



The effectiveness of the ECRIF framework in developing EFL students' engagement and learning outcomes: A case study of Moroccan middle school students

AYAD CHRAA^a  

HANANE AQADOH^b  

^a Centre Régional des Métiers de l'Éducation et de la Formation- Souss Massa, Morocco

^b Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco

Abstract

Recent shifts in education, particularly in English language teaching (ELT), have emphasized learner-centered approaches over teacher-centered ones. The ECRIF framework (Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, Fluently Use) is widely recognized for providing a practical roadmap for facilitating active, meaningful, and student-centered learning experiences. This study investigates its effectiveness in developing learning outcomes and engagement among Moroccan EFL middle school students. Data were collected from a sample of 67 ninth-grade students, using a pre-test, post-test, and feedback questionnaire. The results revealed that the ECRIF framework significantly enhanced students' performance in the grammar test compared to traditional instruction. While both instructional methods resulted in learning gains, the improvement observed in the control group was modest compared to the substantial progress made by the experimental group. The structured stages and interactive activities incorporated throughout the instructional session contributed to the positive impact of the ECRIF framework on the experimental group's achievement. The students expressed high levels of satisfaction and positive perceptions toward the ECRIF approach, as reflected in their responses to the feedback questionnaire. Overall, the present study demonstrated that the ECRIF activities used during the lesson not only improved students' learning outcomes but also maximized their engagement and participation. These findings suggest that the framework can effectively foster both student learning and engagement in the English classroom. To this end, the study calls for the integration of ECRIF framework to enhance learner-centered practices and improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: ECRIF, ELT, ninth grade, learner-centeredness, learning

Introduction

Background

With the rapid global changes, English is gaining popularity and importance in almost all spheres of life. Equally important, it is considered the most widely used lingua franca internationally. For many years, English has been primarily taught through traditional teacher-centered methods focusing on grammatical competence and accurate reproduction of rules. The goal of foreign language teaching nowadays is not only educating individuals to use the grammar rules but, more importantly, to make them fluent speakers and autonomous learners. This being the case, recent reforms in ELT have developed new understandings of how language should be taught and learned. In light of the communicative turn in language learning, interaction and communication are emphasized (Stickler et al., 2020). Communicative competence has been regarded as the ultimate goal of language learning.

Moreover, learner-centredness brought about a paradigm shift in ELT models. The learner-centered approach is deeply rooted in the constructivist philosophy of teaching (Brown, 2008; Weimer, 2002). Constructivist approaches place learners at the center of the learning process and emphasize their active construction of knowledge, rather than passively receiving information transmitted to them by teachers and textbooks (Stage et al. 1998, p. 35). Learners learn by doing and experiencing, rather than relying on teachers' wisdom and expertise to transmit knowledge (Brown, 2008). With this view, the teacher's role changed from being the "sage on the stage to the guide on the side (King, 1993). The learner-centered teaching style focuses on how students learn instead of how teachers teach (Weimer, 200; Wohlfarth et al., 2008). In the same vein, Withall (1975) conceptualized the role of the teacher as one of facilitator: "the primary role and purpose of any teacher in any classroom is to help learners learn, inquire, problem-solve, and cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them" (p. 261).

As unequivocally put by Nunan (2000), the importance of learner-centered classrooms lies in the fact that they are places where "key decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and how it will be accessed will be made with reference to the learner" (p. 11). As such, this shift in thinking about learning and teaching was translated into a change in methods, approaches, and models. Indeed, it was reflected in language teaching frameworks with two fundamental learner-centered principles. The first is making students assume the responsibility over their learning, and the second is teachers taking the role of facilitators of knowledge so they can help learners learn how to learn. By so doing, teachers can also foster their students' autonomy by creating and maintaining a learning environment where they can develop their language and learning skills to become autonomous learners (Aslan, 2016). This means that learners take responsibility for their learning and are directly involved in it.

However, not all learners benefit from such opportunities. While some learners can benefit from a wide range of resources outside the classroom, it is not the case for others. In countries where English is taught as a foreign language, the classroom can be the only context for language input and interaction. Given the limited resources and opportunities in countries where English is taught as a foreign language, such as Morocco, it is crucial to make classrooms reflect real-life language use domains. This situation requires shifting the classroom reality into one that is dynamic and interactive, and students' roles from passive recipients of teachers' knowledge into active participants. The reform of various methods, frameworks, and models reflected a shift from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered one.

The ECRIF framework has gained recognition as an effective instructional model in language education (Kurzweil & Scholl, 2007). Its structured progression from initial exposure to target

language items to the fluent use of such items in meaningful contexts offers a comprehensive approach to language acquisition (Kurzweil & Scholl, 2007; Mezied, 2017; Tosuncuoğlu, 2017). Research has consistently highlighted its benefits in educational settings where learners acquire a second language in immersive environments. However, significantly less attention has been paid to its application in contexts where English is taught in non-native settings, with minimal exposure to authentic language outside the classroom. Recent research has also emphasized that individual differences, such as motivation, out-of-class exposure, and strategic learning, play a crucial role in vocabulary acquisition (Albalawi, 2024). Unlike L2 learners, EFL students typically have limited opportunities to engage with the language beyond formal instruction. As such, an examination of the model's effectiveness in EFL contexts is both timely and necessary. This study aims to contribute to the literature by offering insights for teachers working in multilingual countries such as Morocco where English is taught alongside other languages.

Problem Statement

Various observations were made based on one of the researchers' experiences in teaching English to Moroccan middle school students. In the Moroccan educational system, English is introduced in the public sector in the ninth grade, the last year of middle school. Therefore, most students are learning English for the first time, except for very few students in every class. The students were taught English for approximately three months, with an average of two hours per week per class, prior to the onset of this study. Students primarily depend on classroom instruction, which may be insufficient to improve their language proficiency. Each unit, containing four lessons, usually takes two weeks; hence, the chances of reinforcing the vocabulary and skills related to that unit are minimal. Amid these circumstances, we felt compelled to adapt our classroom instruction and activities to address these issues and maximize students' learning and engagement, thereby meeting the needs of the current era. Our main concern was reducing teacher-talk time, creating opportunities for students' learning that mirror real-life situations, and allowing for the gradual integration of different skills and activities to capture students' attention. As such, we considered implementing the ECRIF framework to examine how much it would help us reach this objective.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to investigate the extent to which ECRIF affects students' learning and involvement. More specifically, it is guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent does ECRIF facilitate students' learning compared to presentation, practice, production (PPP)?
- What are the students' perceptions regarding their experience of learning through ECRIF?

Review of Literature

Conceptualizing ECRIF

In light of the new trends in ELT, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), post-method pedagogy, and constructivist theory, a framework that links the teaching practices and theoretical tenets and principles of each of these areas was necessary. To guide teachers' decision-making in planning productive language skills, Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) introduced the ECRIF framework as a new paradigm in language teaching. ECRIF was developed as an alternative to the PPP framework. Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) state that one of the fundamental issues

he has always encountered with the PPP approach is determining who the actor is. According to him, "Present" usually invites teachers to lecture or do a long presentation.

However, lecturing and long presentations are seen as forms of teaching that hardly focus on individual students' learning (Thornsbury, 2012). Besides, Tanner (2009) emphasized that traditional lecturing relies on passive learning, which may not be as effective as active student-centered learning strategies. Therefore, Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) felt the need to create an alternative framework to put learning at the center and focus on what learners are doing with language as they learn. Therefore, they developed ECRIF, a learning-teaching framework that meets CLT's criteria and requirements in the post-method pedagogy and constructivist theory.

