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## The Case for Grammar: What Preservice Teachers Need to Know about Metalinguistic Awareness

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### Cover Page Footnote

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## **The Case for Grammar: What Preservice Teachers Need to Know about Metalinguistic Awareness**

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### **Introduction**

Teachers' preparation years are a prime time to foster language-confident professionals who face their future students' language needs with knowledge and enthusiasm, not fear or anxiety (Pappamihiell, 2007). Their education should offer multiple opportunities for language training exposure and subsequent grammar knowledge. However, that has not always been the case (Hadjiioannou & Hutchinson, 2010; Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014).

Increasing educational opportunities to develop grammar knowledge and metalinguistic awareness (MA) is not only beneficial, but also an essential step for future educators (Andrews, 2003; Carey, Christie, & Grainger, 2015; Moats, 1994, 2009; Myhill, Jones, & Watson, 2013). When investigating English language teachers' grammar knowledge, research findings have shown that teachers' metalinguistic knowledge of English is a critical component of their teaching effectiveness in the language and that *lack* of teacher metalinguistic awareness may in fact compromise students' success rates (Andrews, 1997, 2001, 2003; Moats, 1994, 2009; Myhill et al., 2013; Nutta, Mokhtari & Strebel, 2012; Wright 1991, 2002).

This study attempts to shed light on the challenging issue of teacher training in English language knowledge, particularly in the area of grammar. We draw upon research into preservice teachers' (PSTs, as they are often referred to in the United States) language knowledge from the United States (Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Folse, 2016; Nutta, Mokhtari & Strebel, 2012), the UK (Alderson, Steel & Clapham, 1997; Andrews, 1999a; Myhill, 2000), and Australia (Fielding-Barnsley, 2005, 2010; Harper & Rennie, 2008) to frame our study.

### **Teacher Knowledge of Language**

The need for teachers to have a deeper understanding of language has long been a source of examination in the language teaching field. The Knowledge about Language movement, or what is sometimes referred to as Language Awareness, is known in Britain for its contention that language learners should know more about language to be more proficient users of it (Alderson, Steel, & Clapham, 1997). Andrews (1999a) favors the term teacher Metalinguistic Awareness (MA) in investigations of what he calls the declarative dimension of MA, or teacher knowledge of both grammar and grammatical terminology. Andrew's research contends that teachers must develop and reflect on their personal knowledge of language to be of better assistance to their students. He claims that teachers need an "extra cognitive dimension" within their language knowledge/awareness and that such a dimension will ultimately inform their teaching and improve their ability to help their students (Andrews, 1999b, p. 163). This study's framework utilizes Andrews's definition of Metalinguistic Awareness (MA) and specifically focuses on undergraduate preservice teachers' (PSTs) knowledge of grammatical categories, lexical items, and explanations of grammatical categories/errors.

Consistent across research studies is that a more language-knowledgeable teacher will be more effective in the classroom. Teachers who are more linguistically aware will be able to

better gauge and understand both the language they teach and their students' language difficulties (Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2005, Fielding-Barnsley, 2010; Wright, 2002). Studies consistently point to the importance of *teachers'* expertise in numerous content domains, such as phonology, phoneme/grapheme correspondence, morphology, semantic organization, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics (Cairns, Schliesselberg, Waltzman & McDaniel, 2006; Cairns, Waltzman & Schliesselberg, 2004; Moats, 1994, 2009; Zipke, 2008, 2011). Myhill et al. (2013) investigated if grammar teaching embedded within regular writing teaching units would improve students' writing attainment.

Results demonstrated strong impact of the intervention, but even more important, the results showed that the *teachers'* subject knowledge of grammar was a mediating factor in the success of the intervention.

### **Perspectives on Preservice Teacher Knowledge about Language**

The necessity for enhanced awareness about language begins with PSTs, whose need for a robust understanding of language structure is compelling. (Montrul, 2008; Tunmer, 1984; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014; Zipke, 2008, 2011). In a seminal study concerning future language professionals' knowledge about language and MA, Bloor (1986) administered a questionnaire (Students' Prior Awareness of Metalinguistics) to 63 undergraduates and 175 second-year students. Participants had to recognize the parts of speech from sentences and give an example of one way in which English differs from another language in relation to grammar (Bloor, 1986, p. 160). The results indicated a reason for concern with college students' grammar and language awareness. Out of all the parts of speech available, the only two correctly recognized by the linguists were *verb* and *noun*. In the non-linguist category, even these two parts of speech failed to be named correctly.

