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THE IMPACT OF EXPLICIT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION ON LEARNERS' GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE AND ACCURACY IN WRITING

A Case Study of First-Year Students of Commerce at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Magister Degree in Applied Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to the loving memory of my **MOTHER**. I hope that this achievement will complete the dream that she had for me all those many years when she chose to instill the value of education in me.

This thesis is also dedicated to my loving and patient **FATHER** who has taken great pains to see me succeed in life.

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ABSTRACT

The present study is conducted to investigate the impact of the presence or absence of explicit grammar instruction on grammatical knowledge and accuracy in writing of first-year students of Commerce at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University at Oum El Bouaghi. Previous research suggests that explicit grammar instruction results in gains in explicit knowledge and its application in discrete-point grammar tasks, but there is little evidence that it results in gains in grammatical accuracy in integrative tasks including written compositions. To fulfill the purpose of this study, a quasi-experimental research design was conducted. Two pre-existing groups of learners were randomly assigned as experimental and control groups. The experimental group received explicit grammar instruction which involved explanation and practice of some rules governing English articles. Subjects in the control group did not receive any explicit presentation of grammatical rules. Instead, they were instructed in the comprehension of texts of Commerce containing definite, indefinite, and zero articles. Participants were pre-tested through a fill-in-the- blank test and a composition test to check their current grammatical knowledge and accuracy level in the use of articles. An attitudinal survey was administered at the same time. After the instruction, a post-test was administered; it was identical to the pre-test. The results of both a paired-samples t-test and an independent-samples t-test indicated that explicit grammar instruction was the most significant factor influencing students' explicit grammar knowledge and grammatical accuracy in writing. In addition, survey results revealed that learners preferred receiving explicit grammar instruction. Finally, it was concluded that it is entirely possible that explicit grammar instruction may have a more powerful effect on explicit grammatical knowledge as well as accuracy in writing in the target language.

List of Abbreviations

ASTP	Army Specialized Training Programme
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CR	Consciousness-raising
EFL	English as a foreign language
EGI	Explicit grammar instruction
ESL	English as a second language
FL	Foreign language
LLK	Learned linguistic knowledge
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NNS	Non-native speaker
PPP	Presentation, practice, production
SL	Second language
SLA	Second language acquisition
SLL	Second language learning
TL	Target language
US	United States
Vs	Versus
<	Less than
<	More than

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INTRODUCTION

Grammar has played a major role in language teaching. Traditionally, the acquisition of grammar was regarded equal to the acquisition of language, so grammar was considered to be the equivalent of language. As Alexander (1990: 379) puts it:

> The fact is, grammar is language whatever else we put on top of it to make it more palatable, it will always continue to be the centre of our attention.

Therefore, the common way to talk about language is in terms of its grammar (Hulstijn, 2002). In fact, a question that has concerned educators and researchers alike is how grammar should be taught to achieve second language proficiency.

The usefulness (or lack thereof) of explicit grammar instruction (EGI) in learners' acquisition of a second (L2) or foreign (FL) language has long been a topic of debate in applied linguistics, and the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction has been questioned both on theoretical and empirical grounds. Some second language acquisition theorists particularly Krashen (1982) --and those agreeing with him-- have argued that explicit grammar instruction is of little or no value in facilitating second language acquisition. From Krashen's perspective, knowledge of grammar only helps learners to monitor their production (time permitting). He and his supporters further argue that extensive exposure to comprehensible input in the target language is the best means of promoting second language acquisition.

Other applied linguists (McLaughlin, 1987; White, 1987; and Ellis, 1990) have long opposed the position held by Krashen and his followers. They have proposed that raising the students' conscious awareness of how to use grammatical resources accurately and appropriately is important for language acquisition in

general and for the development of advanced literacy skills of adult learners in particular.

Empirical research on the effect of EGI on learners' explicit grammatical knowledge and accurate use of grammar structures in writing has also yielded mixed results. Some studies found explicit explanations of grammatical structures to be beneficial to L2 learners' explicit grammatical knowledge (Scott, 1989, 1990; Doughty, 1991; N. Ellis, 1993; Alanen, 1995; DeKeyser, 1995; Robinson, 1996; DeGraaff, 1997 ; DeKeyser, 1997), but the exact relationship between explicit instruction and accuracy in writing remains unclear. In other words, when accuracy is at issue, learners fall far short of native-like proficiency.

As part of that effort, this study will examine the effect of explicit grammar instruction both on learners' explicit grammar knowledge and grammatical accuracy in writing. Clearly there is a wide range of related variables that determine the usefulness of explicit instruction. Questions such as whether the individual learner is interested in grammar, concerned about grammatical accuracy, and willing to pay attention to form, and the nature of the structure in question should enter into our consideration of the role of EGI.

In this study, subjects are 43 first-year students in two intact classes at the Department of Commerce, University of Oum El Bouaghi. The investigation follows a quasi-experimental design that includes control and experimental groups, and the use of a pre-test and a post-test. The experimental group underwent explicit instruction, while the control group was provided with implicit instruction. Specific statistical tests, namely a paired-samples t-test and an independent-samples t-test are used to evaluate the significance of results.

Statement of the Problem

During discussions with EFL teachers at both secondary schools and university, I have always had the impression that most students know the grammatical rules of the structures, and they often apply these rules in grammar tests. However, they usually do not apply the rules when writing. Therefore, teachers are left feeling like failure. This reoccuring problem has led many teachers to doubt the efficacy of explicit explanations of grammatical features.

Interestingly, this study is an attempt to examine whether explicit grammar instruction affects (a) the grammatical knowledge, and (b) the writing accuracy of a group of Algerian EFL learners at the intermediate level of language proficiency in comparison with another group not receiving EGI at the same level of language proficiency.

Research Questions

The following questions have been set for the dissertation to address:

1. Does explicit grammar instruction affect the explicit grammatical knowledge of a group of intermediate Algerian EFL learners in comparison with another group not receiving EGI at the same level of language proficiency?

2. Does explicit grammar instruction affect the writing accuracy of a group of intermediate Algerian EFL learners in comparison with another group not receiving EGI at the same level of language proficiency?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

I hypothesize that the students who receive explicit grammar instruction about the target structures would show a significantly higher improvement in their explicit grammatical knowledge than those who do not receive EGI.

Hypothesis II

I also hypothesize that the students who receive explicit grammar instruction about the target structures would show a significantly higher improvement in their grammatical accuracy in writing than those who do not receive EGI.

Structure of the Dissertation

In order to reach the aims and objectives of our investigation, we divide our research paper into five chapters. The first chapter provides: (a) a consideration of the nature of approach, method, and technique; (b) an analysis of the major approaches and methods of English language teaching; and (c) an examination of the treatment of grammar in each approach or method.

The second chapter sheds light on the importance of explicit grammar instruction in L2 acquisition: (a) it defines grammar; (b) it discusses the interface debate as this debate focuses on the organization of linguistic knowledge, and as such it describes the potential relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge; (c) it looks at the role of formal instruction in second language acquisition; (d) it discusses the role of EGI in the SLA classroom; and (e) it highlights the place of consciousness raising and noticing in second language learning.

The third chapter explores the relationship between explicit grammar instruction and grammatical accuracy in writing: (a) it considers the nature of writing; (b) it looks at the role of writing in second language learning; (c) it shows

a comparison of speech and writing; (d) it provides the major approaches of writing; (e) it highlights the importance of grammatical accuracy in L2 writing; and (f) it discusses the effect of EGI on the accuracy of student writing.

The fourth chapter represents our fieldwork that includes: (a) the design and organization of the quasi-experiment; (b) the design and administration of the questionnaire; (c) a presentation of the findings; and (d) a discussion of the results.

The fifth chapter provides some pedagogical implications for second and foreign language pedagogy, and presents some suggestions for future research in the field of grammar teaching and learning.

Definition of Key Terms

In this section, the key terms are described as used and interpreted in this dissertation.

Accuracy: In this work, the term is used to refer to grammatical accuracy involving interrelationships among syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic correctness.

Explicit instruction and implicit instruction: The terms are used to refer to two types of instruction in which attention to form is either overt or covert. As soon as the instruction involves explanation of rules, or if learners are asked to discover rules, the instruction must be explicit. Conversely, when rules are not discussed and learners are not asked to attend to rules during L2 tasks, the instruction is implicit (DeKeyser, 1995: 380). In this dissertation, the explicit instruction was designed to provide the language learners with conscious knowledge of the targeted grammar structures, while the implicit instruction was designed to expose the language learners to the target structures.

Grammatical knowledge: In this work, grammatical knowledge refers to explicit grammatical knowledge resulting from explicit instruction, and it denotes conscious awareness of the rules of the target language.

Second language (L2) or foreign language (FL): They are generally distinguished by the roles played by the target language in the learner's community (Ellis, 1994: 11-12). A target language is viewed as an L2 when it "plays an institutional and social role in the community", but as a FL in settings in which it "plays no major role in community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom" (*ibid.*). The current dissertation will use these two terms as synonyms.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS

Introduction

The teaching of foreign languages has a long fascinating history, in which a debate on teaching methods has evolved particularly over the last hundred years. In fact, it is the recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency that learners need which leads to changes in language teaching methodology. Therefore, approaches and methods in foreign language teaching can be seen as a historical sequence of revolutions and evolutions, and also as a growing range of teaching options. This chapter will try to analyse the most influential teaching approaches and methods: the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Approach, the Oral-Situational Approach, the Cognitive-Code Approach, and the Communicative Approach. The analysis will try to define the precise role of grammar in each approach or method. But before doing that, it is interesting to distinguish between the terms "approach", "method", and "technique".

1.1 Definition of "Approach", "Method", and "Technique"

In 1963, the American applied linguist Edward Anthony proposed a definition of these three terms.

1.1.1 Approach

An approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. Anthony (1963; in Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 15) defined approach as

> … a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught.

Thus, an approach embodies the theoretical principles governing language learning and language teaching.

1.1.2 Method

A method is a practical plan for teaching (or learning) a second language, based on the theoretical approach selected. It goes into more detail about the syllabus, which in turn consists of learning objectives and learning activities for achieving those objectives. According to Anthony (1963; in Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 15),

> … Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural.

