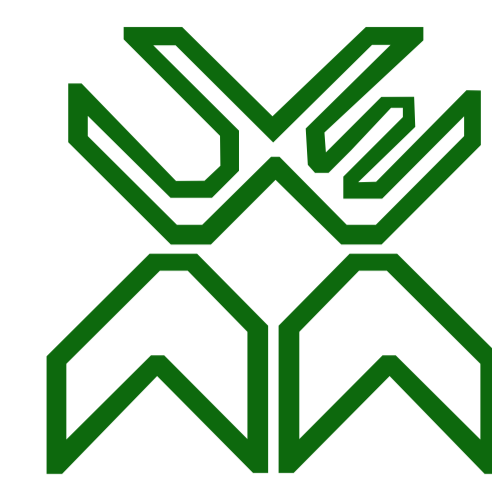


Strategies and Materials for Teaching Portuguese as a Second Language (PSL)



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PSL IN MOZAMBIQUE

Figure 1: Map of Mozambique



Mozambicans are speakers of Bantu languages as their first languages (85.3%).

Mozambican speakers of Portuguese as a second language increased from 24.4% in 1980 to 39.7% in 2007.

Only 10.7% of the population has Portuguese as their first language.

Chimbutane (2011)

University students are exposed to, at least, two language varieties: Mozambican Portuguese in natural settings and European Portuguese in instructional settings.

- The majority of the university students have multiple competencies in Portuguese.
- Students are still dealing with target language acquisition and writing proficiency development.

RESEARCH

Relevance

- Knowledge about students' linguistic competence is relevant to the development of teaching strategies and instructional materials.
- Adequate strategies and instructional materials that meet target group's linguistic needs are important to develop writing accuracy.

Research questions

- What are university students' specific difficulties in writing in PSL?
- What can teachers do to help students improve their writing accuracy?

METHODOLOGY

Written data was collected from different regions of Mozambique. The analysis and description of this corpus enabled researchers to:

- establish the linguistic profile of this population (Gonçalves 2005, 2010, among others) (see table 1);
- draw a taxonomy of the most common PSL errors (see, e.g., table 2);
- develop further research on teaching strategies and instructional materials.
 - Teaching strategies – Written Corrective Feedback (Siopa 2011)
 - Teaching materials – Grammar minilessons (Siopa 2006, 2010; Justino 2010)

Table 1: Linguistic Profile of Portuguese Second Language Advanced-Learners

AREA	ERROR TYPE	PERCENTAGE
LEXICAL (6,1%)	Semantic Neologism	3,8
	Formal Neologism	1,8
	Others	0,2
	Categorial Selection	9,2
SYNTAX (33,5%)	Personal Reflex Pronoun	2,4
	Clitic Placement	5,6
	Complex Structures	5,6
	Article	6,5
	Others	3,3
	Verb Agreement	3,7
MORPHO-SYNTAX (12,1%)	Noun Agreement	3,5
	Verb Tense	1,9
	Verbal Mood	1,5
	Others	0,8
SPELLING (48,3%)	Graphic Accent	34,5
	Spelling	13,2
	Others	2,8
TOTAL		705

Table 2: Error Log - Comparison of Results of WCF between First Essay and Last Essay (Siopa 2011)

