

## Abstract

This thesis is a conceptual replication of VanPatten (1990) and Bouden, Greenslade, and Sanz (1999). It is a quantitative study about the effects that consciously focusing on form while reading for meaning will have on a L2 learner's comprehension due to the limited attentional capacity of working memory. Data was gathered from 101 subjects at a private Mexican institution, 52 at the intermediate L2 English level and 49 at the advanced L2 English level, by way of brief exercises to measure text comprehension while focusing on a lexical content item, a bound morpheme, or a non-content lexical item. Subject's reading comprehension was measured using a modified version of Carrell's (1985) idea unit analysis, after which a statistical analysis was used to obtain the overall comprehension scores for each task group. The statistical analysis revealed that L2 learners of English have difficulty focusing on a bound morpheme and a non-content lexical item while reading for comprehension in the L2. It also demonstrated that focusing on a content lexical item does not adversely affect L2 comprehension. The implications for this study include providing evidence that L2 learners at the intermediate and advanced stages have difficulty consciously focusing on form while reading for meaning in the L2. It also provides evidence that working memory is a limited capacity processing system.