As such, within one approach there can be many methods. A method is implemented in the classroom through what are called techniques.

1.1.3. Technique

A technique refers to a specific activity manifested in the classroom to accomplish a particular learning objective or a set of objectives. According to Anthony (1963; in Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 15),

> … A technique is implementational – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, strategem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.

Anthony's perspective is hierarchical. This suggests a logical sequence leading from theory (approach), in which basic beliefs about language and language learning are considered, to method, in which a practical plan for teaching

(or learning) a language is considered, to the details (technique) where the actual learning activity takes place (Figure 1).

APPROACH

↓

METHOD

↓

TECHNIQUE

Figure1: Anthony's sequence (Johnson and Johnson, 1999: 11)

1.2 Grammar in the Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method dominated foreign language teaching in Europe from 1840's to 1940's. To this day, it remains one of the most popular and favourite models of language teaching in certain parts of the world. In other words, if we examine the principles of Grammar Translation, we will find that it has not only disappeared, but also many of its characteristics have been central to language teaching throughout the years, and are still valid today. This method was historically used in teaching Greek and Latin, and was generalized to the teaching of modern languages. According to Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979; in Brown, 2001: 18-19), the principles of the Grammar-Translation Method are:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.
2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
3. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.

5. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

With the Grammar-Translation Method, FL study is seen as a mental discipline, the goal of which is to read literature or simply to be a form of intellectual development. In practice, reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking and listening. The student's native language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language. Language learners are passive in language learning, and teachers are regarded as an authority; i.e., it is a teacher-centred model.

The Grammar-Translation Method, just as the name suggests, emphasizes the teaching of the second language grammar. A typical method would be to present the rules of a particular item of grammar, illustrate its use by including the item several times in a text, and practise using the item through writing sentences and translating them into the mother tongue. Hence, grammar is taught deductively in an organized and systematic way by the presentation and study of grammar rules which are then practised through translation exercises. In a word, grammar is very essential in foreign language teaching. Gascoigne (2002: 21) holds that:

> In fact, the dominant method of second language instruction from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, the grammar-translation approach, viewed grammar as the sole means to, and at times even the object of, language study.

Moreover, Larsen-Freeman (2000: 11) notes that:

> It was also hoped that, through the study of the grammar of the target language, students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that this familiarity would help them speak and write their native language better.

Furthermore, the Grammar-Translation Method defined a dominant role for explicit grammar in the language classroom where it is used as a vehicle of developing the student's mind as pointed out by Gascoigne (2002: 22):

> In grammar translation, the development of the mind, as well as of translation skills, was accomplished through a deductive form of teaching, moving from the statement of the rule to the example. In the classroom, the student was a passive recipient of rules and engaged in practice activities and translation exercises requiring the application of explicit grammar rules.

Despite its dominance in the European and foreign language teaching from the ancient days to the 1940's, the Grammar-Translation Method had many weaknesses which were grouped by Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989: 15) as follows:

- It [the method] aims at knowing the grammar of the language and not the language itself.
- It provides the learner with rules, but does not enable him to construct systematically correct sentences.
- It neglects the speaking skill because it is primarily concerned with the written language.
- Vocabulary is translated on lists of separate words out of any context.

Additionally, the method has no theoretical basis. That is, it has no literature that offers a rationale, or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 5). In addition, Grammar Translation often creates frustration for students by a tedious

experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary, and the limitations of practice techniques never emancipate the learner from the dominance of the first language.

Another important drawback of this method concerns its non-communicative nature. In other words, the Grammar-Translation Method does not improve the communicative ability of students in the foreign language since they learn more about how the language works than how to use it in communicative situations.

In spite of the strong criticism against this method, it is still widely practised across the globe. Stern (1983: 455) asserts that the first language (L1) as a reference system is indeed important for the L2 learner. Therefore, translation can play a certain part in language learning. Moreover, some learners endeavour to understand the grammatical system of the second language. Hence, grammar teaching may have some importance for them. Furthermore, thinking about formal features of the target language and translation as a technique put the learner into an active problem-solving situation. Finally, Grammar Translation appears relatively easy to apply, and it makes few demands on teachers, which is perhaps the exact reason for its popularity.

1.3 Grammar in the Direct Method

The Direct Method emerged as a revolution against the Grammar-Translation Method in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. That is, this method developed because the Grammar Translation Method did not prepare students to use the target language communicatively. Accordingly, the goal of the Direct Method is to have students communicate in the target language by being able to think directly in the language. The basic tenet of this method was that second language learning is similar to first language learning. In this light, there should be lots of oral interaction, direct and spontaneous use of the target language, no translation, the use of new techniques such as demonstrations of pictures and

objects, and little if any analysis of grammatical rules and syntactic structures. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 9-10) summed up the major characteristics of the Direct Method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

The Direct Method became popular in private schools especially those run by Berlitz, one of the best known of its popularizers. The Berlitz schools have been enormously successful because they employed native-speaking teachers, and the learners were highly motivated.

Though the Direct Method enjoyed great popularity, it showed some limitations which can be summed up as follows:

- It is difficult to use mainly because of the constraints of budget and classroom size.
- It is time consuming because the teacher has to struggle hard to explain particular words, especially abstract ones, in the target language when simple translation of them in the mother tongue of learners would make the task very easy.

- It assumes that the L2 should be learned in the same way the L1 was acquired. Obviously that could not be done as there is far less time and opportunity available in schools than a child acquiring his mother tongue.
- It requires a teacher who is fluent in the language, and can use adequately teaching techniques. However, it is difficult to meet these requirements as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 10) put it:

> It required teachers who were native speakers or who had native like fluency in the foreign language. It was largely dependent on the teacher's skill, rather than on a textbook, and not all teachers were proficient enough in the foreign language to adhere to the principles of the method.

Unlike the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method adopts an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. Instead of using analytical procedures of explaining grammar rules, students must be encouraged to use the language naturally and spontaneously, so that they induce the rules of grammar. In other words, the meaning of the structures is not to be given through explanations in either the native tongue or the target language, but it is to be discovered from the way the form is used in the context. Hence, grammar is taught through situations, not rules; it is indirectly acquired through practice. Consequently, the Direct Method has clearly challenged the dominant role of explicit grammar in the language classroom as defined by the Grammar-Translation Approach.
Larsen-Freeman (2000: 29) holds that:

> Grammar is taught inductively; that is, the students are presented with examples and they figure out the rule or generalization from the examples. An explicit grammar rule may never be given.

1.4 Grammar in the Audiolingual Approach

The outbreak of World War II heightened the need for Americans to listen to and speak various languages of their allies and enemies alike. To this end, bits and pieces of the Direct Method were appropriated in order to form and support this new method, the "Army Method", which was developed through a US army programme called ASTP, standing for Army Specialized Training Programme. The Army Method came to be known in the 1950's as the Audiolingual Approach.

The Audiolingual Approach derived its theoretical base from Structuralism, supported by Bloomfield, and behavioural psychology, defended by Skinner. In structural linguistics, learning a language entails mastering the elements or building blocks of the language and learning the rules by which theses elements are combined, from phoneme to morpheme to word to phrase to sentence. Therefore, the approach was characterized by the separation of the skills --listening, speaking, reading, and writing-- and the primacy of the audio-lingual over the graphic skill. On the other hand, language learning is seen, in the behaviourist view, as a question of good habit formation. That is, students are given a stimulus, which they respond to. If their response is correct, it is rewarded, so that the good habit will be formed. If it is incorrect, it is corrected quickly in hopes of preventing students from forming bad habits. If errors are left untreated, both the speaker and the other students in the classroom might internalize those erroneous forms.

The Audiolingual Approach's central goal was to make learners fit for the fluent oral use of the target language. For the achievement of this aim, it depended on the use of dialogues as the chief means of presenting the language, and advocated certain practice techniques such as extensive mimicry and memorization of language patterns and forms. Moreover, the approach stressed the repetition and practice of language structures until they became an inseparable part of the learner's behaviour; i.e., the learner would not stop and think about how to form an

utterance before speaking. Accurate pronunciation and control of structures were paramount in this approach.

The tenets of the Audiolingual Approach were outlined by Moulton (1961; in Kailani and Al-Mutawa, 1989: 19) as follows:

- Language is speech, not writing. That is, it is the spoken aspect of language that concerns structural linguistics.
- Language is a set of habits. This principle means that language is acquired by imitation and practice.
- Teach the language, not about the language.This means that we must teach pupils a 'set of habits', not a 'set of rules'.
- A language is what native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.

The popularity of Audiolingualism waned after 1964 because of its shortcomings. It fell short of promoting communicative ability as it paid undue attention to memorization and drilling while downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. Dirven (1990: 6) holds that:

> The weakness of the audiolingual pattern drill method was its overemphasis on repetition and its lack of cognitive insight and of any form of genuine language and creative use of it.

After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation, and errors were not necessarily bad.

In spite of these criticisms, Stern (1983: 465-466) contends that the Audiolingual Approach was of major contributions to language teaching. For example, it was among the first theories to recommend the development of language teaching theory on declared linguistic and psychological principles. In addition, it attempted to make language learning accessible to large groups of

ordinary learners because it proposed that language teaching should be organized in such a way as not to demand great intellectual feats of abstract reasoning to learn a language. Moreover, this approach led to the development of simple techniques of varied and intensive practice of specific features of the language.

In the Audiolingual Approach, grammar is taught by inductive analogy, involving processes of generalization and discrimination, rather than deductive explanation. More specifically, students practise a particular grammatical structure in a variety of contexts without receiving any rule explanation. Instead, they are expected to create their own grammatical generalizations through analogy during drill activities which emphasize the accurate use of the structure. Moreover, proponents of this method believe that students should be able to use language subconsciously, like native speakers, without conscious manipulation of grammar rules.

Although explicit explanations were very few in an audiolingual course, many pattern-practice exercises and substitution drills such as "person, number substitutions, patterned response drills, singular-plural transformations, tense transformations, directed dialogue, cued response, and translation drills"(Omaggio Hadley, 2000; in Gascoigne, 2002: 26) kept certain grammatical structures in focus.