According to Carey et al. (2015), to meet current teacher language standards and be adequately prepared to graduate, PSTs' language knowledge needs to improve, not only in functional English language and literacy but across the *whole curriculum*. In a study with 196 native English-speaking participants, Carey et al. (2015) investigated the validity of teaching English grammar to PSTs in a teacher education course at an Australian university. Participants reported that deeper language knowledge contributed to their overall academic proficiency. The researchers argue that "A teacher with a rich knowledge of grammatical constructions and a more general awareness of the forms and varieties of the language will be in a better position to help young writers" (Andrews, 2005, p. 75 as cited in Carey et al., 2015, p. 20). Current Practices in Preservice Teacher Education in Knowledge about Language Studies suggest that teacher preparation courses do not contain a rigorous language component and those that do should allot more time for solid and specific language training for teachers (Andrews, 1997, 2003; Moats, 1994, 2009; Myhill et al., 2013; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014; Washburn et al, 2016).

Washburn, Binks-Cantrell, Joshi, Martin-Chang, and Arrow (2016) examined PSTs' knowledge of basic language constructs related to the structure of the English language across four different teacher preparations programs in Canada, England, New Zealand, and the USA. Two hundred and seventy-nine PSTs completed the Survey of Basic Language Constructs, which measured content knowledge and understanding of constructs related to phonology, phonics, and morphology. One of the results showed that on items measuring explicit knowledge of a

language construct, all participants performed below 70 %, with PSTs from the United States scoring only 40 %, leading the researchers to theorize that explicit language knowledge, vital to teaching early literacy skill, was not prioritized in preservice teacher programs.

### **Preservice Teachers and Teaching English Learners**

Research on how PSTs in the United States feel about teaching ELs demonstrates that PSTs expect to face more language issues with ELs than with native speaker students in their classrooms (Nutta et al., 2012; Pappamihiel, 2007). Because teachers have expressed clear insecurities about their preparedness to teach language-oriented topics, especially to English Learners (ELs; Kelly, 2018; Nutta et al., 2012), there is a clear case for providing deeper language knowledge instruction during the teacher preparation years. There are strong arguments for augmented teacher preparation that includes both an understanding of the nature of language, as well as how “to support second language development and academic achievement” (Nutta et al., 2012, p. 1). A current trend for teaching ELs in content-based instruction has pointed to a clear change from teaching language for language’s sake to an approach that embraces grammar (and vocabulary) as essential in achieving the necessary language arts standards at grade-level proficiency (Nutta et al., 2012; Svalberg, 2015).

It is argued in this investigation that PSTs are not receiving enough language exposure to develop a deeper knowledge of how the English language works, which can impact their students’ English language development in the classroom, particularly ELs. This lack of MA is a problem that can be minimized through an enhanced grammar-focused curriculum for PSTs and its implementation should be based on well-designed research.

### **Research Framework**

For this study, MA was conceptualized as the ability to deconstruct language in relation to grammar; identify parts of speech; and recognize, identify, and correct errors by providing accurate metalanguage (Ellis, 2006). This study investigated the current metalinguistic awareness of PSTs in a United States university education program by narrowly focusing on grammatical categories, lexical items, and explanations of grammatical categories/errors as proposed by Andrews (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2001).

### **Methods**

#### **Context of the Present Study**

The present study investigated PSTs’ knowledge grammatical categories, lexical items, and explanations of grammatical categories/errors, as important factors in predicting positive consequences for their future students. PSTs at the university where this study took place are required to take two state-mandated courses that focus on raising their awareness about second language acquisition issues to receive their ESOL Endorsement. The current study took place in one of these two ESOL Endorsement courses.

#### **Research Design**

The research design for this study was quasi-experimental, one-group pretest- posttest (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). The study investigated the current grammar knowledge and MA of participants as measured by an adapted version of the Language Awareness Test (LAT)

with permission (Alderson et al., 1997; Andrews, 1999b, 2006, 2007) or the aLAT forthwith. For the purposes of this limited study of the functional grammar in context that was measured by the aLAT, the grammar knowledge was narrowly focused on a measure of grammatical categories, lexical items, and explanations of grammatical categories/errors. The independent variable was a three-week grammar module in which participants took part during the course. The dependent variable was the participants' scores obtained on the aLAT (pre- and post-).