The ECRIF framework, as its name indicates, consists of five stages: *Encounter*, *Clarify*, *Remember*, *Internalize*, and *Fluently Use*. ECRIF is given various descriptions and appellations in the literature to the extent that there is hardly any consensus on whether ECRIF is a method, methodology, approach, or framework. For instance, Lin (2016) described ECRIF as an approach for moving the classroom from teacher-centered lessons to student-centered collaboration. Likewise, Mezied (2017) considered ECRIF an approach that focuses on how learners learn. Eker (2020) envisioned the ECRIF stages as a taxonomy of the cognitive process dimensions. According to this view, learners begin to learn from the most superficial level, the level of knowledge, and develop in a step-by-step fashion to reach the level of interpreting and evaluating the data. Tosuncuoğlu (2017) described it as a framework for looking at how students learn a language to design lessons and courses accordingly. Joining this latter view, we refer to ECRIF as a framework in this article simply because it differs from the other ELT approaches and cannot be a method in its own right.

ECRIF is a sequence of stages and steps that serve better if understood as a framework for planning lessons or course materials. It is not a prescriptive framework. It is, instead, a dynamic, flexible, and coherent framework for lesson planning and material design. It raises teachers' awareness of the importance of their students' learning experiences and needs in an organized and contextualized way. Further, it helps teachers design and sequence scaffolding practice activities, from controlled, semi-controlled, to free activities in such a way that they will lead to the fluent use of the target language or skills for "genuine communication" (Richards, 2006). Through ECRIF, teachers are presenters, designers, organizers, guides, scaffolders, discussion leaders, resource providers, needs analysts, and facilitators to lead students along the sequence of different learning activities (ECRIF stages) to achieve the objective(s) of the lesson. These stages follow a logical sequence from simple to complex or easy to difficult, forming an inductive approach to language teaching.

ECRIF Stages

The ECRIF framework is designed to help learners communicate fluently and meaningfully across different cultures and contexts. As a learner-centered model, it places a strong emphasis on the learning process rather than solely on teaching (Kurzweil & Scholl, 2007). While the framework acknowledges the importance of both teaching and learning, it prioritizes the latter. The ECRIF stages can be structured into a lesson plan, guiding teachers in designing activities, instructions, tasks, and feedback strategies that engage and motivate students. Notably, each stage in the framework reflects what students do rather than what teachers do, reinforcing its focus on active learning and learner autonomy.

In the first stage of the learning process—the *Encounter* stage—students are introduced to the target information for the first time, hence the name *Encounter*. At this point, the teacher presents new language items and content while taking students' background knowledge into

account. Activating this prior knowledge helps students connect with the new material being introduced (Mezied, 2017). During this stage, teachers focus on engaging learners by prompting them to recognize and explore the target language elements embedded in the activity. Students begin to identify the specific language skill or component being introduced—whether it be grammar, vocabulary, speaking, or another aspect—and gain an initial understanding of how it functions (Tosuncuoğlu, 2017).

After encountering the target language items, students move on to the *Clarify* stage, where they work to understand their meaning, form, pronunciation, spelling, and usage (Tirira, 2013). This stage is largely internal and unobservable, as much of the learning happens in the students' minds. Rather than passively receiving information, learners take an active role in clarifying the target language or skill on their own. At this stage, students engage in processing and constructing knowledge independently. Their goal is to develop a clear understanding of the new language item. For instance, when learning vocabulary, they focus on aspects such as meaning, pronunciation, part of speech, and collocations. Meanwhile, teachers facilitate this process by guiding learners in clarifying the language and assessing their comprehension through comprehension-checking questions (CCQs).

When students understand new information, they have to convey it from short-term to long-term memory (Tosuncuoğlu, 2017). At this stage, *Remember*, students repeat, drill, and refer back to support materials in order to remember the language item (Mezied, 2017). In other words, this stage involves activities and strategies that enable students to recall the new language structure or item, allowing them to retrieve it later and use it in their production.

The *Internalize* stage differs from the previous stages as it involves freer, less controlled practice of the new language item without external support. Having transferred the knowledge to long-term memory, students now begin to apply it in semi-controlled activities. At this stage, teachers create opportunities for learners to use the target language and skills in interactive, real-life contexts while maintaining a degree of structure. Although students take the lead in practicing, teachers may still provide subtle, indirect hints to encourage self-correction and refinement (Tirira, 2013). This process helps learners build confidence and prepares them for fluent and natural language use.

Fluency is the ultimate goal of second or foreign language learning and, accordingly, represents the final stage of the ECRIF framework. While fluency can be fostered throughout all stages of ECRIF, it is at this stage that students are expected to communicate naturally and spontaneously, having successfully stored the target language in long-term memory. At this point, learners integrate newly acquired language items and structures with their existing knowledge, using them fluidly in real-life or simulated interactions (Mezied, 2017). To demonstrate language proficiency, students engage in communicative and interactive tasks without external support. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful opportunities for learners to reach this stage (Tirira, 2013). Additionally, students' ability—or inability—to complete tasks at this stage serves as a key indicator of whether they can effectively use the target language in authentic contexts (Brawn, 2009, p. 60).

Overall, the ECRIF stages are well designed for planning lessons that emphasize fluency over accuracy and learning over teaching. Starting from the encounter stage, the students are expected to take part in the lesson freely, discuss the ideas and examples selected by the teacher and simultaneously get familiar with the new material. After that, they will remember and learn that information in subsequent stages until they develop the ability to use that knowledge effectively while communicating. This supports our argument that ECRIF is different from the traditional ELT frameworks, which tend to be teacher-centered, leaving little room for students to interact and practice the target language.

ECRIF in Practice

The ECRIF framework offers flexibility in selecting activities, allowing teachers to adapt their lessons to students' needs, interests, and learning styles, as well as their own teaching preferences. Rather than prescribing specific methods, ECRIF provides a structured yet adaptable approach that enables gradual achievement of lesson objectives. Notably, while ECRIF was originally designed for teaching speaking, it is highly versatile and can be applied to nearly all language skills and components, including grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and functions (Caiza Aucapiña et al., 2023). Moreover, it supports an integrated approach, facilitating a smooth transition between different skills within a single lesson.

By aligning with the communicative approach and fostering communicative competence, ECRIF encourages contextualized learning. For instance, grammar lessons are introduced in meaningful contexts, with students actively using new structures in simulated real-world interactions. A reading passage containing the target structure might be introduced in the "Encounter" stage, preceded by images to spark interest, a discussion prompt, or a vocabulary recognition task, and followed by comprehension questions to reinforce understanding. Another strategy to teach receptive skills through ECRIF as suggested by one of its designers is as follows:

One way of using ECRIF with reading or listening is to focus on aspects of the language or genre in the post-reading stage. For example, students may have just read a story or newspaper article. After focusing on the main ideas and details of the text through reading/listening tasks, I often do noticing tasks that focus on specific vocabulary, grammar, or genre features. A straightforward routine I do is to have students go back to the reading and find 4–5 words that they'd like to know more about. In this way, they 'encounter' words of their own choosing. Then, they can check with a partner or with the class to clarify. We can then do some other activities to remember/internalize the words while also reviewing the content of the text. (Personal communication with Kurzweil, 2022).