1.5 Grammar in the Oral-Situational Approach

The Oral-Situational Approach (originally called the Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching) was developed by British applied linguists, such as Firth and Halliday from the 1930's to the 1960's. It was considered "as an alternative approach to the audiolingual approach promoted in the United States" (Ellis, 2005: 3). The Oral-Situational' s theory of language was based on the school of British Structuralism which regarded speech as the basis of language, and viewed structure as being at the heart of speaking ability. This view was similar to that proposed by American structuralists, such as Fries. However, the

notion of British linguists that structures must be linked to situations in which they could be used, gave its distinctiveness to Situational Language Teaching.

The Oral-Situational Approach was based on a behaviourist learning theory. This viewed language learning, like any other kind of learning, as the formation of habits. Ellis (2005: 3) posits that habits were formed when learners learned the correct responses to stimuli through repeated practice.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 34), the basic assumptions on which the Oral-Situational Approach is based are:

1. Language teaching begins with the spoken language. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form.
2. The target language is the language of the classroom.
3. New language points are introduced and practiced situationally.
4. Vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that an essential general service vocabulary is covered.
5. Items of grammar are graded following the principle that simple forms should be taught before complex ones.
6. Reading and writing are introduced once a sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established.

Situational Language Teaching is totally inductive in its approach to teaching grammar. The meaning of the structures is not given through explanation; it is induced from the way the form is used in the situation. In fact, it is preferred if students do not think about grammar at all, and the theory has clearly stated that no grammar rule should be explicitly taught. Ellis (2005: 3-4) notes that: “According to this theory, grammar is learned inductively; there is no need for (and no value) in explicit explanations of grammar points.”

Evidently, the Oral-Situational Approach refused to teach any explicit rules; however, it is extraordinary that its syllabus was grammar based. This syllabus would grade the grammatical items according to their complexity; i.e., the simple forms should be taught before the complex ones. Accuracy in grammar was regarded as crucial.

According to Aslam (2003: 52), what was new about this approach that made it more viable was its emphasis on the use of language in context and situation that were provided by the immediate environment of the learner, the classroom. Furthermore, and like the Direct Method, concrete linguistic items were taught through demonstration and abstract ideas through association. So, the teacher's job would be to carry whatever objects he needs to make the lesson interesting.

Despite its merits, the Oral-Situational Approach was also criticized in many ways. First, teachers could find it easy to demonstrate concrete objects, but found it difficult to make abstractions understood by learners. Naturally, they found the use of the mother tongue a more easy way of bringing home the meaning to the learner. Second, the theory –Behaviourism– on which this approach was based was called into question by mentalists, especially by Chomsky, who viewed language not as an accumulation of habits but as a mental construct the capacity of which was inborn and innate to all the members of a speech community.

1.6 Grammar in the Cognitive-Code Approach

The Cognitive-Code Approach was developed in the United States as a reaction to the Audiolingual Approach. It rejected Behaviourism, and put an emphasis on the learning of rules through meaningful practice and creativity. The approach came to the fore in the 1960's, and claimed theoretical support from an alliance of two schools of thought: Chomsky's theory of Transformational Generative Grammar in linguistics, and cognitive theories in psychology.

According to Chomsky, there are universals which underlie all languages. These are rules which can generate any sentence from a universally common deep structure, and each language may use different transformations to get to the surface structure. Moreover, Chomsky claims that an infinite number of sentences can be created from a finite set of rules. In short, transformationalists argue that language is creative (not memorized) and rule-governed (not based on habits). In other words, one can use a language creatively only when is familiar with the rules of that language.

Chomsky's theories of language and learning were in line with the cognitive and mentalist approaches of the time. These stressed the importance of learners making sense of things for themselves but with the guidance of a teacher. This reaction to Behaviourism stated that language learning was not defined simply in terms of habit formation, but it required cognitive processing and mental effort as pointed out by Carroll (1965: 278):

> … learning a language is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of a language largely through study and analysis of these patterns.

The Cognitive-Code Approach considers the conscious study of language rules as central to the learning of a foreign language. One of its most important concepts is meaningful practice. Practice is considered meaningful when the learner understands the rules involved in practice. Thus, the conscious study of grammatical rules is not only allowed, but also regarded as crucial to language learning. Therefore, the teaching of grammar is deductive in this approach. Learners are encouraged and helped to first have a clear understanding of a grammatical rule before they practise and use it in meaningful contexts. Carroll (1965: 278) states that:

> The learners' understanding of the structure of the target language was more important than their facility in using those structures. Facility was assumed to develop automatically with the use of the language in meaningful situations.

Clearly, while reemphasizing the role of the student's mind and cognitive abilities in the language learning process (somewhat similar to the Grammar Translation's goal of training the mind), the Cognitive-Code Approach also reinstates explicit grammar presentation and practice into the classroom. Therefore, Cognitive-Code Learning is often referred to as a "modified Grammar-Translation Approach". Furthermore, this approach represented a sharp contrast to the Audiolingual Approach which relied on pattern drills as a means of teaching grammar, without any explicit explanation of grammatical rules.

It has to be mentioned that the Cognitive-Code Approach has pinpointed theoretical and practical weaknesses of the earlier theory and has drawn attention to important facets of language and language learning which the audiolingual theory has disregarded or underemphasized, such as creativity and meaning (Stern, 1983: 471). Most important of all, this approach allowed teachers to treat errors as not only natural, but also as a positive indication that learning was taking place.

1.7 Grammar in the Communicative Approach

In the early 1970's, the Communicative Approach, or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), grew out of the work of linguists including Halliday (1973) and Hymes (1972). One of the cornerstones of CLT is the interpretation of 'competence'. The origins of the concept of competence go back to Chomsky's understanding of it as the knowledge of "an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community" (Chomsky, 1965: 3). Competence, the primary concern of linguistic theory, is said to underlie performance. Hymes (1972) wished

to broaden the concept of competence beyond grammar as a reaction against Chomsky's interpretation. He proposed a new concept which he referred to as 'communicative competence'. The latter constitutes the ultimate goal of CLT which views language first and foremost as a system of communication. For Hymes, communicative competence is "dependent upon both [tacit] knowledge and [ability for] use" (Hymes, 1972; in DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman, 2002: 22). In other words, communicative competence involves the ability not only to communicate using rules of grammar but also to use language appropriately in social contexts. Accordingly, a communicative syllabus would be "designed around semantic notions, such as time, place, and quantity, and functions (that is, communicative uses of language)" (Lock, 1996: 266).

Hymes' notion of communicative competence was examined by a number of practiceoriented language educators including Canale and Swain, who gave an elaborate definition of the term in 1980. According to these researchers, there are four dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 71). Grammatical competence includes "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology" (Canale and Swain, 1980: 3). Discourse competence is the ability to connect sentences in discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances. According to Canale and Swain (1980: 8), sociolinguistic competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of the participants, the information they share and the function of the interaction. Strategic competence refers to the strategies participants use to enhance communication. It should be noted that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners have developed their communicative competence.

For the development of learners' communicative competence, CLT requires a considerable amount of exposure to the target language and a learner-centred, communication-oriented language instruction based on the learner's language learning needs in a supportive classroom atmosphere. In such an atmosphere, learners are provided with more practice and experience of language used in real situations through the use of authentic materials and activities. In these activities, learners share their knowledge and experience with their classmates, and accept correction from their peers as well as teachers who act as facilitators.

Celce-Murcia (1991a: 8) gave a list of aspects included in the Communicative Approach:

a. It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language.
b. The content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures.
c. Students regularly work in groups of pairs to transfer (and, if necessary negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that the other(s) lack.
d. Students often engage in role-play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts.
e. Classroom materials and activities are often authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands.
f. [All four skills] are integrated from the beginning.
g. The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors.
h. The teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.

As far as grammar is concerned, the Communicative Approach emphasizes meaning along with grammar. For some linguists and language teaching specialists,

as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 66) pointed out, "Communicative Language Teaching means little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching." Littlewood (1981; in Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 66) states:

> One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language.

Moreover, Canale and Swain's definition of communicative competence specifically includes grammar. Widdowson (1990: 40) notes that: "a proper understanding of the concept of communicative competence would have revealed that it gives no endorsement for the neglect of grammar."

Furthermore, most communicativists conceive grammar as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Halliday (1985; in Rea-Dickins and Woods, 1988: 630) claims that traditional grammar asks the question, "What do these forms mean?" However, the question should be, "How are these meanings expressed?" Hence, grammatical forms are taught not for their own sake but as a means of meaningful communication. In fact, where researchers differ is in how these grammatical structures are to be taught in a communicative classroom. In order to find a good answer to this question, it is necessary to refer to what Howatt (1984: 279) described as weak and strong versions of CLT.

On the one hand, the weak version of CLT can be summed up as the view that learners learn the language in order to use it. That is, "learn the rules and then apply them in life-like communication" (Thornbury, 1999: 18). One example of such an approach to CLT is what is known as the PPP lesson (for presentation, practice, and production). Language forms are first presented under the guidance of the teacher, then practised in a series of exercises, again under the teacher's supervision. The chosen forms are finally produced by the learners themselves in the context of

communicative activities that would be related to the students' real lives and interests. The PPP model clearly treats language as a product constructed from teachable parts; these parts are the linguistic forms and structures behind the pragmatic functional use of language. Therefore, "the exclusion of explicit attention to grammar was never a necessary part of CLT" (Thompson, 1996; in Liao, 2000: 4).

On the other hand, proponents of the strong version of CLT argue that one uses a language in order to learn it. In fact this version pays no attention to explicit grammar teaching in the classroom. Rather than a presentation and practice approach to language forms, the teacher begins with communicative activities that allow learners to actively learn for themselves how the language works as a formal system. Hatch (1978; in Larsen-Freeman, 2001: 36) commented, "One learns to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally and, out of this interaction, syntactic structures are developed."

In either case, CLT does not mean a rejection of grammar, but the adaptation of a different approach to the teaching of grammar. In other words, the overt teaching of uncontextualized, isolated grammatical structures without using them in a meaningful context is discouraged in a communicative classroom, and instead presenting grammar in meaningful contexts of authentic discourse is encouraged. Widdowson (1990: 78) states that:

> It often seems to be supposed that a concern for grammar is inconsistent with the principles of communicative language teaching. This supposition, I believe, based on an impoverished concept of the nature of grammar, one which does not account for the complementary functioning of lexis and syntax as an essential resource for the negotiation of meaning in context.

