, still struggling with written English. Although there is cultural diversity in this sample, the study does focus on ninth grade L2 students, and the applicability to L1 learners is underrepresented though present.

The most significant limitation is in the literature review because there is no published research on the process of glossing in grammar instruction. The literature that is cited in this study focuses on other forms of grammar instruction, mainly indirect and direct feedback, and what is and is not effective. This study proposes to fill a gap in the current literature. There is a plethora of information available in peer-reviewed journals

on grammar instruction, and this literature review did not aim to be all encompassing, but a general briefing on the teaching of grammar to L2 students. Another limitation in the studies reviewed is that not all studies are relevant to high school students, some deal with college and graduate level L2 learners. The concept of grammar glossing is a new one, and so this research will barely scratch the surface as to the overall effectiveness of grammar glossing in elementary through college level students.

Limitations to the research include, but are not limited to, the effectiveness of the survey questions and if they were accurately and reliably answered, and students 'sharing' their survey answers with each other. The potential limited effectiveness of the questions asked lies with the researcher. Some questions might be confusing to the sample, while other questions that should have been asked might not have been. The students could potentially not tell the entire truth on some questions, particularly those asking about their past experiences with grammar. Two reasons they might result in inaccuracies would be if the students did not know what a term meant, and therefore unintentionally excluded it, or if they did not fully read the question. The students took this survey during a regular class period, and could potentially copy what the person next to them wrote. Another limitation is that for demographic purposes, the survey should have asked what their favorite type of grammar instruction was in order to further guide the English department's decisions on the instruction of grammar.

### **Areas for Future Research**

Future studies need to be conducted that expand the research. This study only looked at the student's opinions on the grammar glossing process. It did not address

whether or not the grammar glossing process was actually effective in improving student writing. Future studies should be conducted that look at student perceptions of the grammar glossing process, and incorporate analysis of student writing over a long period of time in order to fully understand the benefits, or possible drawbacks, to the grammar glossing process.

This study also did not look at the effectiveness, or lack of, adding in mini-lessons to the glossing process. Nor did it take into account student attitude towards school. There are many factors that could influence student opinion as to whether or not the grammar glossing sheet is useful. Looking at student attitude, aptitude, the use of mini-lessons, and coding student writing to look for improvements over an extended period of time are a few things that still need to be studied in this area.

### **Summary**

The grammar glossing process is a new form of indirect feedback that researchers have so far not studied. Johansen and Shaw (2003) indicate it is very successful at their American high school. This study proposed to look at how students perceived the effectiveness of the grammar glossing process on their writing abilities and if they felt it helped them to improve their writing. If focused on a population mainly consisting of L2 learners in Kuwait. The results of this study are only the beginning of research that needs to be done on the effectiveness of the grammar glossing process on high school students.

Despite Truscott's claims to the ineffectiveness of grammar correction, there is still usefulness perceived by students in this area. Grammar glossing sheets may not be for everyone, but they are a step in the right direction. That is, they are an attempt to help

each student focus on the grammatical errors they commonly make. Because the grammar glossing sheets can be utilized for individual students, they have great potential in helping students improve the grammar in their writing.

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## Appendix A

**ASK Standard English Conventions—High School Rule Sheet**

1. SPELLING - Use standard spelling at all times.
2. CAPITALIZATION - Follow the standard rules for capitalization.
3. RUN-ON - A run-on sentence is two or more sentences improperly combined.  
**Correct:** He went to the game. He watched his team win.  
**Incorrect:** He went to the game, he watched his team win.
4. FRAGMENT- A fragment is a piece of a sentence that is missing either a subject, a predicate, or a complete thought.  
**Correct:** He was running across the field and caught the ball.  
**Incorrect:** Running across the field and catching the ball.
5. APOSTROPHE- Apostrophes are used to show possession or to indicate a contraction.  
**Correct:** John's new skis don't have bindings.  
**Incorrect:** Johns new skis dont have bindings.
6. COMMA-
  - a. Use a comma to separate items (words, phrases, or clauses) in a series.  
**Correct:**
    - I. We have read novels, poems, and dramas.
    - II. We found seaweed in the water, on the sand, and in our shoes
    - III. The teacher tried to ascertain what we had learned, what we hadn't, and what we to wanted to know more about.
  - b. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives preceding a noun.  
**Correct:** This is a rough, narrow road.
  - c. Use a comma before *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, and *so* when they join independent clauses.  
**Correct:** Our group received ten bonus points, for we had completed the task ahead of time.
  - d. Use a comma after a long prepositional phrase or after the final phrase in a series of phrases.  
**Correct:** At the top of a hill on the ranch, we found the lost calf.
  - e. Use a comma after an introductory words, phrases, and clauses.  
**Correct:**
    - I. Cheered by the cards and letters, Mary faced her rehabilitation more optimistically.

- II. After the team won the preliminary meet, they advanced to the regional competition.
- III. Yes, you may go to the office.
- f. Use a comma to set off parenthetical expressions and other words that interrupt a sentence.
  - Correct:**
    - I. The school year, so far as we know, will end on June
    - II. Augusta, the capital of Maine, is an hour north of here.
  - g. Use a comma to separate a noun of direct address, wherever it appears in the sentence.
    - Correct:** Josh, please answer the question. Please answer the question, Josh.
  - h. Use commas in standard conventional situations.
    - Correct:**
      - I. We have lived at 209 Riverside Drive, Augusta, Maine, since 1998.
      - II. Exams begin on Wednesday, January 14, for all students.
    - i. Never use a comma to separate a verb from its subject.
      - Correct:** What I cannot imagine is winter without snow.
      - Incorrect:** What I cannot imagine, is a winter without snow.