Additionally, in the final stage—*fluently use*—teachers can choose between speaking or writing activities based on their lesson objectives. For instance, after introducing vocabulary related to food, a teacher might opt for a speaking activity where students express their likes and dislikes through a survey or dialogue. Alternatively, they could assign a writing task, such as writing a letter or paragraph describing their eating habits or favorite foods.

When considering the different stages, it is crucial to remember that they describe a flexible process, not a linear one. As Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) described the dynamic process of an ECRIF lesson, a student may be fluently using language in a conversation, which then leads another to encounter an unknown word. The student might then need to clarify the meaning of that word and try to remember it. During the process, they might forget it and need to clarify it again. Similarly, the student might be in the process of internalizing the word, then they realized they just encountered the pronunciation or collocation of a word that leads them to clarify more about it. As such, it is recommended that teachers make use of learning activities that allow for learning, unlearning and relearning of the target language. Table 1 below outlines a list of activities that can be used in each stage.

Table 1. Sample activities according to the stages of ECRIF

Stage	Encounter	Clarify	Remember	Internalize	Fluently use
Sample Activities	✓ Storytelling, video or audio recordings. ✓ Pictures ✓ Reading scripts and dialogues ✓ Categorizing, sorting, predicting ✓ Brainstorming.	✓ CCQs ✓ Eliciting ✓ Definitions ✓ Examples ✓ Visual aids ✓ Realia.	✓ Drilling ✓ Gap fill or cloze ✓ Information gap ✓ Scrambled words, sentences ✓ Guessing games ✓ Matching	✓ Guessing games ✓ Information gaps ✓ Storytelling ✓ Role play ✓ Short answers	✓ Surveys ✓ Debates ✓ Role play ✓ Information gap ✓ Discussions ✓ Writing.

Adapted From: “ECRIF: Seeing Learning” by Kurzweil, J. and Scholl, M, no date (<https://www.ecrif.com>)

ECRIF Vs PPP

When it comes to language teaching, numerous methods and models have been proposed to enhance both teaching and learning. While they all aim to develop the same fundamental language skills and components, each framework is grounded in its own theoretical and methodological principles. Consequently, the choice of a particular framework reflects a specific perspective on the teaching-learning process, shaping how lessons are planned, the types of activities and materials used, and the roles assigned to both teachers and students. In other words, each model offers a distinct vision of language education, influencing instructional strategies, learner engagement, and expected learning outcomes. Therefore, selecting a specific model or framework requires a clear understanding of its principles, as well as how it compares to and differs from other frameworks or models.

One way of evaluating the merits of a framework or model is by comparing it to another. To do so with ECRIF, we compare it against one of the most widely known and used lesson planning frameworks in ELT for years, that of PPP. Grounded on traditional views of language and learning, the PPP model has been regarded as a significant procedure in ELT methodology since the 1960s, although it was not back then referred to as PPP (Harmer, 2007). Despite being used for such a long time, Evans (1999, p. 1) stated that “PPP has evolved over the years, cherry picking the more attractive elements of other approaches, and incorporating them into its basic format”.

PPP, also referred to as PPU (Presentation, Practice, and Production/Use), represents a widely used traditional framework in language teaching, particularly for grammar instruction. The model is structured around three sequential stages: first, the teacher *presents* the target language item, either within a contextualized situation or in isolation; second, learners *practice* the item through controlled, accuracy-focused activities—such as choral repetition, individual drilling, and other reproduction techniques; and finally, learners move to the *production* (or use) phase, which emphasizes communicative and meaning-focused application of the language. In this final stage, students are encouraged to generate original sentences using the newly acquired structure (Harmer, 2001, 2007). The PPP model, in its essence, reflects a linear view of language learning, where language is introduced, practiced, and then expected to be actively used in communication.

Despite its widespread use among teachers and educators, the PPP model is not without its criticisms. One of the most significant concerns lies in its foundation on traditional, teacher-centered pedagogy (Harmer, 2007). Within this framework, the teacher assumes the role of the primary knowledge provider—delivering explanations related to meaning, pronunciation, grammar, and usage—while learners are expected to immediately replicate the target language through guided practice and then apply it in highly controlled contexts. This approach offers limited learner autonomy, often restricting opportunities for creative language use (Skehan, 1996). In contrast to more learner-centered models like *ECRIF*, the PPP stages tend to minimize students' active engagement in constructing their own understanding, thereby reducing their agency in the learning process.

The PPP framework is often viewed more as a way of describing the teaching process rather than the learning process, making it inherently prescriptive. It emphasizes the memorization of correct language forms for immediate practice, prioritizing accuracy over fluency. As such, it tends to foster mechanical language use rather than communicative competence. Harmer (2007) summarizes several key criticisms of the PPP model. First, it is built upon discrete language items, a point also raised by Scrivener (1994) and Woodward (1993), which can lead to a fragmented understanding of language. Second, it places a disproportionate emphasis on accuracy at the expense of fluency (Willis, 1993). Third, the model lacks flexibility, offering little opportunity for recycling or recursive movement between stages (Scrivener, 1994). Fourth, PPP aligns more naturally with a structural syllabus, whereas a skill-based syllabus can be effectively utilized in units with a basic pre-, while-, and post- sequence (Hedge, 2000). Fifth, while PPP may be effective for beginner learners, it becomes less appropriate at advanced levels, where learners need to compare and manipulate multiple grammatical forms simultaneously. Finally, critics argue that PPP neglects key principles of second language acquisition, including: a- the learner's motivation or readiness to learn, b- the delayed effect of instruction (i.e., learning may not be immediate), and c- the importance of the silent period, during which learners process input before producing output.

The PPP model is fundamentally a teacher-centered approach, where instructional control and decision-making are primarily in the hands of the teacher. In contrast, the *ECRIF* framework prompts teachers to shift their perspective, enabling them to view the learning process from the student's point of view. Within this model, learners are seen as active participants, constructing knowledge through meaningful engagement. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of the teacher's role in scaffolding learning and facilitating development within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development—"the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (p. 176). Moreover, *ECRIF* is fluency-oriented and designed to promote continuous student involvement across its stages. Each phase invites learners to explore, process, and apply language in a meaningful way, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and greater learner autonomy.

Indeed, *ECRIF* stands out as a learner-centered framework that prioritizes how learners acquire language, in contrast to traditional models like PPP, which focus on how teachers deliver instruction. This shift in focus has proven influential in deepening teachers' understanding of the language learning process from the learner's perspective (Al-Mobayed, 2016). *ECRIF* offers a structured yet flexible sequence of stages that guide teachers in facilitating optimal learning outcomes. Rather than promoting passive, teacher-led instruction, *ECRIF* emphasizes active, collaborative learning and the co-construction of knowledge. It encourages learners to engage meaningfully with the content and with each other, fostering deeper comprehension and long-term retention.

ECRIF is not limited to lesson planning alone; it is a versatile framework that can be applied across various teaching contexts and for multiple purposes. Beyond structuring classroom activities and guiding instructional sequences, ECRIF serves as a valuable tool for reflective teaching, enabling educators to critically engage with both their instructional choices and student learning outcomes. In terms of reflection for action, ECRIF can be employed during the planning phase to help teachers select or adapt materials—including modifying textbook content—to better align with students' needs. It also facilitates reflection in action, where teachers dynamically assess student progress in real time, making informed instructional decisions as they transition through the ECRIF stages. Finally, ECRIF supports reflection on action, encouraging teachers to analyze their lessons after delivery, evaluate what worked or didn't, and implement necessary adjustments or targeted feedback in subsequent sessions. This cyclical reflection process ensures that instruction remains responsive and that student learning is continuously maximized.