Brown (1994: 349) also remarks that:

> Reason, balance, and the experience of teachers in recent CLT tradition tell us that judicious attention to grammatical form in the adult classroom is not only helpful, if appropriate techniques are used, but essential to a speedy learning process.

In sum, stating that communication is essential in L2 learning, and that grammar teaching in an L2 is of limited use, is almost certainly wrong because grammar and communication can not be separated; they influence each other. That is, the wrong order, the wrong function word, or the wrong inflection may cause miscommunication in the message. Therefore, grammar and communication should be allies, not enemies. Savignon (1991: 268) holds that:

> While involvement in communicative events is seen as central to language development, this involvement necessarily requires attention to form. Communication can not take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning.

Similarly, Brown (1994: 348) asserts that:

> No one can tell you that grammar is irrelevant, or grammar is no longer needed in a CLT framework. No one doubts the prominence of grammar as an organizational framework within which communication operates.

It is no doubt that the Communicative Approach developed quite fast. It has dominated language teaching in many countries because it not only makes language learning more interesting, but helps learners develop linguistic competence as well as communicative competence.

But all is not rosy in CLT. It will not be wrong to say that there are as many communicative approaches as there are teachers because there is not a single, uniform method that could be called 'communicative' (Aslam, 2003: 58). In fact, different practitioners use various techniques to involve learners in the process of learning. These include slide shows for identification, incomplete maps, plans, and diagrams for completion, etc. However, there is no homogeneous view among practitioners about the ways CLT can be interpreted through the classroom teaching.

Conclusion

We can see the shape of grammar in all these influential language teaching methodologies. Indeed, almost all approaches and methods discussed have different attitudes towards grammar; however, they all consider it part of language teaching. Hence, grammar is central to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. As Kailani and Al-Mutawa (1989: 69) put it: "A language can not be learned without learning its grammar because it is the element that makes meaning in language use."

It appears that grammar has always been playing a role in foreign language teaching and learning. This may probably be one of the reasons leading to the debate of grammar teaching. The debate leads to the most important question that teachers and researchers need to consider: How grammar should be taught? There are now repeated calls, by both theorists and practitioners, for a return to explicit grammar instruction. All these points will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLICIT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Introduction

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a relatively new field of study. While it may not be possible to identify its precise starting point, many researchers would agree that the late sixties marked the onset of an intense period of empirical and theoretical interest in how second languages are acquired (Ellis, 2005).

Within the field of SLA, there is much lively debate about whether grammar teaching is a useful means of improving language ability. Krashen is a leading proponent of the idea that grammar instruction is not an important part of language acquisition, which is developed instead through massive comprehensible input of the target language. Hence, in Krashen's (1992: 410) view, " the effect of grammar is peripheral and fragile."

However, it is possible to find greater support for the use of grammar instruction from those who are in some measure opposed to Krashen's theories. Ellis in particular comments that the importance of grammar instruction in L2 classrooms is unquestionable. He (1985: 229) observes:

> To deny that instruction can help learners to acquire a L2 is not only counter-productive, but contrary to the personal experience of countless teachers and students.

Acknowledging the role of grammar in language teaching and learning, the focus of attention has shifted from whether or not to teach grammar to the question of what type of grammar instruction is most effective. This question has caused strife among many camps in the field of L2 theory and pedagogy over whether explicit versus implicit instruction should be utilized in SLA classroom. After all, there are many studies that prove the paramount importance of explicit grammar instruction in the classroom, in spite of the fact that there are still some researchers and teachers who do not believe that explicit instruction is essential to acquire an L2.

2.1 Defining Grammar

To know what we are talking about, it is essential to define the word grammar. Table1 provides an overview of grammar interpretations in a chronological order. These definitions represent a development in the interpretation of grammar from a narrow view to a broad one.

Table 1: List of grammar definitions

Source	Definition
Close, 1982: 13	English grammar is chiefly a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences.
Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad, 1982: 51	We shall use grammar in reference to the mechanism according to which language works when it is used to communicate with other people. We can not see this mechanism concretely because it is represented rather abstractly in the human mind. One way of describing this mechanism is a set of rules which allow us to put words together in certain ways, but which do not allow others.
Ur, 1988: 4	Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning.
Alexander, 1990: 379	Grammar is a combination of morphology and syntax which together make up the system of language.
Batstone, 1994: 4	At its heart, then, grammar consists of two fundamental ingredients -syntax and morphology- and together they help us to identify grammatical forms which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning.
Brown, 1994: 347	Grammar is a system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence.
Larsen-Freeman, 2003: 142	…grammar (ing) is one of the dynamic linguistic processes of pattern formulation in language, which can be used by humans for making meaning in context-appropriate ways.

Three observations can be made about the content of these definitions. Firstly, in the definitions of Close (1982), Alexander (1990), and Brown (1994), the structuralist point of view of grammar is prevailing covering only morphology and syntax. In other words, in the narrow sense, grammar means morphology and syntax.

Secondly, the traditional narrow view of grammar is expanded by Ur (1988), Batstone (1994) and others. In their interpretation, grammar is not simply structure, but structure in use in particular contexts. This is a broader view of grammar also shared by Larsen-Freeman (1991) who posits that grammar is best seen as involving interrelationships among form, meaning, and contextualization including the dimensions of semantics and pragmatics into the scope of grammar.
Cecle-Murcia (1991b) also takes the view that grammar interacts with meaning, social function or discourse, and does not stand alone as an autonomous system which should be learnt for its own sake.

Thirdly, the definitions of Leech, Deucher and Hoogenraad (1982) and Larsen-Freeman (2003) reflect the cognitive dimension where grammar is seen not in terms of its forms but of its underlying systems. With this, a reference is made to the internal grammar which is acquired through different mental processes. Consequently, grammar is regarded as a system in a dynamic sense. The word ‘dynamic’ (used by Larsen-Freeman) refers to the understanding of grammar as a process and not only product.

In the discussion of the mental processes involved in the internal representation of language structures, the distinction in cognitive psychology between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1983) as well as explicit/ implicit knowledge (Bialystok, 1979) is unavoidable.

2.2 Types of Knowledge

The distinction between explicit/implicit knowledge and declarative/ procedural knowledge is widely recognized in both cognitive psychology and second language acquisition.

2.2.1 Explicit and Implicit Knowledge

Bialystok (1981) hypothesizes that learners internalize two different types of knowledge: explicit and implicit knowledge.

2.2.1.1 Explicit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that is: (1) analyzed (i.e., it can be described and classified), (2) abstract (i.e., it takes the form of some underlying generalization of actual linguistic behaviour), and (3) explanatory (i.e., it can provide an objective account of how grammar is used in real communication).

Ellis (1993) assumes that explicit knowledge is available to learners as a conscious representation, so that, if called upon, learners are able to say what it is that they know. For him, explicit knowledge can not be equated with metalinguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of grammatical terms) although this may help in its articulation. Furthermore, Ellis (1995) posits that this type of knowledge manifests itself in certain forms of problem-solving activity (e.g. a sentence transformation exercise), and it can also be accessed in natural language use (e.g. a conversation) that allows time for monitoring.

2.2.1.2 Implicit Knowledge

Ellis (1993) identifies two types of implicit knowledge: formulaic knowledge and rule-based knowledge.

2.2.1.2.1 Formulaic Knowledge

It consists of ready-made chunks of language such as whole utterances (e.g. I don't know) or utterance frames with one or more empty slots (e.g. Can I have a…?)

2.2.1.2.2 Rule-based Knowledge

It consists of generalized and abstract structures which have been internalized. In both cases, according to Ellis (1994: 356), "the knowledge is intuitive and, therefore, largely hidden." It is unanalyzed in the sense that language users are not conscious of the language they hold. Therefore, native speakers are usually unable to describe the rules they use to construct actual sentences. Implicit knowledge "is accessed rapidly and easily and thus is available for use in rapid, fluent communication" (Ellis, 2005: 36).

It should be noted that while implicit knowledge is highly proceduralized; i.e., allowing rapid access, explicit knowledge can be accessed only slowly. Ellis (2003: 105) states:

> It is true that, with practice, access to and use of explicit knowledge can be speeded up (Ellis 1993) but this results only in 'false automatization' (Hulstijn, 2002) as it still does not allow for the easy and immediate access that characterizes the use of implicit knowledge.

2.2.2 Declarative and Procedural Knowledge

A basic distinction in cognitive theory is that between declarative and procedural knowledge. These terms were initially used by Ryle (1949), and subsequently taken up by cognitive psychologists like Anderson (1983). Essentially, declarative knowledge has to do with knowledge of facts and things; i.e., knowledge that such and such is the case.

Procedural knowledge refers to the knowledge about how to do things. The distinction is sometimes described as the difference between knowing that (declarative knowledge) and knowing how (procedural knowledge). For example, knowledge of the highway rules (e.g. always signal before overtaking) would be declarative, and knowledge of how to drive a car according to these rules would be procedural.

According to Anderson (1983), classroom L2 learning involves transforming the declarative knowledge of grammatical rules (usually supplied by the teacher) into procedural knowledge via a process called proceduralization. This involves passing from a cognitive stage where rules are explicit, through an associative phase where rules are applied repeatedly in a consistent manner, to an autonomous stage where the rules are no longer explicit, and are executed automatically without thinking.

The distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge is not controversial. What is disputable, however, is the interaction between them.

2.3 The Interaction between Explicit and Implicit Knowledge

The key issue is whether explicit L2 knowledge can convert into implicit L2 knowledge. Two major positions have been espoused on this point. These are: (1) the non-interface position and (2) the interface position.

2.3.1 The Non-Interface Position

It states that explicit L2 knowledge can not convert into implicit L2 knowledge. This position has been advanced by Krashen (1981).