## Research Questions

The research questions for the study were:

Is there a statistically significance increase in the overall grammar knowledge of participants after treatment as measured by pre- and post- administrations of the aLAT; and

Is there a statistically significant difference in the ability of participants to provide metalinguistic explanations for grammatical errors after treatment as measured by pre- and post-administrations of the final portion of the aLAT?

## Participants

The participants of the study were mainly undergraduate PSTs taking a specific course as part of their ESOL Endorsement. PSTs who seek bachelor's degrees in education from this university pursue majors in early childhood education, elementary education, or English language arts, while graduating with an ESOL Endorsement. Some of the participants were undergraduates who take this course as part of their TEFL certification.

## Instrumentation

The aLAT measures grammar knowledge in its first three parts and deeper grammar knowledge and MA in its fourth and final part, when participants explain grammatical issues. The only adaptations made to the LAT were the replacement of lexical items that are not typical of American dialect (e.g. *flat*, *spanner*, *colic* and *phoned*), the addition of *definite article* to the list of 14 grammatical items that should be identified, and the removal of the item *passive verb*, which was replaced by an example of *uncountable noun*.

The aLAT contains two different grammar sections, Section 1 and Section 2 (S1, S2); and each section has two Parts (P1, P2), hereafter S1P1, S1P2, S2P1, and S2P2. S1P1 contains one sentence from which participants identify 14 specific grammatical items. Participants were given the grammatical categories (*verb*, *auxiliary verb*, *participle verb*, *infinitive verb*, *noun (any example)*, *countable noun*, *uncountable noun*, *relative pronoun*, *adjective*, *article: definite*, *article: indefinite*, *adverb*, *preposition*, and *conjunction*) and had to write in the correct word from the sentence into the item box. The sentence is: *Materials are delivered to the factory by a supplier, who usually has no technical knowledge but who happens to have the right contacts.*

S1P2 has four sentences from which participants identify and underline one part of the sentence:

*Poor little Joe stood out in the snow.* (Identify subject)

*Joe has nowhere to shelter.* (Identify predicate)

*The policeman chased Joe down the street.* (Identify direct object)

*The woman gave him some money.* (Identify indirect object)

S2P1 contains a list of 15 sentences, each one containing one grammar mistake which participants recognize and rewrite correctly. (See Appendix A for the list of sentences). For example, for the first sentence “*I walk to work very quick*” the acceptable correction is “*I walk to work very quickly.*”

S2P2, the core of Research Question 2, has the same 15 sentences from S2P1, but requires participants to *explain* the grammatical rule they previously corrected in S2P1, showing participants’ level of MA and their knowledge of grammatical terminology. For example, for the first sentence, “*I walk to work very quick,*” acceptable explanations could be variations of: 1) When a verb is qualified, use adverb (not adjective); 2) *Quick* is an adjective, it must be an adverb to qualify a verb; or 3) Add the morpheme *-ly* to the adjective so it becomes an adverb and refers to the verb *walk*.

### **Treatment**

The treatment consisted of a 3-week grammar module in the 16-week ESOL Endorsement course that met twice a week for 75 minutes every term. The course covered general applied linguistics topics, e.g. first language acquisition and second language acquisition. Typically, three weeks were used to cover morphology, grammar, and syntax, with minor variations. Prior to the study, a cross-reference between the grammar module and the aLAT was created to ensure content validity of the instrument.

### **Data collection**

The study comprised three phases: (a) the administration of the aLAT (pretest) and biodata questionnaire; (b) the treatment (three-week grammar module); and the administration of the aLAT (posttest) immediately after the grammar module. Around week seven of the course and immediately before its first grammar component, participants were administered the biodata questionnaire and the aLAT pretest. In the following three weeks, participants attended classes for the treatment (grammar module), and immediately after that they took the posttest.

The procedures for the posttest were similar to the pretest.

### **Rating of the aLAT**

The aLAT was scored based on a mark scheme that was created after a thorough analysis of the mark schemes previously used by other authors (Andrews, 1999b, 2007; Alderson, et al., 1997). The updated mark scheme included some of the previous authors’ comments on what should be considered right, wrong, or incomplete regarding the answers given by participants, as well as the principal researcher’s own notes after rating the tests given in a pilot study. Both the principal researcher as well as a second rater evaluated 20% of the total as a calibration effort before the principal rater proceeded to the rating of the final 80%. The aLAT mark scheme is in Table 2.