In summary, all language teaching models have their own strengths and limitations, and their effectiveness largely depends on the teaching context and learning objectives. While PPP remains one of the most widely used frameworks, it is particularly effective when the primary instructional focus is on accuracy. However, its linear and rigid structure poses significant constraints: it lacks flexibility for recycling between stages, and it offers limited scope for integrating diverse language skills and components within a single lesson. These structural limitations have been consistently highlighted in the literature, prompting educators to explore more learner-centered and adaptable alternatives that better support fluency, engagement, and long-term retention.

Empirical Studies

Theoretical arguments supporting or opposing either of these models remain speculative in the absence of empirical validation. To substantiate these claims, we reviewed relevant empirical studies.

In this regard, Tirira (2013) explored students' perceptions of implementing the ECRIF framework through a mixed-method descriptive case study. The study involved 21 first-year students from various academic disciplines enrolled at the Academic Language Center of Universidad Técnica del Norte in Ibarra, Ecuador. A questionnaire was developed for data collection, followed by interviews to gain deeper insights. The findings indicated predominantly positive perceptions toward the implementation of ECRIF. Participants reported increased motivation and satisfaction, which they attributed to notable improvements in their language learning. These perceptions were linked to several aspects of the framework, including the scaffolding process, content relevance, use of visual aids, and interactive learning activities. Additionally, the study emphasized the feasibility of employing ECRIF as a guiding framework due to its flexible, non-prescriptive nature. Overall, the researcher identified ECRIF as an effective and learner-centred approach that facilitates language acquisition.

Mezied (2017) conducted an experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of the ECRIF and PPP instructional frameworks in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and retention among fifth-grade students. The study involved a sample of 143 students, who were divided into three groups. The first experimental group ($n = 41$) was taught using the ECRIF framework, while the second experimental group ($n = 42$) received instruction based on the PPP framework. A control group ($n = 42$) was taught using traditional instructional methods. To collect data, the researchers employed pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed vocabulary tests, in addition to a content analysis card. The findings revealed statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the mean scores for vocabulary achievement between the two experimental groups in both the post-test

and delayed test, with the ECRIF group outperforming the PPP group. Mezied attributed this superior performance to the use of the ECRIF instructional strategy. Based on these results, the study recommended the integration of the ECRIF framework into English language instruction to enhance vocabulary learning and long-term retention among learners of English as a foreign language. Furthermore, it suggested extending the ECRIF and PPP frameworks to teach other English language skills and sub-skills to explore their broader pedagogical potential.

In a related study, Tamrabet (2018) examined the role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in foreign language classrooms, specifically investigating the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework in enhancing learners' ICC. This quasi-experimental study employed a pre-test-posttest design to assess the impact of ECRIF on students' intercultural communication skills. The sample consisted of two randomly selected second-year classes at L'arbi Ben M'hidi University, totaling 60 students out of a cohort of 264. The experimental group received instruction through the ECRIF model during the oral communication module across eight sessions over a period of two months. In contrast, the control group was taught the same content using a traditional lecture-based approach, without integrating ECRIF stages. The findings indicated statistically significant differences in performance between the two groups, with the experimental group demonstrating notably higher gains in intercultural communicative competence. Consequently, the study affirmed that incorporating the ECRIF model into instructional practice can effectively enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education. In a broader perspective, Pradheepa, Gurusamy, and Pushpanathan (2025) conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating that language games are effective in fostering vocabulary acquisition, further supporting learner-centered approaches.

Moreover, Dalkıran and Semerci (2020) investigated the impact of the ECRIF framework on academic achievement in foreign language education. The study was conducted with a sample of 56 fourth-grade primary school students during the 2018–2019 academic year. A pretest-posttest control group design was employed over a five-week instructional period to evaluate the effects of ECRIF-based teaching. To assess student progress, the researchers utilized an achievement test focusing on listening and speaking skills. The results revealed statistically significant differences in academic performance in favor of the experimental group, indicating that the use of ECRIF had a positive effect on learners' academic achievement. Specifically, analysis of the experimental group's pretest and post-test scores in listening demonstrated a notable improvement, underscoring the efficacy of the ECRIF approach. Dalkıran and Semerci (2020) concluded that the ECRIF framework enhances academic performance by providing learners with targeted support and resources that foster the development of language skills. Furthermore, they argued that ECRIF contributes to improved academic outcomes by addressing students' individual needs, supporting learner engagement, and creating an enjoyable and effective classroom environment.

Caiza Aucapiña et al. (2023) also conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of ECRIF in enhancing students' speaking skills. Following an experimental design, involving 32 students from three basic education grades, they found that ECRIF helps plan and structure activities deemed to enhance students' speaking skills. The framework was also shown to provide meaningful opportunities to practice the language and speak more spontaneously and accurately. They also revealed that the participants in their study demonstrated significant improvement in their speaking abilities because of the gradual shift of ECRIF-based instruction from instructor-controlled activities to spontaneous student-initiated interaction. Based on these findings, they recommend using ECRIF in ELT classrooms to improve students' communicative skills.

Hameed and Moussa (2025) examined the effect of ECRIF on Iraqi students' achievement and cognitive engagement in English language learning. Their study involved 74 students using

a pre-test, post-test, and a questionnaire to collect the data. Their study revealed positive findings regarding the role of the ECRIF framework. The ECRIF stages fostered a more focused, ordered, and engaging learning process among the participants. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between students' academic achievement and cognitive involvement. The hands-on practice activities motivated the students to engage deeply and cognitively with the tasks and apply newly acquired skills in real-life situations. The stages allowed students to learn and transfer their language skills in authentic situations.

In a nutshell, the previous studies cited in this section have acknowledged the positive impact of the ECRIF framework on various language skills, cognitive engagement and communicative competence. While research in this regard has been conducted in various contexts, studies investigating the use of ECRIF in the Moroccan context are scarce. Indeed, the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework in Moroccan EFL classrooms has not been explored. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how ECRIF-based instruction influences grammar learning outcomes and engagement among Moroccan middle school students.

Methodology

The present study investigates the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework in comparison to the PPP model within the Moroccan secondary education context. Specifically, it explores whether ECRIF facilitates improved learning outcomes among ninth-grade students and examines their perceptions of the framework based on their first-hand classroom experiences.

Research Design

To achieve the objectives of this study, a mixed methods design was employed. The primary data is quantitative based on pre- and post-test scores, and the qualitative component obtained through the feedback questionnaire serves to complement and provide deeper insight into the quantitative findings. The feedback questionnaire was administered after the post-test to gather students' perceptions of the instructional method, their engagement, and their perceived progress. By integrating both types of data, this study aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effect of ECRIF-based instruction on ninth-grade students. The rationale for combining both quantitative and qualitative components lies in the belief that test scores alone may not fully capture the impact of this framework. Student perceptions, motivation, and engagement are critical factors that influence learning but are often overlooked in purely quantitative designs. Therefore, the present study opted for a mixed-methods design.