Krashen (1981, 1982) claims, in his Monitor Theory, that adults have two independent systems for developing ability in a second language, an ‘acquired system’ and a ‘learned system’. The former is developed by means of *acquisition*,

a subconscious process through which learners naturally develop linguistic competence, exactly like children who are not necessarily aware that they are acquiring language; they are only aware that they are communicating. The latter is the result of *learning*, a process of paying conscious attention to language in an effort to understand and memorize rules. As Krashen (1987: 10) puts it, learning refers to "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them." In sum, learning is equated with grammar or explicit knowledge of rules. In Krashen's view, acquisition initiates utterances, and is responsible for fluency. Learning, on the other hand, has only one function, that is as a Monitor or Editor, and thereby is responsible for the accuracy of communicative output (Figure 2).

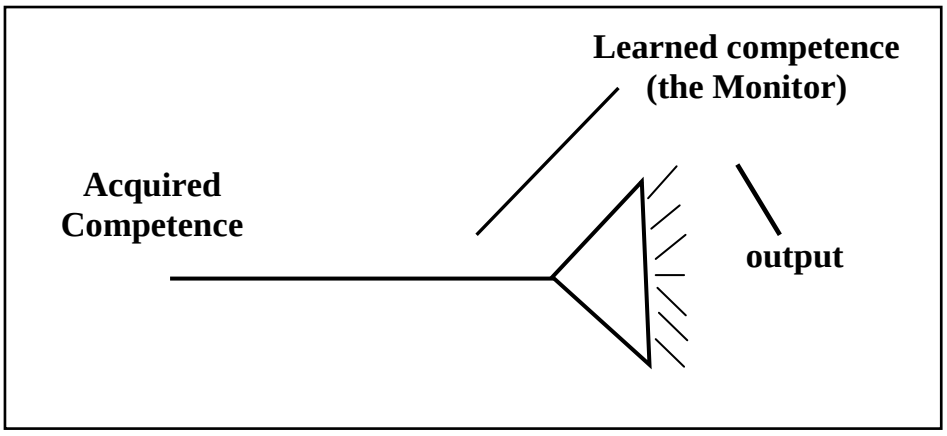


Figure 2: Acquisition and learning in second language production (Krashen, 1987: 16)

Krashen (1987: 16) states that:

> Conscious learning is available only as a "Monitor", which can alter the output of the acquired system before or after the utterance is actually spoken or written. It is the acquired system which initiates normal, fluent speech utterances.

According to Krashen, acquisition takes place automatically when learners engage in meaningful interaction in the target language --natural communication-- where they are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying, and where there is comprehensible input. The latter, for Krashen, is a meaningful input that is a little beyond the current level of acquired competence. For instance, if the learners' stage is 'i', then acquisition occurs when they are exposed to comprehensible input that constitutes 'i+1', provided they understand the language containing 'i+1'. Learning, by contrast, seems to be entirely realized in formal teaching whose goal is the learning of conscious rules, and error correction is taught to help the learner arrive at the 'right' form of the rule (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 26).

Evidently, the acquisition/learning distinction mirrors the implicit/explicit distinction, a point that Krashen himself acknowledges (1982: 10). He argues that the two knowledge types are entirely separate and unrelated.
Krashen (1982: 83-84) writes:

> A very important point that also needs to be stated is that learning does not 'turn into' acquisition. The idea that we first learn a new rule, and eventually, through practice, acquire it, is widespread and may seem to some people to be intuitively obvious… language acquisition… happens in one way, when the acquirer understands input containing a structure that the acquirer is 'due' to acquire, a structure at his or her 'i+1'.

Krashen advances a number of arguments for the separateness of acquisition (implicit knowledge) and learning (explicit knowledge). First, acquisition in many instances appears without learning, which means that an individual may be a competent user of a L2 not knowing its rules consciously. Second, learners can often articulate formal rules of grammar, but can not use them correctly in

spontaneous communication. The last argument is based on the claim that no one ever masters all the rules of the target language.

2.3.2 The Interface Position

It states that learners do indeed possess two different types of L2 knowledge, explicit and implicit, but these are not completely separate. Instead, it has been claimed that 'seepage' from one type of knowledge into the other occurs. It is possible to distinguish a strong and a weak interface position.

2.3.2.1 The Strong Interface Position

It states that explicit knowledge (learning) can convert into implicit knowledge (acquisition) as a result of practice. Advocates of this position were mainly Bialystok, Stevick, and Sharwood-Smith.

Bialystok (1979) develops a model of SLA based on two types of knowledge which can interact. In positing these knowledge types, 'explicit knowledge' as a result of learning, and 'implicit knowledge' as a result of acquisition, Bialystok maintains a distinction fairly close to Krashen's, but contrary to his theory, she allows for explicit knowledge to turn into implicit knowledge via practice. Thus, according to her, the implicit knowledge can be built up in two different ways: (1) via unconscious acquisition and (2) through the automatizing of explicit knowledge by practice.

Stevick (1980) develops a model of SLA (called the Lavertov Machine) which allows the flow of knowledge from learning to acquisition and vice versa. He posits that learning relates to secondary memory which holds material for longer than two minutes, but loses it gradually unless the material is occasionally used. Acquisition, by contrast, relates to tertiary memory which contains material, and never loses it even if it is not used. Like Krashen, Stevick sees acquisition

as the product of communicative experience, yet he argues that the learner can make use of material which has been recently memorized and is part of secondary memory. When this material is used in communication, there is the possibility that it is transferred into tertiary memory, by means of which learning has become acquisition.

Sharwood-Smith (1981) develops a full interface model that is based on the assumption that formal instruction serves the purpose of raising the learner's consciousness resulting in explicit knowledge which is practised until it is automatized (Figure 3). He (1981: 166) holds:

> Whatever the view of the underlying processes in second language learning… it is quite clear and uncontroversial to say that most spontaneous performance is attained by dint of practice. In the course of actually performing in the target language, the learner gains the necessary control over its structures such that he or she can use them quickly without reflection.

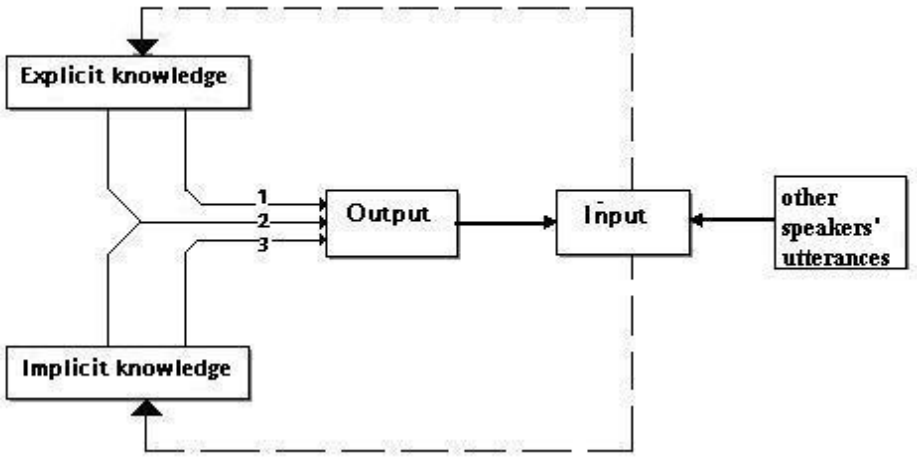


Figure 3: Linguistic input and output: Three potential sources of feedback (Sharwood-Smith, 1981: 166)

According to Sharwood-Smith's model, the learner can produce L2 output in three ways: (1) using just implicit knowledge, (2) using just explicit knowledge, and (3) using both explicit and implicit knowledge. The input comprises the learner's own utterances and the other speaker's utterances. It provides information that can lead the learner to alter the composition (content and organization) of either his explicit or implicit knowledge, or both.

The model also shows that performance that is based entirely or partly on explicit knowledge, which lacks automaticity, can provide feedback into implicit knowledge. If this occurs often enough (i.e., through practice), the explicit knowledge can become fully automated as part of implicit knowledge.

2.3.2.2 The Weak Interface Position

This position makes no claim beyond a facilitating effect. In other words, explicit knowledge facilitates the development of implicit knowledge rather than changes into it. It was advocated by Seliger and Ellis.

Seliger (1979) argues that learned rules are anomalous since different learners end up with different representations of the rules they have been taught. For him, the rules that are learnt are not represented as internal rules that can be activated in natural communication. Consequently, these rules can not be held responsible for actual language behaviour. In Seliger's view, pedagogical rules do act as 'acquisition facilitators', which focus the learner's attention on "critical attributes of the real language that must be induced" (Seliger, 1979: 368). Furthermore, rules can act as mnemonics to retrieve features of an internal rule which are seldom used by the learner. Seliger accepts the assumption that the process involved in the internalization of rules is different from that used for learning them. However, he believes that knowing a pedagogical rule may make its internalization easier, and may facilitate the use of features in natural communication. It should be mentioned

that Seliger never suggested that pedagogical rules (learnt knowledge) are converted into internalized (acquired) knowledge.

Ellis (1993) proposes a weak interface model where "explicit knowledge may contribute to the development of implicit knowledge by helping learners to process input and intake" (Ellis, 2000: 57). Input refers to the processible L2 samples that the learner is exposed to as a result of contact with the language in communication (oral or written). Formal instruction can also provide input although it is mainly directed at teaching specific grammatical items. Intake is that part of input that has been processed for short-term and may be medium-term memory (figure 4).