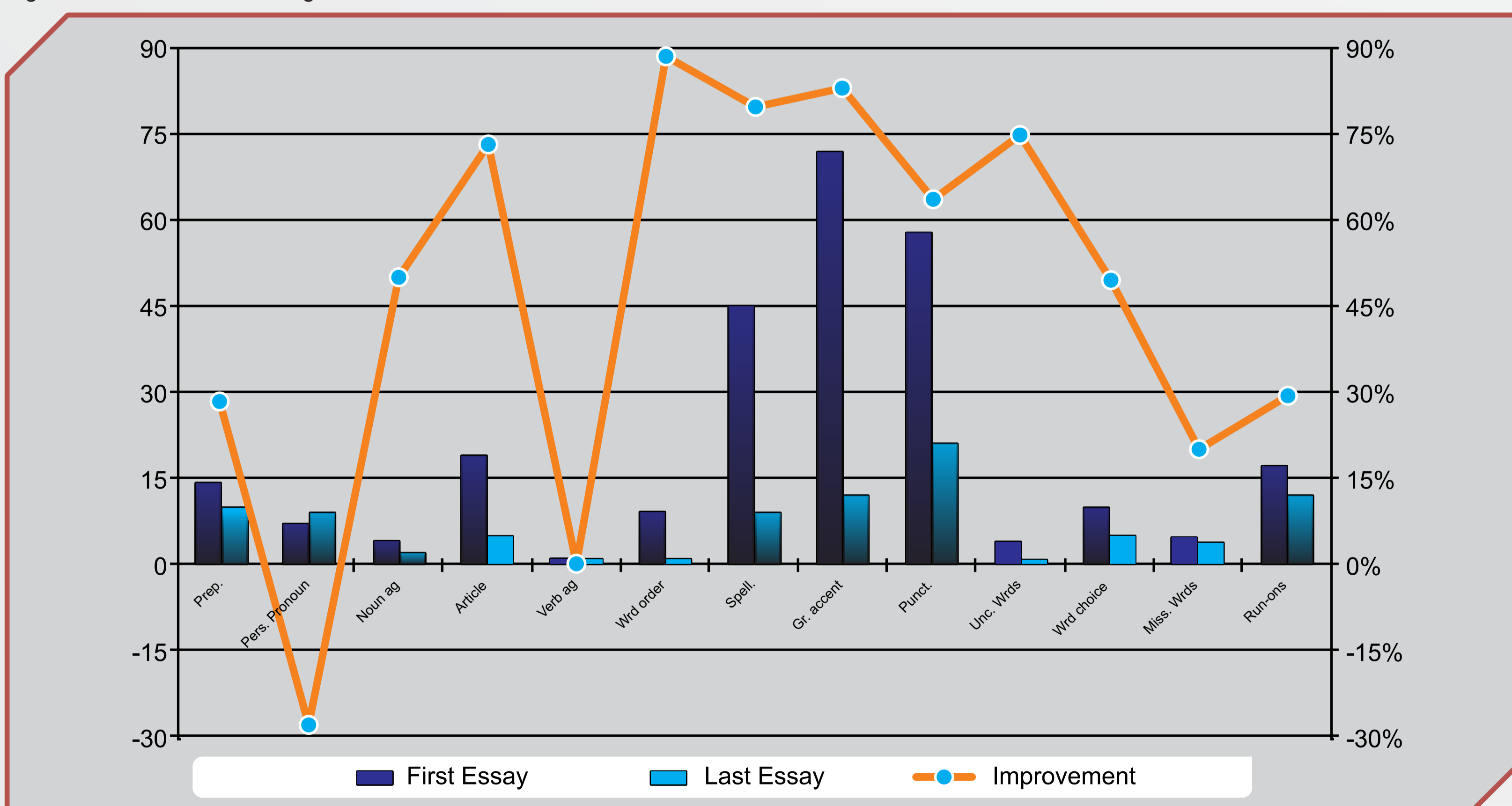
TYPE OF ERRORS	IMPROVEMENT		
	Errors of 1st Essay	Errors of Last essay / Percentage	
Grammar	Categorial Selection (preposition)	14 / 10 / 29	
	Personal Pronoun	7 / 9 / 29	
	Noun Agreement	4 / 2 / 50	
	Article	19 / 5 / 74	
	Verb Agreement	1 / 1 / 0	
	Verb Tense	5 / 3 / 89	
	Word order	9 / 1 / 80	
	Graphic Accent	72 / 12 / 83	
	Mechanics	Spelling	45 / 9 / 64
		Punctuation	58 / 21 / 64
Unnecessary Words		4 / 1 / 75	
Discourse	Word Choice	10 / 5 / 50	
	Missing Words	5 / 4 / 20	
	Run-ons	17 / 12 / 29	
TOTAL	270	95 / 65	

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

This study was conducted with a group of university students (n=20), and the instructional methodology used was indirect corrective feedback (Ferris 2002; Bitchener 2008) on form features and discourse items of all essays students did, either in class or as homework, during a semester.

Figure 2: Results of WCF Long Term Successful Correction



- On the last essay students made less grammar, mechanical and discourse errors in general.
- The most successful categories were graphic accent, spelling, punctuation, article and word order.
- The use of prepositions shows no significant improvement and personal pronouns show no benefits at all.