Table 2

*Mark Scheme for the aLAT*


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S1P1: Participants identify 14 words in a sentence correctly

*Correct answer = 2; Incorrect/no answer = 0; Total Points = 28*

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S1P2: Participants underline correct grammatical category in each of 4 sentences

*Correct answer = 2; Incorrect answer/no answer = 0; Total Points = 8*

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S2P1: Participants rewrite 15 English sentences containing grammar mistakes correctly.

*Correct answer = 1; Incorrect/no answer = 0; Total Points = 15*

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S2P2: Participants explain the rule or reasoning behind the corrections from S2P1

*Fully Correct = 2; Partially Correct = 1; Incorrect/nothing = 0; Total Points = 30*

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<b>Fully correct explanation: 2</b>	<b>Partially correct explanation: 1</b>	<b>Incorrect explanation: 0</b>
Rule with grammar terminology: correct explanation shows knowledge of the rule using clear grammar terminology.	Rule only or informal explanation of the rule: correct, but informal explanation with minimal or no grammar terminology.	Either no explanation or incorrect explanation. It simply describes the correction from S2P1.
Overall Total Points = 81		

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**Data analysis**

The present study employed paired-samples *t*-tests to investigate the two research questions in relation to scores on the pretest and posttest after the Treatment using the whole dataset ( $N=101$ ). Participants filled out a brief biodata questionnaire with information about their age, gender, major, and languages spoken (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Participants Biodata Information (N = 101)*

Age		Gender		Other Language Spoken		Major	
20 - 25	24%	Female	85%	Spanish	18%	Elementary Education	53%
21 - 82	76%	Male	15%	Other*	14%	Early Childhood Education	17%
						English Language Arts	12%
						Other Major	18%
100%		100%		32%		100%	

\*Other languages include Arabic, Burmese, Creole, Farsi, French, Japanese, Malaya Malan, Portuguese, and Vietnamese

**Findings**

Research Question One refers to the results of the entire aLAT and its four parts (S1P1, S1P2, S2P1, S2P2), while Research Question Two depicts the results for the last part of the aLAT (S2P2).

**Research Question One**

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant increase in relation to overall scores from pre- to post-test of the aLAT. Results indicated that the mean of the pretest ( $M= 34.38, SD= 13.35$ ) had a statistically significant increase from pre- to posttest ( $M= 40.90, SD= 13.12, t(100)= .9.10$ )  $p<.001$  out of a possible score of 81 on the aLAT. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -7.9350 to -5.0947. The effect size index *d* was .90, which is considered a large effect size under the conventional interpretation of .2, .5, and .8, representing small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Green & Salkind, 2008). See Table 4 for results.

**Research Question Two**

A paired-samples *t* test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores from pre- to posttest on metalinguistic explanations for grammatical errors of the aLAT (S2P2). The results indicated no statistically significant difference from mean pre- ( $M= 6.030, SD= 5.3413$ ) to post-test ( $M=, 6.436, SD=5.6788$ ),  $t(100)= -1.358, p=.177$  scores, out of a potential score of 30. The standardized mean difference was 0.135, considered a small effect. See Table 4 for results.

Table 4

*Research Questions 1 and 2 Results*

	Maximum Points		Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	N
RQ1 (Overall Scores)	81					101
		Pre	34.386	13.3566	103290	
		Post	40.901	13.1244	1.3059	
RQ2 (S2P2)	30					101
		Pre	6.030	5.3413	.5315	
		Post	6.436	5.6788	.5651	

**Discussion****Research Question One**

The results demonstrated that an overall increase of PSTs' grammar knowledge is feasible after only a short period of grammar study. This is encouraging for any preservice teacher education program which includes English grammar within the scope of their curriculum. When looking at the descriptive statistics, though, the pre-and post-test scores reflect an overall low level of knowledge. While the *t*-test demonstrates a significant increase in scores, Figure 1 shows the overall low percentage of participants' scores within each section on the pretest and the post- test.