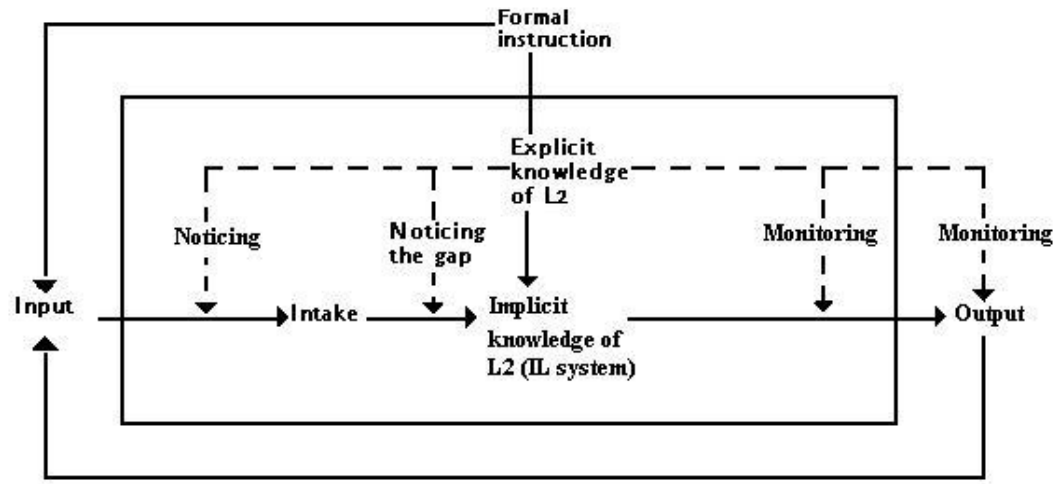


Figure 4: A model of L2 acquisition incorporating a weak interface position (Ellis, 1993: 97)

According to this model, explicit knowledge facilitates the development of implicit knowledge in two major ways. First, it can aid the process of noticing. That is, if learners are armed with the explicit knowledge of a grammatical feature, they are more likely to notice it in the input and also to notice the meaning it realizes. For example, learners who know that plural nouns have an -s are expected

to notice the -s on the ends of nouns they hear or read in the input, and are more likely to associate the -s morpheme with the meaning more than one. Second, explicit knowledge may assist noticing the gap. In other words, it may help learners incorporate a feature that has become part of the intake into their implicit knowledge by facilitating the process by which they compare what they observe in the input with their own output. With this, explicit knowledge may help learners to carry out cognitive comparisons between their own norms and the target norms. For instance, if learners know that plural nouns have an -s, they are more likely to notice the difference between this feature in the input and its omission in their own output.

It should be noted that explicit knowledge is also used for monitoring. Ellis (1993: 98) holds that monitoring can occur before an utterance is produced or after. Monitored output is one source of input as pointed by Terrell (1991; in Ellis, 1993: 98), "monitoring can apparently interact with acquisition, resulting in learners acquiring their own output."

Ellis' model also hypothesizes that explicit knowledge of L2 items and structures may convert directly into implicit knowledge. However, this usually does not happen for two reasons:

a. The amount of new grammatical knowledge derived in this way is limited since only a small portion of grammatical rules can be consciously learnt.

b. Explicit knowledge can only convert directly into implicit knowledge if learners are developmentally ready to incorporate it. Ellis (1994: 88-89) argues that:

> Explicit knowledge derived from formal instruction may convert into implicit knowledge, but only if the learner has reached a level of development that enables her to accommodate the new linguistic material. In such cases, the learner's existing knowledge constitutes a kind of filter that sifts explicit knowledge and lets through only that which the learner is ready to incorporate into the interlanguage system.

According to Ellis (1993b; in Belkacem Bouricha, 1999: 24), "developmental readiness" entails the ability

> … to manage the processing of the operations involved or the restructuring of the existing system which the incorporation of new features is likely to entail.

Evidently, the main way of the internalization of implicit knowledge is by deriving intake from input. Therefore, Ellis adopts an approach to grammar teaching that emphasizes input processing for comprehension rather than output processing for production. This approach requires tasks that are designed to focus learners' attention on a targeted structure in oral or written input, and enable them to comprehend the meaning(s) of this structure. According to Ellis (2003: 157), these tasks go under different names –*comprehension tasks* (Loschky and Bley-Vroman, 1993), *interpretation tasks* (Ellis, 1995), and *structured-input tasks* (Van-Patten , 1996). These tasks may be more successful in eliciting attention to a targeted feature than production-based tasks because learners can not avoid processing them (Figure 5).

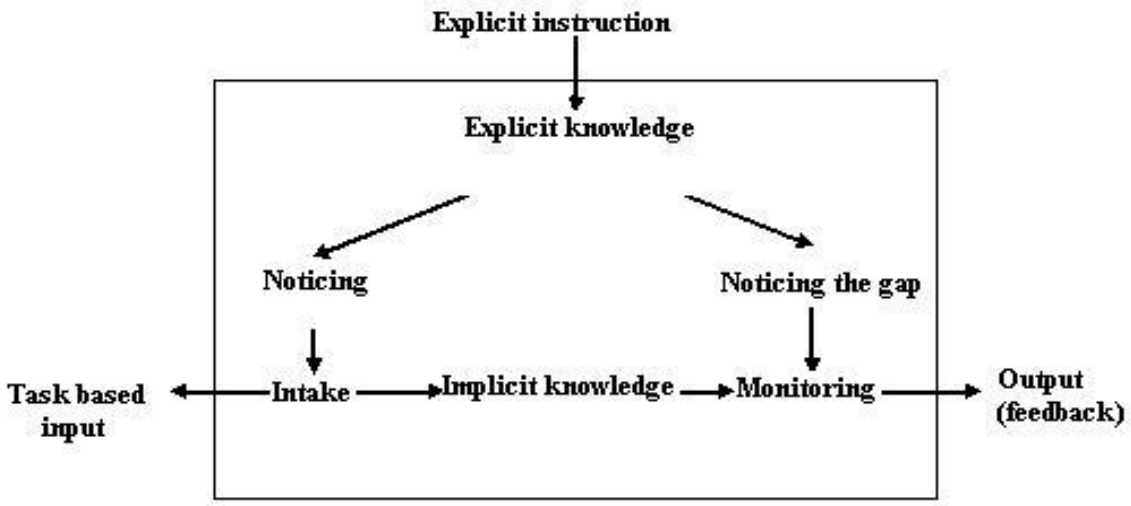


Figure 5: The role of explicit knowledge in implicit learning

(Ellis, 2003: 149)

2.4 The Role of Formal Instruction in Second Language Acquisition

In general, the assumption behind second language teaching and learning is that the L2 can be successfully taught. L2 pedagogy has operated, in particular, on the assumption that grammar can be taught. In the literature of L2 acquisition, grammar teaching is often referred to as 'formal instruction'. According to Ellis (1990: 13),

> 'Formal instruction' refers to the attempt to teach some specific feature of the L2 code –usually a grammatical feature –in one way or another.

Along with the different linguistic trends and theories, the role of formal instruction has been at the heart of a debate in language acquisition, and subject to controversy and discussion among researchers for many decades. On the one hand, it might be surprising for some people that several scholars do adopt a zero position; i.e., they do not believe that grammar teaching will have any impact on acquisition, and therefore neglect it. The strongest advocate of this view is Krashen. He believes that the only case in which the teaching of grammar can

result in language acquisition is when the students are interested in the subject, and the target language is used as a medium for instruction (i.e., providing comprehensible input). Very often when this occurs, both students and teachers are convinced that the study of grammar is essential for SLA, and the teacher is skillful enough to present explanations in the target language so that the students understand. In other words, the teacher's talk meets the requirements for comprehensible input and perhaps with the students' participation, the classroom becomes an environment suitable for acquisition.

On the other hand, there are linguists who do believe in the value of grammar teaching. McLaughlin (1987: 38) states that comprehensible input alone can not develop the learners' grammatical system. Hence, one can not assume that learners will automatically induce the foreign language grammatical features from the input without mentioning grammar in class (White, 1987).

The investigation of the role of formal instruction can be identified in two broad trends. The first trend raises the question "Does formal instruction aid SLA?"; i.e., what are the effects of formal instruction on SLA? The second trend raises the question "Does type of instruction make a difference?"; i.e., what is the type of formal instruction that facilitates SLA the most?

The first question is addressed under the assumption that all types of formal instruction share certain basic premises and that it is, therefore, possible to talk generically about formal instruction.

2.4.1 The Effects of Formal Instruction on SLA

The effects of formal instruction on SLA must be considered separately in terms of:

- The effects of formal instruction on the route of development (i.e., the general sequence or specific order of acquisition).

- The effects of formal instruction on the rate of development (i.e., the speed at which learning takes place) or the success of development (i.e., the proficiency level that is finally achieved).
- The effects of formal instruction on the accuracy with which learners use specific linguistic items and rules.

2.4.1.1 The Effects of Formal Instruction on the Route of SLA

Investigations carried out to shed light on the influence formal instruction may have on the route the learner is likely to take when acquiring specific structures of the L2 fall into two groups: (1) the morpheme studies and (2) longitudinal studies. These studies were of either pure naturalistic SLA or mixed SLA (i.e., where there was both naturalistic exposure and instruction).

2.4.1.1.1 The Morpheme Studies

These studies investigate the order of acquisition of a range of grammatical morphemes (e.g. articles, markers of plurality, third person singular, etc.). In other words, they attempt to answer the question "Do learners acquire some target language (TL) features before others?" Krashen based his Natural Order Hypothesis on observation that, like L1 learners, L2 learners seem to acquire the features of the TL in a natural predictable order. For him, certain grammatical morphemes or structures are acquired before others. For example, in the English language, the learner acquires the progressive -ing before he/she acquires the third person singular -s. Moreover, the rules which are easy to state (and thus to learn) are not necessarily the first to be acquired. For instance, the rule for adding an -s to third person singular verbs in the present tense is easy to state, but even some advanced L2 speakers fail to apply it in rapid conversation. Further, Krashen observed that the natural order is independent from the order in which the rules have been learned in language classes; it is also different from the L1 acquisition order. Therefore, all learners pass through the same natural order.

Krashen (1981) argues that the only time that a different order occurs is when instruction requires the subjects to focus specifically on the form rather than the meaning of their utterances, as in some of the tasks of Larsen-Freeman's study (1975). Krashen (1981: 52) holds that the natural order was affected by the intrusion of the conscious grammar which caused an elevation in the accuracy of those items that were easiest to learn (third singular morpheme, regular past morpheme). When performance is 'Monitor-free' (little time, focus on communication and not form), the natural order is maintained, but when performance is 'Monitored', the natural order is disturbed (table 2).

Table 2: Morpheme order obtained in Monitor-free and Monitored condition (Larsen-Freeman, 1975; in Krashen, 1987: 101)

Morpheme order obtained in Monitored condition	Morpheme order obtained in Monitor-free condition
- copula	- ing
- auxiliary	- copula
- third person singular	- article
- ing	- auxiliary
- regular past	- short plural
- irregular past	- regular past
- article	- third person singular
- long plural	- irregular past
- short plural	- long plural
- possessive	- possessive

In an attempt to examine the effects of formal instruction on the order of acquisition of grammatical forms, Ellis (1985: 218-220) reports on five morpheme studies investigating second language learners and four studies investigating foreign language learners (table 3).