Table 3: Error-free Clause Ratio

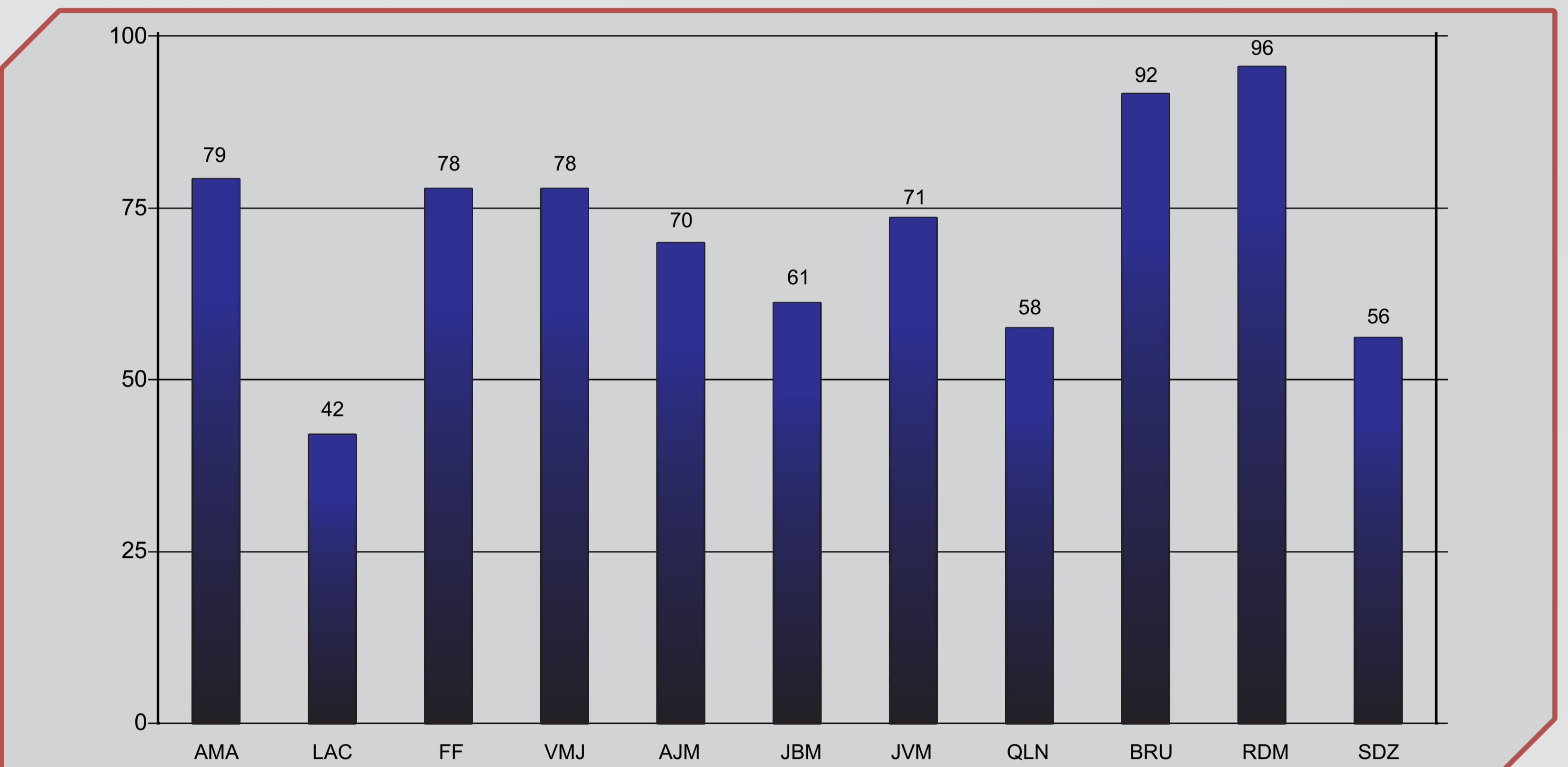
Group	Number of students	1st essay EFC ratio average	Last essay EFC ratio average	Gain / Loss
2011	20	60	67	07

Focused Grammar Minilessons

Grammar minilessons (Ellis 1997, Ferris 2002, Duarte 2008, Larsen-Freeman 2009) were orientated for both explicit and implicit knowledge of structural syllabus (grammatical structure). This learning material has three moments according to "grammar workshop/laboratory" model (Duarte 1992, 2008, among others) or "discovery learning" approach (Hudson 1992, 1999):