Two intact classes were randomly selected and assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. Both groups received instruction on a grammar topic focused on forming short answers in the simple present tense. The instructional approach differed between the groups: the experimental group was taught using the ECRIF framework, while the control group received instruction based on the PPP model. The independent variable in this study was the implementation of the ECRIF framework within the grammar lesson on simple present short answers. The dependent variable was the students' improvement in achievement, measured by comparing their performance on a pretest and a post-test administered before and after the instructional intervention.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 67 ninth-grade students from a public middle school in Agadir, Morocco. Both the experimental and control groups included male and female students, with ages ranging from 13 to 17 years. The students were assigned to two groups: the experimental group ($n = 34$) and the control group ($m = 33$).

Data Collection

Instruments

Three primary instruments were employed to achieve the objectives of this study: a pretest, a posttest, and a follow-up questionnaire. The pre-test and post-test consisted of items designed to evaluate students' understanding and use of the grammatical form introduced during instruction. They included a combination of multiple-choice questions and sentence completion tasks, both of which required learners to demonstrate recognition and production of the target structure in context. Both tests aimed to measure students' mastery of the target structure. The experimental group received lessons designed around the ECRIF framework, while the control group were taught using PPP. The pre-test was administered prior to instruction, while the post-test was given after the instructional intervention to evaluate progress and learning gains. The same pre- and post-tests were completed by both groups in order to examine the effectiveness of the treatment.

After the treatment, a follow-up questionnaire (Appendix 2) was administered to the experimental group to elicit their perceptions toward the learning experience using the ECRIF framework. The questionnaire begins with demographic items, including gender, age, years of English study, and participation in extracurricular English courses. It then comprises 10 items designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback on various aspects of the instructional session. These items assess students' overall impression of the framework, perceived contribution to learning, and the level of engagement and interest. The inclusion of both Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions allows for a comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences, combining measurable trends with individual insights.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure that the ECRIF-based instruction was reliable and valid, all lesson plans, materials and tests used were carefully reviewed by two experienced ELT experts before the experiment. Their feedback helped modify the content to align with the framework's core principles and the objectives of our study. In addition, the same teacher delivered the lessons to both groups to ensure consistency throughout the implementation.

Concerning the reliability of the pre-test and post-test instruments, several steps were taken. Both tests were developed using a parallel structure; they included items of similar difficulty and format. This aimed to reduce any variation in scores that could arise from differences in test construction rather than actual learning gains. In addition, the test items were reviewed by two experienced language teachers who assessed them for clarity, relevance, and alignment with learning outcomes. Their feedback helped refine ambiguous items. Importantly, both the pre-test and post-test were administered under standardized conditions to all participants to reduce the influence of external factors.

Besides, the questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literature, and informal consultations with EFL teachers to ensure relevance and clarity. Content validity was established through expert review by two experienced language teachers, resulting in minor revisions to item wording and structure.

Procedure

Before the treatment phase, both groups completed a pretest after the test instructions were simplified to ensure clarity and comprehension. The test was conducted under consistent conditions and with identical timing for both groups. The primary purpose of the pretest was to confirm that the two groups were of equivalent proficiency prior to the intervention. To avoid

influencing student behavior during the instructional phase or testing, participants were not informed that they were part of a research study. Following the pretest, the two intact classes were randomly assigned to serve as the experimental and control groups. The class consisting of 34 students was designated as the experimental group, as one of the ECRIF activities—the internalize stage—required an even number of participants to facilitate paired interaction.

The control group was taught following the PPP framework. No modifications were made to the instructional approach for this group, as the teacher had consistently used PPP throughout their English language instruction. During the session, the teacher introduced the grammar rule, illustrated it with examples, and then guided students through practice exercises that, while similar in format, were not identical to those used in the assessment. In contrast, the experimental group was taught using the ECRIF framework. Students were first exposed to the target grammatical structure in a meaningful and contextualized manner. They were then encouraged to infer the rule independently before engaging in a sequence of scaffolded activities designed to reinforce their understanding and facilitate gradual application of the rule in communicative contexts.

Immediately following the treatment, the post-test was administered to both groups to minimize the potential influence of time-related variables on students' performance. The primary objective of the post-test was to assess differences in mean scores between the experimental and control groups. The follow-up questionnaire was then distributed to the experimental group to gain insight into students' perceptions of the ECRIF framework and their learning experience. It was administered in the students' native language (Arabic), and later translated into English to maintain accuracy. Data were collected immediately following the post-test, with students completing the questionnaire in their classroom under the researcher's supervision.

Data Analysis

The participants' scores from the pretest and post-test underwent relevant statistical analysis to examine both intra-group and inter-group differences in performance. Descriptive statistics, including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, were first calculated to summarize the overall performance of students in each group. In addition, independent-samples t-tests were performed to compare the performance of the experimental and control groups on both the pre- and post-tests, and assess the impact of each approach. Subsequently, paired-samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether the observed differences between the pre- and post-test scores within each group were statistically significant.

Moreover, the data obtained from the feedback questionnaire administered to the experimental group were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to identify students' responses to the closed-ended items. This allowed for an overview of students' perceptions toward the ECRIF framework and the instructional session in which it was implemented. Similarly, responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic content analysis. This process involved coding and categorizing students' written responses to identify recurring themes and key insights. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the ECRIF framework on students' outcomes and perceptions. The results of these analyses are presented in the following section.

Results

Research Question 1: To What Extent Does ECRIF Facilitate Students' Learning Compared to PPP?

Prior to the treatment phase, an independent samples t-test was conducted on the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups to determine whether any statistically significant

differences existed between their initial performance levels. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the pretest scores.

As shown in Table 2, which displays the pretest results for both groups, there was no statistically significant difference in performance between the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention. The mean score for the control group was 5.48, while the experimental group had a slightly higher mean of 5.58. The standard deviations were 2.37 and 2.04 for the control and experimental groups, respectively, indicating a relatively similar distribution of scores. These results suggest that both groups were similar in their initial understanding of short answers in the simple present tense. Consequently, it was appropriate to proceed with the instructional intervention and subsequent statistical analyses to evaluate the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework on student learning outcomes.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of pretest scores of the experimental and control group*

Group/score	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Experimental	34	2.00	10.00	5.58	2.04
Control	33	1.00	11.00	5.48	2.37

An independent samples t-test was run to reveal any significant statistical difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pretest. Table 3 below shows that there is no significant statistical difference between the mean scores of both groups ($MD = 0.103$, $t = .191$, $p = 0.217 > 0.05$).

Table 3. *Independent samples test on pretest scores*

T	t-test for Equality of Means			
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	
Pretest	.191	65	.217	.10339

The results thus far indicate that the experimental and control groups had approximately equivalent mean scores on the pretest. However, the findings presented below reveal notable differences between the two groups in the post-test results. Regarding the control group's performance, Table 4 shows that their post-test mean score ($M_{po} = 12.09$) was considerably higher than their pretest mean score ($M_{pre} = 5.48$). Additionally, the minimum score increased to 8 on the post-test, although this remains slightly below the average. Notably, the highest score in the control group rose to 16 in the post-test, reflecting an improvement compared to the pretest. These results suggest that the students' scores improved and that the treatment given to the control group contributed positively to their learning.