Three of the studies of SL learners (Fathman, 1975; Perkins and Larsen-Freeman, 1975; Turner, 1978) confirm the Natural Order Hypothesis of Krashen. In other words, they suggest that formal instruction does not affect the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes in spontaneous language use.

The other two studies of SL learners (Lightbown *et. al*., 1980; Lightbown, 1983) present slight evidence to the effect that formal instruction affects the order of acquisition in spontaneous language use, an effect, however, which was only temporary.

One problem to be considered when interpreting the results of all the five classroom morpheme studies of SL learners is that of separating the effect of instruction from environmental influence. In other words, the studies may not have tapped the effects of pure classroom learning as the learners were also exposed to L2 outside the classroom (Ellis, 1985: 219). This problem is minimized in the four studies reporting on FL learners.

With one exception, the results from FL acquisition (Fathman, 1978; Makino, 1979; Pica, 1983) point to formal instruction as having a minimal effect on the route of development. The exception is reported by Sajavaara (1981) who found a disturbed order in Finnish FL learners.

Summing up, formal instruction seems to have only a negligible effect on the morpheme order manifest in spontaneous language use. The morpheme order is either the same as the natural order, or it differs from it only in the short-term. In addition, the order may differ when the learners' attention is on form rather than meaning. This general conclusion is true irrespective of whether the learners are children or adults and, most important of all, irrespective of whether the learners are in second or foreign language environments.

2.4.1.1.2 Longitudinal Studies

These studies investigate a specific feature (such as negation) in detail and over time in order to show how learners gradually arrive at the TL. Showing that learners pass through stages on route to the TL rule provides evidence for a sequence of acquisition. There are very few longitudinal studies, so the available evidence is even slighter than that provided by the morpheme studies.

Ellis (1985: 221-224) reports on three studies: Felix (1981), Ellis (1984a), and Schumann (1978b). Like the morpheme studies, longitudinal studies suggest that though formal instruction may develop L2 knowledge, this knowledge manifests itself in language use only when the learner is attending to form (table 3). Accordingly, formal instruction does not, except in relatively minor ways, affect the route of SLA which is evident in communicative speech (Ellis, 1985: 224).

2.4.1.2 The Effects of Formal Instruction on the Rate/Success of SLA

While the route of development does not seem to be easily manipulated by instruction, formal instruction seems to be helpful in speeding up the rate of learning. Long (1983) reviewed a total of eleven studies that examined the effects of formal instruction on the rate/ success of L2 acquisition. All the studies used designs involving comparisons between learners receiving instruction and those experiencing simple exposure to the L2 in natural settings. In other words, they attempted to answer the question "Does L2 instruction make a difference?" by investigating whether instruction or exposure produced higher levels of proficiency. Long (1983: 375) found that six of the studies (Carroll, 1967; Chihara and Oller, 1978; Briere, 1978; Krashen, Seliger, and Hartnett, 1974; Krashen and Seliger, 1976; Krashen, Jones, Zelinski, and Usprich, 1978) showed a positive effect of formal instruction. Three studies (Upshur, 1968; Mason, 1971; Fathman, 1975) indicated that instruction did not help, while two studies (Hale and Budar, 1970; Fathman, 1976) produced ambiguous results (table 4).

On the basis of this review, Long (1983: 374) claimed that "there is considerable evidence to indicate that SL instruction does make a difference." He also argued that instruction was beneficial (1) for children as well as adults, (2) for intermediate and advanced learners, not just beginners, (3) on integrative as well as discrete-point tests, and (4) in acquisition-rich as well as acquisition-poor environments.

In general, Long concluded that the studies showed an advantage for formal instruction over exposure in promoting L2 acquisition. For him, this conclusion presented Krashen's position on formal instruction a serious blow, namely that instruction does not contribute directly to acquisition and should be limited to a few learnable rules. Krashen (1985: 28-31) maintained that the findings simply reflected the utility of a classroom as a source of comprehensible input for

beginners which was lacking in the natural environment, and not the results of instruction. When Long mentioned that the studies also involved advanced learners, Krashen simply defended himself by saying that subjects in some of the studies had been wrongly classified as intermediate and advanced. However, Krashen himself in an earlier paper had concluded that "formal instruction is a more efficient way of learning English for adults than trying to learn it in the streets" (Krashen, Jones, Zelinski, and Usprich, 1978: 260).

In sum, there is support for the claim that formal instruction facilitates the rate/ success of SLA. Long (1988: 135) holds that:

> …formal SL [Second Language] instruction has positive effects on SLA processes, on the rate at which learners acquire the language, and on their ultimate level of attainment.

2.4.1.3 The Effects of Formal Instruction on Production Accuracy

Ellis (1994: 617-627) reported on a total of sixteen studies that examined the effects of formal instruction on learners' ability to produce specific grammatical features accurately (table 5). Taking all these studies together, Ellis (1994: 623) claims that, "there is sufficient evidence to show that formal instruction can result in definite gains in accuracy." As an example of the studies Ellis reported on, we will consider three (Pica, 1983; Kadia, 1988; Harley, 1989) in some detail.

Pica (1983) examined the effects of formal instruction on the accurate performance of a number of grammatical morphemes in unplanned speech. She compared three groups of learners: (1) the natural group received no grammar teaching; i.e., learners learnt naturally through communication, (2) the mixed group experienced both instruction and naturalistic learning, and (3) the instructed group received formal instruction.

Table 4: Empirical studies of the effects of formal instruction on general language proficiency (based on Long 1983)

Study	Type of classroom	Subjects	Proficiency level	Data	Results
Carroll 1967	Foreign language learning in United States (exposure abroad)	Adults-first language English	All proficiency levels	Integrative test	Both instruction and exposure help, but exposure helps most.
Chihara and Oller 1978	EFL in Japan	Adults- first language Japanese	All proficiency levels	1 Discrete point test 2 Integrative test	Instruction helps, but exposure does not.
Krashen, Seliger and Hartnett 1974	ESL in United States	Adults- mixed first languages	All proficiency levels	Discrete point test	Instruction helps, but exposure does not.
Briere 1978	Spanish as a second language in Mexico	Children- local Indian language is first language	Beginners	Discrete point test	Both instruction and exposure help, but instruction helps most.
Krashen and Seliger 1976	ESL in United States	Adults- mixed first languages	Intermediate and advanced	Integrative test	Instruction helps, but exposure does not.
Krashen *et. al.* 1978	ESL in United States	Adults- mixed first languages	All proficiency levels	1 Discrete point test 2 Integrative test	Both instruction and exposure help, but instruction helps most.
Hale and Budar 1970	ESL in United States	Adolescents- mixed first languages	All proficiency levels	1 Discrete point test 2 Integrative test	Exposure helps, but instruction does not- results doubtful, however.
Fathman 1976	ESL in United States	Children- mixed first languages	All proficiency levels	Integrative test	Exposure helps, but instruction does not-- results doubtful, however.
Upshur 1968	ESL in United States	Adults- mixed first languages	Intermediate and advanced	Discrete point test	Instruction does not help.
Mason 1971	ESL in United States	Adults- mixed first languages	Intermediate and advanced	1 Discrete point test 2 Integrative test	Instruction does not help.
Fathman 1975	ESL in United States	Children- mixed first languages	All proficiency levels	Integrative test	Instruction does not help.

Pica found that the instructed group was more accurate on plural -s than the natural group but less accurate on progressive verb -ing. The mixed group was intermediate in both cases. In contrast, there were no accuracy differences among the three groups on articles. The results led Pica to suggest that the effects of instruction may depend on the structure that is being taught. In other words, if the structure is formally simple, and manifests a straightforward form-function relationship (as in the case of plural -s), instruction may lead to improved accuracy. If the structure is formally easy, but is functionally fairly complex (as in the case of progressive -ing), instruction may help learners to learn the form but not its use, so learners end up making a lot of errors. If instruction is functionally very complex (as in the case of English articles), instruction has no effect at all.

Pica concluded from her experiment that formal instruction results in increased accuracy of only those features which are formally easy to acquire, and which manifest transparent form-function relationships.

Kadia (1988) studied the effects of 40 minutes of one-to-one instruction on a Chinese learner's acquisition of ditransitive verbs (e.g. 'I showed him the book') and phrasal verb constructions such as 'I called him up'. She found that formal instruction had an immediate effect on accuracy in monitored language use (planned production; i.e., a test situation), but none in spontaneous language use (unplanned production). She (1988: 513) concluded: "… formal instruction seemed to have very little effect on spontaneous production, but it was beneficial for controlled performance."

Ellis (1994: 621) explains the findings of Kadia's study by suggesting that it may be that the learner needed more time for the benefits of instruction to show, especially that the structures Kadia investigated are complex and typically acquired late. It is also possible that instruction may have a delayed effect. That is, the

learner would be able to make use of the information he received through instruction at a later time.

Harley's (1989) study focused on the acquisition of the distinction between 'passé composé' and 'imparfait' among French immersion students in Canada. The researcher, who was also the instructor of the students, used functional-grammar materials to teach the subjects of the experimental group over an eight-week-period. The students from the control group received their regular instruction. The pre-test and the post-test comprised a written composition, a cloze test, and an oral interview.

The students of the control group did not score better on the post-test while the experimental group showed significant improvement in the accuracy with which they performed the two verb tenses in the three tasks of the post-test. Harley demonstrated that formal instruction has an effect on learners' ability to produce specific grammatical features accurately, and that the instructional effects are thus beneficial in both planned (written composition, cloze test) and unplanned language use (oral interview).

Table 5: Studies investigating the effects of instruction on accuracy (based on Ellis 1994).