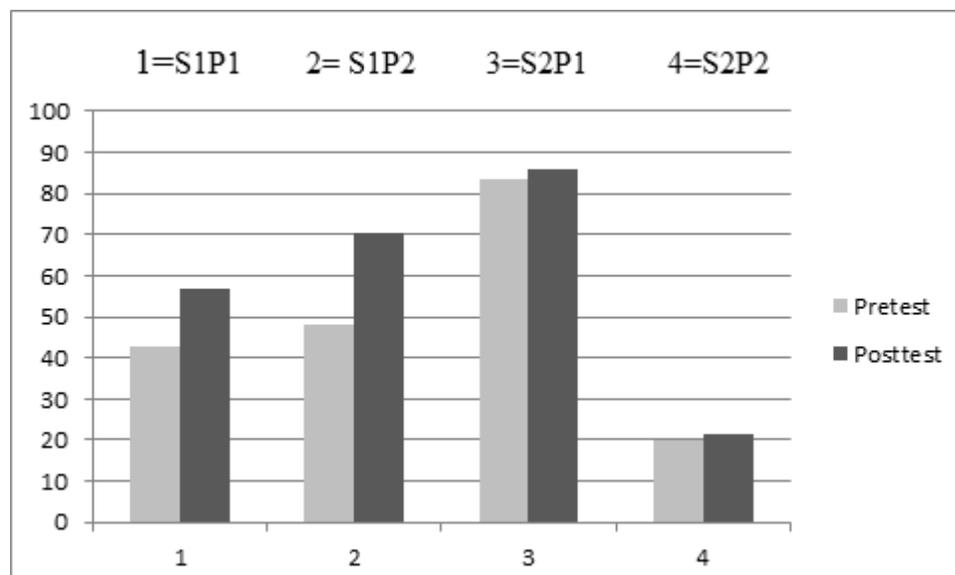


Figure 1. Average percentage scores on the aLAT: Pre- and post-test by section.

In section SIP1, identification of parts of speech, participants only scored an average of 42% on the pre-test. In looking deeper at the individual items, it is even clearer how participants struggled with identifying more complex parts of speech. For example, participants correctly identified items 1 and 5, (*verb and noun*) over 80% of the time on both pre- and posttests. On the other hand, Item 2 (*auxiliary verb*) and Item 3 (*participle*) show less than 19% of participants identifying them correctly on the pretest and less than 24% in the posttest (See Table 5 for all items). These low scores echo similar results from previous research studies measuring undergraduate students and PSTs in recognition of parts of speech (Bloor, 1986; Washburn, E. K., & Mulcahy, C. A., 2014; Williamson and Hardman, 1995; Wray, 1993).

Table 5

*Participants' Average Percentage Scores Per Item in SIP1*

Item Number	Part of speech	Pretest	Posttest
1	Verb	83%	88%
2	Aux. Verb	19%	23%
3	Participle	16%	12%
4	Infinitive	14%	33%
5	Noun	93%	95%
6	Count. noun	69%	79%
7	Uncountable noun	29%	42%
8	Relative pronoun	40%	66%
9	Adjective	65%	81%
10	Definite article	22%	51%
11	Indefinite article	22%	44%
12	Adverb	43%	58%
13	Preposition	34%	50%
14	Conjunction	53%	82%

As surprising as it might be that college students preparing to be teachers cannot recognize many primary parts of speech, it is important to reinforce that the present study did find statistical significance from pre- to posttest for overall grammatical knowledge. There is reason for optimism that grammar instruction can be an efficient way of promoting knowledge in a short amount of time. As evidence of this, category S1P2 participants asked participants to identify and underline specific grammatical categories in four sentences. Results from the pretest showed participants underlined the correct category only 48% of the time but improved to 70% after the treatment.

This is a clear demonstration of how identification of grammar topics is teachable within a short time. These findings indicate that no matter the state of grammatical knowledge in which PSTs *initiate* their college preparation years, they can and *will improve* if given the opportunity to do so.

### Research Question Two

Results for this portion of the aLAT illustrated that PSTs were not prepared to explain grammar issues. Although the participants demonstrated that they knew how to *detect* and *correct* ungrammatical occurrences successfully in S2P1 of the aLAT, that ability did not translate well to *explaining* the same errors in S2P2 (See Figure 2), considered essential for future teachers (Folse, 2016). A great number of participants left most of the explanations for S2P2 blank; others offered explanations that restated the issue, but did not explain it; finally, some of the answers pointed to a complete lack of awareness as to what the topic encompassed and how it could be explained. For example, a participant accurately corrected the sentence *I opened the door, but I couldn't see nobody* (a common case of double negative), to *I opened the door, but I couldn't see anybody*.