Regarding the experimental group, the post-test mean score ($M_{po} = 15.25$) was substantially higher than the pretest mean score ($M_{pre} = 5.58$), indicating significant improvement in student performance following the treatment. The lowest score in the post-test was 10, while the highest score reached 20.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of post-test scores of the experimental and control groups

Group/score	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Experimental	34	10.00	20.00	15.25	2.30
Control	33	8.00	16.00	12.09	1.97

Table 5 presents the results of the second independent samples t-test, which highlights the mean differences between the participants' scores on the post-test. As indicated by the statistical results presented, the mean post-test score of the experimental group ($M_e = 15.25$) was significantly higher than that of the control group ($M_c = 12.09$). The results of the Independent Samples t-test further confirm that the mean difference in improvement between the two groups ($MD = 3.159$) was statistically significant ($t = 6.019$, $df = 65$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$). These findings suggest that the experimental group, taught using the ECRIF framework, achieved significantly greater gains in performance compared to the control group taught through the PPP model.

Table 5. Independent samples test on post-test scores

t-test for equality of means			
T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
6.019	65	.000	3.15909

After analyzing the inter-group differences based on the overall scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test, intra-group comparisons were also conducted to examine score differences within each group. To compare the mean scores of the pretest and post-test for the control group participants, a paired samples t-test was performed. The results, presented in Table 6, indicate that the control group's achievement on the post-test was significantly higher than their performance on the pretest. Specifically, the mean pretest score was $M = 5.48$, while the mean post-test score was $M = 12.09$. Furthermore, the mean difference between the two tests ($MD = -6.60$) was statistically significant ($t = -20.47$, $df = 32$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) (see Table 7).

Table 6. Paired samples statistics of the control group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Pretest scores	33	1.00	11.00	5.48	2.37
Posttest scores	33	8.00	16.00	12.09	1.97

Table 7. Paired samples test of the control group

Paired differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	SD	95% CI of the difference				
		L	U			
−6.60	1.85	−7.26	−5.94	−20.47	32	.000

On the other hand, the results indicate that the experimental group’s achievement on the post-test was substantially higher than their performance on the pretest. As shown in the statistical results in Table 8, the mean pretest score was $M_{pre} = 5.58$, while the mean post-test score increased significantly to $M_{post} = 15.25$. These findings suggest a marked improvement in the experimental group’s performance following the implementation of the ECRIF framework.

Table 8. *Paired samples statistics of the experimental group*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Pretest scores	34	2.00	10.00	5.58	2.04
Posttest scores	34	10.00	20.00	15.25	2.30

Similarly, the results of the paired samples t-test revealed that the mean difference between the pretest and post-test scores (MD = 9.21) was statistically significant ($t = 18.27$, $df = 25$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) (see Table 9).

Table 9. *Paired samples test of the experimental group*

		Paired differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	95% CI of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest - Posttest scores	-9.21	2.56	-10.24	-8.17	-18.27	25	.000

The statistical results of the t-tests comparing the overall pretest and post-test scores of both groups indicate that the control and experimental groups performed at approximately the same level on the pretest. Furthermore, both groups demonstrated substantial progress on the grammar exercises in the post-test relative to their pretest performance. However, notable differences emerged between the two groups, with the experimental group achieving greater gains than the control group in the post-test. As previously reported, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 15.25, while the control group’s mean score was 12.09.

The positive impact of the ECRIF framework on the experimental group’s achievement can be attributed to the structured stages and interactive activities incorporated throughout the instructional session. The opportunities for continuous student interaction likely created an engaging learning environment that encouraged active participation and allowed students to practice using short answers extensively prior to the post-test. Additionally, it is plausible that enabling students to discover the grammatical rule independently, rather than receiving it directly from the teacher, enhanced their understanding and retention of the target structure. To gain further insights into the students’ experiences with the ECRIF approach, a feedback questionnaire was administered following the post-test.

Research Question 2: What are the Students' Perceptions Regarding their Experience of Learning Through ECRIF?

As previously noted, the objective of this article is not only to describe the ECRIF framework and its pedagogical application, but also to investigate its practical effectiveness in the classroom based on students' feedback ($n = 34$). To this end, a questionnaire was administered to collect students' perceptions of the implementation of ECRIF during the treatment phase. The questionnaire comprised 10 items designed to assess how students perceived the ECRIF-based lesson, the activities utilized, and their self-evaluated assessment of the framework's effectiveness in supporting their language learning in general, and their learning during the experimental session in particular.

The first item on the questionnaire aimed to elicit students' general opinions about the ECRIF-based session. As previously noted, the students had been consistently taught using the PPP approach since the beginning of the academic year; therefore, the introduction of ECRIF represented a notable change in the classroom dynamic. All students responded "yes" to this question, indicating overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the session and, by extension, of the ECRIF framework itself. This positive trend was further reflected in their responses to subsequent items.

When asked whether the ECRIF framework contributed to their learning during the session and to their English language learning more broadly, all students reported that it contributed "a lot" to their progress in both areas. Similarly, when questioned about the smoothness of transitions between the different stages of the lesson (Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluently Use) and the activities associated with each stage, all students affirmed that the transitions were seamless and that the activities effectively supported their learning.

Regarding their perceptions of the activities themselves, the majority of students ($n = 31$) described the activities as "very interesting," while the remaining three students rated them as "somewhat interesting." These findings suggest overall engagement and satisfaction with the ECRIF-based instructional approach.

This positive perception can be attributed to the noticeable difference students experienced between the activities used in this session and those typically employed in their regular classes. In this ECRIF-based session, there was a greater emphasis on speaking activities and on encouraging interaction among students. This distinction was consistently reflected in students' explanations of why they appreciated the activities. From their responses, three main themes emerged: (1) the use of varied materials and visual aids, (2) a high level of interaction and participation in class, and (3) personalization of the learning experience.

Concerning the first theme, students noted that the use of pictures and situational contexts made it easier to grasp and practice the target grammatical structure. One student commented, *"I did not feel like I was learning or practicing grammar; I felt as if we were playing a game, and I liked that."* As for the second theme, students reported enjoying the opportunity to interact with their peers, particularly during the final two activities. As for the second theme, students tend to feel reluctant to participate in classroom activities due to the fear of being placed in the spotlight, especially at beginner levels where feelings of shyness and anxiety are common. In this context, one student stated, *"I liked the activities in this session because I practiced everything with my friend, and I was not worried about making mistakes in front of her."*

Regarding the third theme, personalization of the lesson, the target structure—short answers—was integrated with expressions of likes and dislikes related to food items. This approach aimed to stimulate students' interest and connect the grammar content to their background knowledge. As a result, students reported enjoying the lesson and feeling that they were actively engaged from beginning to end. One student's reflection illustrates this sentiment clearly: *"This*

session helped me know about my friends' likes and dislikes; everybody shared what they like and dislike in a fun way." Overall, students' perceptions regarding the contribution of the ECRIF framework to their learning are encapsulated in the following comment: *"The method used today contributed a lot to my learning and participation in the session. We analyzed the rule... we practiced it with our teacher, we practiced with our friends, and we used it in different activities. The whole session was fun and the lesson was easy to learn."* These responses highlight the effectiveness of integrating meaningful, personalized activities within the ECRIF framework to enhance both engagement and learning outcomes.

These generally favorable perceptions of the ECRIF framework were further reflected in students' selection of adjectives used to describe their learning experience during the session. When asked to describe the ECRIF-based session in comparison to previous lessons, the majority of students selected adjectives such as "enjoyable," "fun," "interesting," and "easy." All students selected positive adjectives, thereby reflecting their overall favorable perceptions of the ECRIF framework. Importantly, these results suggest that ECRIF is likely to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes by fostering a positive and supportive learning environment. When asked whether they felt equipped with the necessary language skills to successfully complete the survey activity in the final "Fluently Use" stage of the session, 13 students selected the "Generally so" option, while 12 students chose "Yes." Furthermore, the teacher's observations during this activity revealed that all students remained actively engaged and consistently used English while interacting with their peers and moving around the classroom to complete the survey task.