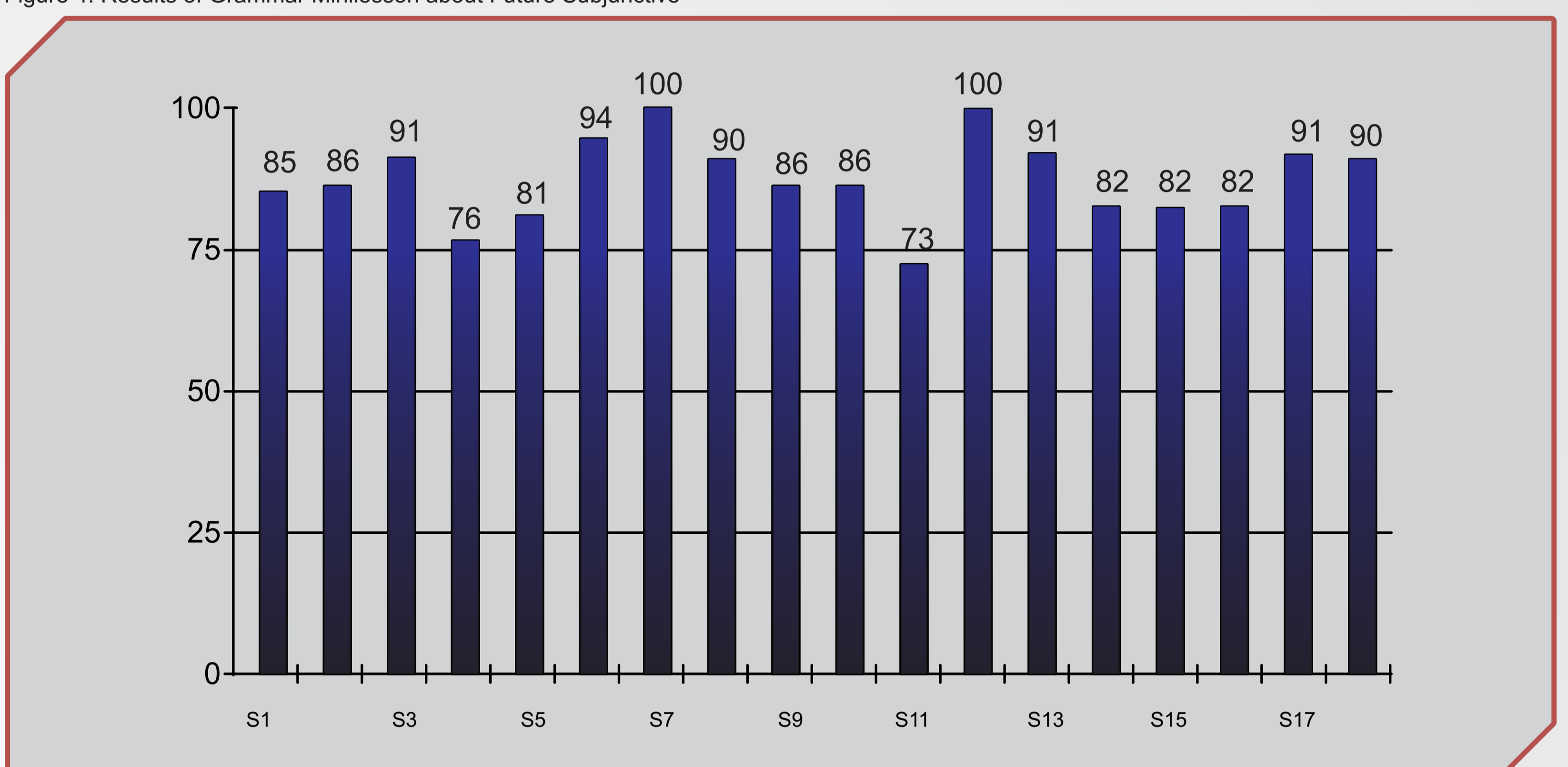
- Input enhancement approach by exposing students to data with rules or target features, for them to observe, discover and grasp those rules.
- Task-oriented explicit learning where an explicit rule is presented or they are guided to describe the implicit rules.
- Practical exercises to produce target structure and evaluate acquired knowledge.

Figure 3: Results of Grammar Minilesson on Preposition a



This experience (fig. 3) showed that on a posttest 64% of the students had above 75% of correct suppliance of target structure. Only one student kept on showing difficulties with target structure, after grammar focused instruction.

Figure 4: Results of Grammar Minilesson about Future Subjunctive



Some students used the lexicalized forms in 100%, others used between 72% and 91% because some of them retained the hypothesis that the inflectional paradigms of the future subjunctive are homophones of irregular verbs. There was an improvement in the future subjunctive use, as students gave above 75% of correct suppliance of target structure (fig. 4).

FINDINGS

- Specific linguistic categories responded differently to WCF
 - Improvements on the short term on prepositions, verb agreement and personal pronoun do not last.
 - Articles, word order, spelling, punctuation illustrate very positive effects on the long term.
- Grammar minilessons on specific linguistic problems of this population produce positive results on target structures.

Limitations

As these students are exposed to a multilingual setting, persistent errors may be related to Portuguese language change in Mozambique where a new variety arises. If this is the case, grammar teaching is limited as it cannot produce positive results or contribute for restructuring the incorrect hypothesis on target language.

IMPLICATIONS ON TEACHING STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

As WCF and Grammar Minilessons help raising L2 students' awareness teachers are adjusting teaching strategies and developing materials to meet target group linguistic needs (Siopa 2006, 2010, 2011; Justino 2011):

Strategies

- Post WCF workshop on revision
- Error logs
- Error-analysis sheet
- Student error-analysis summary form
- Opportunity for production of a revised version of all essays

Materials

- Grammar minilessons
 - Input enhancement on specific structure
 - Analysis of specific grammatical feature
 - Exploration of grammar rules and samples of complex structure
 - Student consciousness-raising exercises
 - Guide to help students revise their essays

FURTHER RESEARCH

Does WCF combined with grammar minilessons on problematic features help students to improve in accuracy more than feedback alone?

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