7. SEMI-COLON - Semi-colons are used to join two sentences (two independent clauses) of equal weight or with closely related ideas.

**Correct:** Mary is a talented drummer; Sam is an excellent trumpet player.

**Incorrect:** Mary is a talented drummer; playing the trumpet is fun.

8. COLON-

- a. Use a colon to signal the reader that a series of words, phrases, or clauses follows a complete sentence.

**Correct:** The baseball coach claimed that the team's success stemmed from four things: consistent hitting,

solid pitching, good fielding, and excellent teamwork.

**Incorrect:** I enjoy playing: basketball, soccer, and ping pong

- b. Use a colon to introduce a long quotation after a complete sentence

**Correct:** In his book, *Language is Sermonic*, rhetorician Richard Weaver described how language may influence us: "Sophistications of theory cannot obscure the truth that there are but three ways for language to affect us. It can move us toward what is good; it can move us toward what is evil; or it can, in hypothetical third place, fail to move us at all" (60).

9. SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT- Subjects should always agree in number with their verbs.

**Correct:** We were planning to go on vacation.

**Incorrect:** We was planning to go on vacation.

10. VERB FORM- Use correct forms and tenses of verbs.

**Correct:** She has lain in bed all day.

**Incorrect:** She has laid in bed all day.

11. PRONOUN REFERENCE- Every pronoun needs an antecedent to avoid indefinite reference.

**Correct:** Sally lost her book but found it before the test.

**Incorrect:** She lost it but found it before the test.

12. PRONOUN/ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT- Pronouns should agree with their antecedents (the words to which the pronouns refer).

**Correct:** Everyone has a right to his own opinion.

**Incorrect:** Everyone has a right to their opinion.

13. PARALLEL STRUCTURE- If two or more ideas are parallel, they should be expressed in parallel grammatical form. Single words should be balanced with single words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses.

**Correct:** I like fishing, boating, and camping.

**Incorrect:** I like fishing, boating, and to camp.

14. DANGLING MODIFIER- A dangling modifier occurs when a word or phrase has nothing in the sentence to modify.

**Correct:** While bumping along in the jeep, I thought the moon looked beautiful.

**Incorrect:** Bumping along in the jeep, the moon looked beautiful.

15. COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS- Words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings often cause writers trouble.

**Correct:**

I. It's much faster than its competitors.

II. They're hanging their jackets there.

**Incorrect:**

I. People loose coins in the cushions.

II. Incorrect: They arrived to late.

16. POINT-OF-VIEW (POV) SHIFT- It occurs whenever a speaker or writer shifts from one grammatical person to another person without a discourse or semantic reason for doing so.

**Correct:** I want you to have a talk with them on Monday.

**Incorrect:** Everyone should register early to ensure you get the schedule you want.

17. SENTENCE FLUENCY- Sentences should begin in different ways and be of various lengths. They should also utilize varied form and punctuation.

Appendix B

*This survey will be used for a research project being conducted by an English teacher here at ASK. The research aims to look at the use of the grammar glossing sheets that are being introduced this year to you in your English classes. Please do not write your name on this form. The answers you give will help the English faculty determine the benefits and drawbacks of the grammar glossing sheets, as well as helping us to help you develop your writing skills.*

*\*\*By responding to this survey, I am providing my consent.*

**Grammar Questionnaire #1:**

1. What would you rate your knowledge of English grammar on a scale of 1 to 5?

I Am Not Knowledgeable

I Am Very Knowledgeable

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

2. What would you rate your comfort level of using grammar on a scale of 1 to 5?

I Am Not Comfortable

I Am Very Comfortable

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

3. What strategies do you use to improve your writing? Please circle all that apply.

Conferencing with Teacher

Looking at Examples

Peer Review

Prewriting

Proofreading

Reading Good Writing

Rubrics

Writing Checklists

Writing Practice (including journals)

Written Teacher Feedback

4. What kinds of errors do you tend to make in your writing?

Grammar:

I Never Make Grammar Errors

I Always Make Grammar

Errors

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5



## Spelling

I Never Make Spelling Errors

I Always Make

Spelling Errors

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

## Punctuation

I Never Make Punctuation Errors

I Always Make

Punctuation Errors

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

5. Do you feel comfortable writing in English?

I Do Not Feel Comfortable

I Feel Very Comfortable

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

6. What kind of grammar instruction have you had? Please circle all that apply.

Diagramming Sentences

Notes

Lectures

Worksheets

7. Is English your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If no, what is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_

*This survey will be used for a research project being conducted by an English teacher here at ASK. The research aims to look at the use of the grammar glossing sheets that are being introduced this year to you in your English classes. Please do not write your name on this form. The answers you give will help the English faculty determine the benefits and drawbacks of the grammar glossing sheets, as well as helping us to help you develop your writing skills.*

*\*\*By responding to this survey, I am providing my consent.*

### **Grammar Questionnaire #2**

1. How helpful would you say grammar glossing sheets are for your learning of grammar?

Not Helpful

Very Helpful

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

2. How helpful would you say grammar glossing sheets are for your improvement of writing?

Not Helpful

Very Helpful

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

3. Do you think the grammar glossing sheets are helpful for your comprehension of English grammar? Why or why not?

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