The remaining items in the questionnaire invited students to share their general perceptions of learning through the ECRIF framework during this session and to comment on any difficulties they encountered. Regarding what they liked most about the session, the majority of participants expressed a preference for the final two activities—*Internalize* and *Fluently Use*. Sample student responses included: *"I learned (yes, I do/No, I don't) and how I can use them when people ask me,"* and *"We did many activities in this session; we played a game about some vocabulary we had seen before, we read a dialogue, we learned grammar, and we did a lot of speaking. It was not boring."* Another student remarked, *"I wish we could have more activities like today."* These responses illustrate that students not only enjoyed the activities and the structure provided by the ECRIF stages but also demonstrated evidence of meaningful learning. They highlighted increased opportunities for interaction, both in pairs and with the whole class, which contributed to a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. Overall, students' comments reflected a strongly positive perception of the implementation of the ECRIF framework.

However, student interaction during the session also revealed one of the inherent challenges of classroom dynamics: noise. In their comments regarding the problems encountered during the session, several students identified noise as a concern. One student remarked, *"I liked the method used in this session and the activities. But, I did not like the noise caused in class when we were all asking each other at the same time."* Although such noise could be considered a sign of active and healthy engagement, it appears that students were not accustomed to this level of interaction, which may have affected their concentration and overall performance. This observation raises important considerations about the practicality and effectiveness of implementing the ECRIF framework, particularly in larger classroom settings where managing noise and maintaining focus can be more challenging.

Overall, the results obtained from the statistical analyses of students' pretest and post-test scores demonstrated that the ECRIF framework had a significant positive impact on the achievement of the students in the experimental group by the end of the study. While both instructional

methods resulted in learning gains, the improvement observed in the control group was modest compared to the substantial progress made by the experimental group. Furthermore, the findings from the feedback questionnaire revealed that students held overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the ECRIF approach.

Based on these results, we can align with the arguments presented in the existing literature and assert that the implementation of ECRIF contributed to a meaningful improvement in students' performance by facilitating their learning and enhancing their classroom engagement. Thus, even within the scope of a single instructional session, the experiment provided compelling evidence that the ECRIF framework is likely to enhance students' learning outcomes in the English language classroom.

Discussion

Concerning the first research question, the results of this study revealed that ECRIF significantly facilitated students' learning of short answers in the simple present tense compared to the traditional PPP framework. Both the control and experimental groups began at a statistically similar level, as confirmed by the non-significant difference in their pretest scores. However, while both groups showed significant improvement from pre-test to the post-test, the experimental group taught through ECRIF achieved substantially greater gains. Specifically, the experimental group outperformed in the post-test. Their enhanced performance can be attributed to the structured and interactive nature of ECRIF lesson, which allowed students to encounter, clarify, and internalize the grammatical structure through meaningful use rather than passive reception. The interactive tasks and inductive rule discovery may have helped learners engage more deeply with the material, promoting both understanding and long-term retention. Unlike PPP, which tends to follow a teacher-led presentation model, ECRIF encourages active learner participation, repeated use of the target language in various contexts, and opportunities for self-correction and fluency building.

In response to the second question, the students had positive perceptions about the ECRIF-based instruction. This suggests that the framework not only supports language learning but also reshapes the learner's classroom experience in meaningful ways. The ECRIF stages create learning conditions that offer learners multiple opportunities to experiment with language, receive feedback, and refine their understanding through authentic tasks. The student responses indicate that the inductive and personalized nature of ECRIF activities helped reduce anxiety and increased willingness to participate, which in turn improve language acquisition. Importantly, students seemed to appreciate not only the learning outcomes but the process of learning itself, suggesting a shift in classroom culture from teacher-led explanation to student-centered discovery and interaction. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings provide valuable insight into how grammar instruction can be made more effective by integrating interaction, relevance, and staged cognitive support. Students' enthusiasm for the visual and contextualized materials, as well as their appreciation for pair and group work, suggests that ECRIF succeeded in addressing diverse learning preferences and reducing the affective filter commonly experienced in grammar-focused lessons.

The results of this study align with earlier findings from the reviewed literature regarding the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework, despite differences in the specific objectives and the duration of the treatment. They are consistent with those of Tirira (2013), who reported positive student perceptions of ECRIF as it led to increased motivation and observed learning outcomes. While Tirira's study was conducted in a university setting with older students in Ecuador, our results demonstrate similar affective benefits among Moroccan middle school students. This reinforces the theoretical premises suggesting that the ECRIF framework can

effectively be used with different age groups and learning contexts. They also align with Mezied (2017) and Dalkıran and Semerci (2020). Both studies reported that ECRIF-based instruction led to significantly greater learning outcomes compared to traditional methods, either in terms of vocabulary retention or oral communication skills. Similarly, our data showed that students in the experimental group outperformed their peers taught using PPP.

Our study also corroborates Caiza Aucapiña et al. (2023), who found that ECRIF's structured stages enabled students to move from controlled practice to spontaneous use of language. Although their study focused on speaking skills, our results suggest a similar trajectory in grammar instruction; students progressed from rule understanding to independent application during classroom activities.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework. While the previous studies evaluated the outcomes of the ECRIF framework over multiple sessions, our study demonstrates that even a single ECRIF-based lesson can produce significant changes in students' outcomes and perceptions. These findings have important implications for educators working under curriculum constraints or in systems where large-scale instructional reform is challenging. The findings of this study suggest that incremental adoption of ECRIF principles can have a powerful and meaningful impact.

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential impact of using the ECRIF framework on students' involvement and learning in an EFL context. Based on the preliminary investigation conducted, the results indicated a significant difference in performance between the experimental and control groups. The implementation of ECRIF and PPP for teaching a grammar lesson—specifically short answers in the simple present tense—provided valuable insights into the potential effectiveness of ECRIF for teaching a range of language skills. The results of the t-tests conducted on students' pretest and post-test scores revealed that the ECRIF framework significantly enhanced students' performance in the grammar test. Furthermore, students expressed high levels of satisfaction and positive perceptions toward the ECRIF approach, as reflected in their responses to the feedback questionnaire. Overall, the findings demonstrated that the ECRIF activities used during the lesson not only improved students' learning outcomes but also maximized their engagement and participation throughout the session.

Despite its limitations, the present study highlights important implications that can benefit both language learners and practitioners. In light of the study's findings and the arguments presented in the existing literature, the use of the ECRIF framework in the teaching and learning process appears to encourage greater student engagement and active participation throughout instructional sessions. ECRIF helps establish a safe, dynamic, and enjoyable learning environment, which is fundamental for effective language learning. These observations align with recent findings that combining structured frameworks like ECRIF with strategies such as Tick8 or language games can maximize vocabulary retention while maintaining learner engagement (Jahedizadeh et al., 2025; Pradheepa, Gurusamy, & Pushpanathan, 2025). Furthermore, accounting for individual learner variability remains essential to tailor instruction effectively (Albalawi, 2024).

Rooted in a learner-centered approach, ECRIF promotes increased interaction among students, reducing the traditional emphasis on teacher-centered instruction. Furthermore, by building on students' prior knowledge, ECRIF not only facilitates the recycling of previously learned vocabulary and content but also fosters meaningful connections between classroom learning and students' real-life experiences. It is therefore recommended that teachers, syllabus designers, and decision-makers consider integrating the ECRIF stages into material

development and lesson planning in order to enhance student involvement and improve learning outcomes.