However, the explanation offered was: *'Anybody' fits better in the sentence because 'nobody' is past*. In another example, while trying to explain the grammar issue with the sentence *I walk to work very quick*, the participant again corrected the sentence adequately to *I walk to work quickly*. Nevertheless, the explanation the participant offered was: *Quickly instead of quick because it shortens the sentence and sounds better*.

The same sentence was corrected by another participant in the same fashion: she removed the adverb *very* and corrected *quick* to *quickly*. However, the explanation was that *"the verb must agree."* Most participants did not have basic metalanguage to explain that the adverb *quickly* should be used instead of the adjective *quick*, and that an adverb, not an adjective, should be used to qualify a verb. If PSTs' future students need a better understanding of grammar and the ability to self-correct language, they need to be offered more than a mere *"It is like this because it sounds better."* Figure 2 depicts the low percentage of overall results for each one of the sentences that had to be corrected as part of S2P2 of the aLAT.

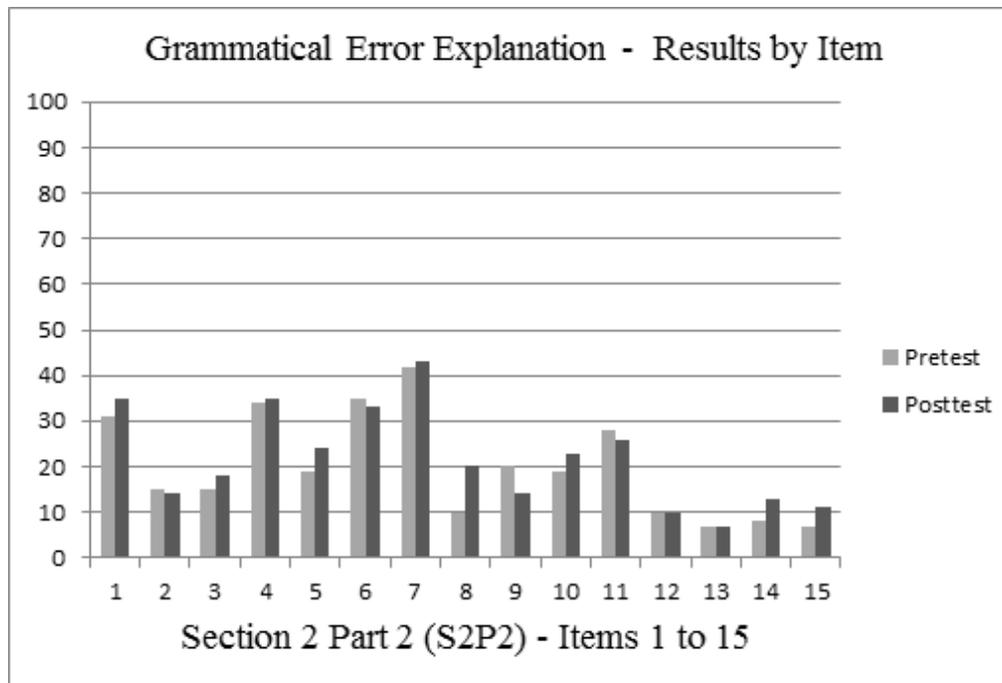


Figure 2. Average percentage scores in S2P2 by item number.

Results for this research question were consistent with studies that have pointed to students' ability to correct grammatical errors with high accuracy, but consistent failure in their attempts to explain them (e.g. Alderson et al., 1997; Washburn et al., 2016). Although participants were equipped to *correct* English errors, they lacked the ability to explain why they were wrong and use metalanguage to do so. It is clear from the analyses of this portion of the aLAT that participants' metalinguistic awareness was minimal, which in turn prevents them from expressing explicit grammar knowledge.

According to Folse (2016), when native English speakers are confronted with a specific language inquiry or issue, they rarely know why their L1 functions that way and they tend to rely on three vague attempts at explanations: a) the issue at hand might be an exception to the rule; b) it is right because if it sounds right, it probably is; or finally c) it is right because that is how native speakers say it. Teachers without expertise on essential notions about English language should not be in the classroom without the requisite knowledge to help ELs develop language skill (Folse, 2016). Previous research has indicated that PSTs routinely lack higher level metalinguistic awareness as evidenced by their limited ability to explain grammar issues and use proper metalanguage while doing so (Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Nutta et al., 2012; Pappamihiell, 2007).

