

## REVISITING ATTENDING TO FORM DURING MEANING COMPREHENSION IN LEARNING SPANISH AS AN ADDITIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Learners' attentional resources are limited in processing second language (L2) input. Their meaning comprehension might be inhibited if they are required to attend to form and meaning simultaneously during L2 input processing. A series of studies have tested this hypothesis but yielded inclusive findings, possibly due to variations in research modality (aural vs. written) and/or the type of form examined (lexical vs. grammatical). A recent multisite replication by Morgan-Short et al. (2018) revisited this hypothesis in both aural and written modes and generally concluded that attending to forms has no effect on meaning comprehension. However, consistent evidence for the general conclusion needs further investigation, especially for sites using the aural mode. Tentative trends from two aural sites suggest that attending to grammatical forms negatively influenced learners' comprehension. Besides, one aural site extended the research to populations learning Spanish as a third language (L3) with different first language (L1) and L2 backgrounds. Learners' prior language configurations implied cross-linguistic influences in explaining the inconsistent results as well as the need for further investigation from this aspect. Therefore, the current study aimed to further this line of research by replicating Morgan-Short et al. (2018) in the aural mode with a different learner population. The participants in this study were L1 Chinese learners who learned the target language Spanish as an additional foreign language after they had learned English as an L2. For this population, the potential cross-linguistic influence of their L1 and L2 might exhibit different effects when it comes to attending to form in their L3 since the target grammatical form has different structural proximities with that in their L1 and L2 (e.g., the article form is absent in Chinese but present in English). Specifically, participants were randomly assigned to perform one of the three tasks: 1) listening to a passage in Spanish, 2) listening to the same passage and simultaneously noting the key lexical item *sol*, and 3) listening to the same passage and simultaneously noting the definite article *la*. After the listening task, all participants took a multiple-choice comprehension test. The results partially reproduced the previous findings that attending to a lexical item (*sol*) had no effect on meaning comprehension. However, a small to medium effect was found on comprehension scores for simultaneously attending to a grammatical form (*la*). This finding revealed a site-specific effect with learners from different L1 backgrounds, suggesting that learners' attending to a grammatical form absent in their L1 is detrimental to their meaning comprehension even if this form exists in their earlier learned L2. This study expands the research in a wider Spanish-learning context and emphasizes considering cross-linguistic influences of prior learned language(s) when investigating the form-meaning relations.

**Keywords:** focus on form, grammar, listening comprehension, cross-linguistic influences