It is important to reiterate that the aim of this study was not to generalize the findings or to produce definitive evidence regarding the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework. Rather, the study sought to provide a succinct description of ECRIF, including its theoretical background, its various stages, the types of activities suitable for each stage, and a sample lesson plan (Appendix 1). This sample lesson was implemented and evaluated based on students' performance scores and their responses to the feedback questionnaire. It is hoped that this article offers a comprehensive overview of the ECRIF framework, bridging both its theoretical foundations and practical classroom application. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of ECRIF in EFL classrooms, particularly in teaching a broader range of language skills and components.

While the ECRIF framework is recognized in previous theoretical and empirical research as effective, this study contributes to the ongoing literature by demonstrating its practical applicability and pedagogical value in the Moroccan EFL context. The findings of this study highlight that even within a one session intervention, ECRIF can lead to great educational outcomes. This serves to reiterate that ECRIF shows promise in transforming traditional, teacher-centered classrooms into more interactive, learner-focused environments, specifically in contexts where traditional methods still dominate.

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Appendix 1: ECRIF Lesson Plan

Teacher: Ms. Hanane Aqadoh

Length of lesson: 55 min

Level: 9th grade

Teaching action points

- Encourage interaction between teacher and students, and among students.
- Encourage more speaking than note taking in the F stage.
- Make the lesson communicative rather than just taking notes of the uses of the grammatical item we will be dealing with.

What are you teaching? Language points: short answers in simple present

- Do + I \ you \ we \ they + verb? Does+ She \ He \ She + verb+ verb?
- Yes, subject+ do/does. No, subject+ don't/doesn't.

Language skills – circle the primary skill you will teach and underline other skills students will use to help them learn:

Speaking Listening Reading Writing Grammar Lexis Pronunciation

Objectives: Be specific and describe *observable student behaviors*, which you will be able to see in class.

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to **use the** interrogative form of verbs+ short answers in simple present to ask & answer questions about their likes and dislikes in a survey.

English for Global Communication: State specifically how what students are learning today may help them effectively use English in “real life”

- Students are likely to encounter such a situation in real life in which they will need to express themselves and respond to questions about their eating preferences; what they like and what they don't.

Preliminary considerations:

What vocabulary/grammar/information/skills do your students already know in relation to today's lesson

- Vocabulary related to food and drink.
- Affirmative, negative & interrogative forms of verbs in simple present

Time	Stage/ Purpose	Procedure/Steps	Interaction	Materials needed									
5 min	Warm-up	• Vocabulary guessing game. • After ss guess each food item, T asks ss if they like it.	T → Ss	Pictures									
10 min	Encounter	• Ss read a short dialogue between Rim & Sara about their favourite meals to encounter the form (the latter is highlighted). • Ss read the dialogue and answer comprehension questions: 1. What’s Sara’s favourite meal? 2. What does she have for it? 3. Does she make it? • Ss try to use the target form while answering these questions. (Yes, she does/ no, she doesn’t)	T → Ss Ss → T	Laptop White board									
5 min	Clarify	• Ss ask each other (pairs) the same questions & try to use the structure. • T draws ss attention to the target structure. • T elicits the meaning & use from ss. • We use “do you (like).....? To ask a question (interrogative) • To answer, we say (yes or no). yes + do/ does, No+ does/ doesn’t • T simplifies this rule by eliciting from ss and drawing this chart. <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>Positive answers ✓</td><td>Negative answers ×</td></tr><tr><td>Do I/ you/ we/they like?</td><td>Yes, I/ you/we/ they do</td><td>No, I/ you/we/ they don’t</td></tr><tr><td>Does he/she/ it like?</td><td>Yes, he/ she/it does</td><td>No, he/ she/it doesn’t</td></tr></table> T gives other examples of the target structure and asks the students to give their own examples.		Positive answers ✓	Negative answers ×	Do I/ you/ we/they like?	Yes, I/ you/we/ they do	No, I/ you/we/ they don’t	Does he/she/ it like?	Yes, he/ she/it does	No, he/ she/it doesn’t	T → Ss Ss → T T → Ss Ss → T	Board
	Positive answers ✓	Negative answers ×											
Do I/ you/ we/they like?	Yes, I/ you/we/ they do	No, I/ you/we/ they don’t											
Does he/she/ it like?	Yes, he/ she/it does	No, he/ she/it doesn’t											

(Continued)

(Continued)

Time	Stage/ Purpose	Procedure/Steps	Interaction	Materials needed
10 min	Remember	Activity 1: • Ss are shown the pictures of food items. They have to answer using the target form. Ex: Do you like pizza? Yes, I do. Do you like fish? No, I don't Activity 2: • Ss complete questions with do or does, then provide short answers (positive or negative) ✓ Do you play football? Yes, ✓ your friend study here? No, → Whole class correction & explanation of the rule if needed.	T → Ss Ss → T Ss → Ss	pictures Handout
10 min	Internalize	Activity 3: • In pairs, ss ask each other questions: • SS use Yes, I do/ No, I don't while responding Activity 4: • Find your partner: Ss are given sticker notes/cards containing food items. • There is one pair of each card; therefore ss are not allowed to show their card to anyone else. Ss must find a partner who has the same card as them without showing their card. • To do this, ss walk around and ask each other 'Do you like...?' and answer 'Yes, I do. / No, I don't. • Once a pair of ss found their partner, they go to the teacher and then show their cards to the teacher.	T → Ss Ss → Ss	Cards/ Sticker notes

(Continued)

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Time	Stage/ Purpose	Procedure/Steps	Interaction	Materials needed
15 min	Fluently use	• Ss mingle around the class and ask each other about their likes and dislikes. T models with a ss & monitors. → Ss report their findings to the whole class	Ss → T Ss → Ss	Survey worksheets

Appendix 2: Feedback Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims to explore your perceptions and opinions about your learning experience using ECRIF, a new framework of language teaching. Be assured that the information you provide us with will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes solely. Thank you very much in advance for your time and cooperation.

Demographic information:

Gender: Age:

Is this your first year studying English? Yes ☐ No ☐ , If No, mention number of years:

Do you take extracurricular English courses? Yes ☐ No ☐

1. Did you like the method used by the teacher in this session?
Yes ☐ No ☐ not sure ☐
2. Do you think the method used in this session contributes/ can contribute to your learning of English?
A lot ☐ somewhat ☐ not so much ☐ not at all ☐
3. Do you think the activities flow well? Are the transitions between stages smooth?
Yes ☐ No ☐ not sure ☐
4. Do you think the various activities used in each stage help learning? Yes or no and why?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Why:

.....

.....

.....

5. What do you think of the activities used in this session?
Very interesting ☐ somewhat interesting ☐ a little interesting ☐ not interesting ☐
6. Do you have enough language and vocabulary to produce language towards the end of the session?
Yes ☐ generally so ☐ generally not ☐ not at all ☐
7. From your experience in this session, which adjective describes it the most:
Stressful ☐ boring ☐ interesting ☐ fun ☐ relaxing ☐ difficult ☐ easy ☐
enjoyable ☐

Other (specify)

8. Have you experienced any problem learning in this session?
-
-

9. Is there any particular thing you like about this session?

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.....

10. Is there any particular thing you do not like about this session?

.....
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