### Implications

An essential topic among discussions about teacher preparedness is the importance of language knowledge as a factor that must be better accounted for in PSTs' preparation (Dreher & Zenge, 1990; Myhill et al., 2013; Nutta et al., 2012; Svalberg, 2015). Studies point to a clear need for PSTs to be better prepared to handle the numerous challenges of working with their future students (Carey et al., 2015; Harper & Rennie, 2009). Anderson (1999) tells us that "Explicit knowledge about language (the declarative dimension of TMA) is clearly an important

part of any L2 teacher's language awareness..." (p. 144). In their book *Preparing Every Teacher to Reach English Learners*, Nutta et al. (2012) offered a deeper look at the statistics concerning the linguistically diverse population in the United States, as well as the standards written to ensure that this population will receive adequate instruction. There is robust literature endorsing increased educational opportunities for PSTs to develop their language knowledge, critical to future classroom effectiveness in working with native speakers and ELs in particular.

Studies have shown that MA is a powerful predictor of reading comprehension performance in the early years (Dreher & Zenge, 1990). As pointed out by Folse (2016), teachers *should not be* in the classroom without this expertise and institutions need to provide more opportunities for teacher development in language, and more specifically, grammar. PSTs' MA deserves a more prominent place in the current educational curriculum and more should be done to emphasize it (Harper & Rennie, 2009; Myhill, 2000; Myhill et al., 2013). Instead of being fearful and insecure about how much (or how little) language knowledge they have, and how capable (or powerless) they are to answer their students' questions and difficulties about grammar, PSTs should be encouraged to discover the benefits of investigating their own language.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation of this study lies in the fact that the notions of MA encompass more than the study covered, both in terms of the instrument used to measure this construct, as well as the context of the study within one program in the United States. Another limitation of the present study was the number of participants and the fact that its generalizability was limited to the immediate population from which the sample was extracted, namely the specific course within the institution where the study took place. A final limitation of the study was that it offered only a quantitative picture of the results. There are more variables within a period of three weeks in a college class than the numerical results provided. Issues such as motivation, aptitude, studying habits, and prior knowledge could bring a more detailed depiction of the results and offer insight into what made the treatment successful or not.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Although this study was limited to one program in the United States, the methodology of the research and conclusions drawn from the data could have potential implications for any teacher training program. Two recommendations for future research were drawn after the conclusion of this study: First, similar empirical studies should take place on a more continuous fashion, becoming a routine aspect any teacher preparation program. This would offer a more comprehensive view of preservice teacher education in a global context. Second, a more current, comprehensive, and balanced instrument should be designed specifically to evaluate PSTs' MA.

The LAT, as well as similar versions of the test, has been used in previous investigations and it was considered effective tool for measuring grammar knowledge and MA. It can be argued, though, that it presents little balance among its own parts and it should be updated to more current views on grammar and contextualized to local conventions. Because teacher training for working with ELs varies from country to country, and even within those countries, any recommendation to include more emphasis on language knowledge and MA would have to recognize those differences and research protocols adjusted to be culturally and locally relevant.

In fact, a more current, relevant assessment could become a routine diagnostic during PSTs' preparation, and could be administered at least once during their first two years of college. This would help increase awareness of the *importance* of language and give PSTs more time to improve their language knowledge while they are still in college. By expanding the empirical knowledge of PSTs' MA and its ramifications in the teacher preparation field, educational institutions would be better informed how to offer pedagogically-sound language courses for their teacher candidates.

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## Appendix A

### P2S2: GRAMMATICAL ERROR IDENTIFICATION

This section consists of fifteen English sentences, each of which contains a grammar mistake.

For each sentence, participants underline and then explain the mistake.

I walk to work very quick.

When her said that, Jack hit her.

Every day I am making good resolutions.

She's the taller of the four sisters.

I live in a room at a top of an old house.

Mommy goed to the park yesterday.

The children put on their coat.

He usually like to study at the library.

I don't like people which are always apologizing.

I opened the door, but I couldn't see nobody.

When I was a small baby I have colic.

I will pick up you later.

Josh and Pete have went to the show.

Give the paper to Joe and I.

She has phoned a few minutes ago.