Study	Type of classroom	Subjects	Proficiency level	Data	Results
Schumann 1978b	ESL in the United States (one-to-one instruction).	One adult learner—L1 Spanish.	Fossilized; i.e., no development taking place.	Spontaneous speech and imitation test.	Instruction in negatives had no effect on spontaneous speech but led to improved performance in imitation test.
Lightbown *et. al*. 1980	ESL in Canadian schools.	Children and adolescents— grades 6, 8, and10.	Mixed ability levels.	Grammaticality judgement test.	Instruction resulted in increased accuracy in grammaticality judgements in the short term. However, accuracy fell away in follow-up test 5 months later.
Felix 1981	German as a FL in secondary schools.	11-year-old children.	Complete beginners.	Recordings of classroom speech.	Similar errors in negatives, interrogatives, and pronouns as found in naturalistic learners.
Felix and Hahn 1985	German as a FL in secondary schools.	11-year-old children.	Complete beginners.	Recordings of classroom speech.	Analysis of pronoun errors indicates same processes as in naturalistic acquisition.
Lightbown 1983;1987	ESL in schools in Canada.	Children in grades 6, 7, and 8.	Mainly lower-intermediate.	Spontaneous speech on a picture task.	V+ -ing over-used by grade 6 children; replaced by simple verb form in grade 7. Progressive aux. followed similar pattern of development. Forms 'overlearnt' but natural processing takes over later. Effect of instruction delayed.
Pica 1983; 1985	EFL in Mexico/ ESL in the United States.	6 adult EFL learners, 6 adult ESL learners, and 6 natural learners.	Mixed levels of ability.	Audiotaped conversations with researcher.	Instructed learners more accurate in some forms (e.g. plural -s), less accurate in others (e.g. V+ -ing) and the same in others (e.g. articles).
Ellis 1984c	ESL in Britain.	13 children adolescents (10 to 15 yrs).	Mainly low-level ability.	Game designed to elicit unmonitored wh-interrogatives.	Instruction had no significant effect on accuracy of production of interrogatives for group as a whole, but individual learners showed marked gains.
Weinert 1987	German as a FL in Scotland.	Students in forms 1 to 4 in secondary schools.	Complete beginners to low-intermediate.	Non-communicative classroom speech and communicative speech in a communication game.	Similar errors found in naturalistic acquisition. Instruction led to heavy reliance on formulas, blocking IL development.
Ellis and Rathbone 1987	German as FL in London.	Adults in higher education.	Complete and false beginners.	Spontaneous speech from information gap task.	Levels of attendance in Term 1 correlated significantly with word order accuracy at the end of Term 2.

Eubank 1987b	German as FL in the United States.	6 adults learners at university.	Beginners.	Oral description of pictures.	Learners manifested unique errors by placing negator at the end of a clause.
Kadia 1988	ESL in Canadian university.	One adult learner.	Fossilized; i.e., no development taking place.	Spontaneous speech substitution and grammaticality judgement tests.	Instruction had no effect on spontaneous production. Performance on grammaticality judgement test declined but that on substitution test improved.
Harley 1989	French as a FL in Canada.	319 grade 6 learners in immersion programmes.	Intermediate and upper intermediate.	Ratings based on written compositions; close test scores; error scores based on oral interview.	The instructed students better than control students on cloze and oral interview scores on immediate post-test. Gains maintained in follow-up test3 months later.
Van Patten 1990	Spanish as a SL and as a FL in Puerto Rico and United States.	One 14-yr-old and one adult learner.	Intermediate and relative beginner.	Oral interviews supplying more or less spontaneous data.	Many similarities between the naturalistic and instructured learner, but the latter manifested some errors in the use of clitics not seen in the former (e.g. use of wrong person.
Felix and Weigl 1991	German as a FL in Germany.	77 learners aged from 12 to 17 yrs.	Beginner, intermediate, and advanced.	Grammatically judgement test.	Grammatically judgements influenced by L1 at beginner and intermediate levels; advanced learners reluctant to generalize beyond what they had been explicitly caught.
White *et. al.* 1991	ESL in Canada.	82 grade 5 and 6 students.	Post-beginner/low-intermediate.	Grammaticality judgement task, preference task and card sorting task.	Instructed learners made fewer judgement errors and scored higher scores on card-sorting task than did control. However, gains largely disappeared in follow-up test administered 5 months later.
White *et.al.* 1991	ESL in Canada.	56 grade 5 and 6 students.	Post-beginner/low-intermediate.	Grammaticality judgement task, preference task and oral production task.	Instructed learners performed better on all three tasks than controls. Gains maintained in follow-up test 6 months later.

Research focusing on the effects of formal instruction on SLA has shown that instruction in general is facilitative. What is of interest, so far, is whether some types of instruction are more effective than others. Therefore, the question "Does type of instruction make a difference?" should be tackled.

2.4.2 Differential Effectiveness vis-à-vis Different Types of Instruction

In the field of second language learning (SLL) research, there has been a great proliferation of experiments searching for the most facilitative types of instruction in L2 classrooms. Research questions typically posed in these studies involve the issue of the relative effectiveness of explicit and implicit types of grammar presentation. In an important research synthesis and meta-analysis that surveyed 77 published research reports on the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000) found that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction.

DeKeyser (1995: 380) classifies L2 grammar instruction into explicit and implicit types according to rule awareness. On the one hand, instruction is considered to be explicit if it involves the explanation of a rule or the request to focus on a grammatical feature. Explicit instruction can be deductive, where learners are given rules and asked to apply them, or inductive, where they are given samples of language from which to generate rules and make generalizations. Hence, this type of instruction aims to make learners aware of rules deductively or inductively. On the other hand, if instruction does not involve rule presentation or a request to focus on form in the input, then it is considered implicit. Thus, implicit instruction aims at making learners learn rules without awareness but by exposure to examples.

Norris and Ortega's (2000) conclusion that explicit instruction offers advantages over implicit instruction is set within an international debate on the role of an explicit focus on grammar in second language classrooms.

2.5 The Role of Explicit Instruction in the SLA Classroom

For some time, the language teaching profession has been exploring the role of formal instruction in SLA (Ellis, 1985, 1990, 1994; Long, 1983, 1988; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). One particular focus of the debate surrounding formal instruction has been the contribution that explicit instruction provides in the acquisition process.

In his well known Monitor Theory, Krashen (1982, 1985) discounts any important role for explicit instruction in the formation of a linguistic system. At best, as Krashen claims, explicit instruction serves only to give L2 learners explicit knowledge about language. The latter exists in the learners' heads as knowledge with which they can monitor output under restrictive conditions, which are, in Krashen's view, necessary but not sufficient. These conditions comprise time, focus on form, and knowledge of the rule.

Time: The performer needs to have sufficient time for successful use of the Monitor. This, however, seems to be hardly possible in normal conversation; i.e., while speaking and listening, performers have no time for thinking about and applying grammatical rules. Krashen claims that the over-use of conscious rules would result in hesitation and lack of attention. He (1987: 16) states:

> The over-use of rules in conversation can lead to trouble, i.e. a hesitant style of talking and inattention to what the conversational pattern is saying.

Focus on form: To use the Monitor successfully, the performer has to be focused on form, or has to be thinking about correctness. On many occasions,

performers may have time, but still do not use the Monitor as they are completely absorbed with the message they wish to convey. That is, they may be much more concerned with what they are saying, rather than how they are saying it.

Know the rule: Krashen (1981: 3) holds that the performer needs to have a correct mental representation of the rule to apply it correctly. This, however, appears to be difficult for the fact that even the best language students do not usually master all the rules presented to them. By and large, says Krashen, the Monitor will function best with simple rules (e.g. the third person singular) but not with more complex ones (e.g. the grammatical shift demanded by Wh-questions). These must be induced via the unconscious processes that lead to acquisition.

Krashen (1982: 97) asserts:

> The rules that we can learn and carry around in our heads for use as a Monitor are not those that are the earliest acquired, nor are they those that are important for communication. Rather, they are the simple rules, rules that are easiest to describe and remember.

Schwartz (1993) asserts that explicit knowledge does not play any significant role in the formation of syntax in the linguistic system of learners. She believes, as Krashen, that the learned linguistic knowledge (LLK) exists as a result of learners receiving explicit instruction about how language works. In her scheme, LLK can affect behaviour (i.e., output), but it is not regarded as part of the underlying system in which syntax exists.

Several experimental studies have investigated the degree to which learners can acquire grammar under explicit/ implicit conditions. They have tested the role of explicit instruction in the SLA classroom, and have shown an advantage for explicit learning.

Scott (1989, 1990) conducted two very similar experiments with college students of French as a foreign language. In both studies, Scott compared an explicit group with an implicit group on the acquisition of the relative pronouns and the subjunctive. The explicit group was presented with explicit grammar rules and sample sentences that contained the target structures. The implicit group read a text that contained many examples of the relevant forms embedded in a natural context (in the 1990 study, this group was told about the presence of the forms in the text). Both studies showed a significant advantage for the explicit group on written post-tests; the 1989 study also included an oral post-test which did not yield any significant differences.

Doughty (1991) performed a carefully designed computer- assisted study that examined the performance of three groups on English relative clauses.
Group I *(the rule-oriented group)*: It received explicit rules
Group II *(the meaning-oriented group)*: It received the relevant structures highlighted in different ways.
Group III *(the control group)*: learners in this group did not receive any instruction whatsoever; they were simply exposed to many examples of the relative clause structures in question.

Doughty found that group I and group II improved significantly against group III on production and comprehension tests. It appears that the learners in both instructed groups had their awareness of the relevant aspects of relativization raised compared to those in the control group, who were just concerned with the comprehension of the text. Hence, instruction "either via detailed analysis of structure or highlighting of target structures in context, promotes acquisition" (Doughty, 1991: 431).

N. Ellis (1993) conducted a computer-assisted experiment that involved learning rules for the soft mutation of initial consonants in Welsh. Ellis compared three groups of learners.

Group I *(the random group)*: Subjects received exposure to numerous examples of consonant alternations in a random order.

Group II *(the grammar group)*: It received explicit explanation of the rules in question, followed by the same randomized examples as for group I.

Group III (*the structured group*): Subjects received explicit rule explanation, followed by two examples after each rule, and then the same random presentation of examples as the other two groups.

The results revealed that group I was the fastest in learning to judge the well-formedness of sentences seen before, but the slowest in generalizing its knowledge to judge new sentences. Group II showed solid explicit knowledge of the rules, but little ability to apply them to well-formedness judgements especially at early stages. Group III did well on both tests of explicit rule knowledge and grammaticality judgement from the beginning, which means, according to Ellis that there was a transfer to implicit knowledge.

Clearly, the most explicit treatment, the only one that made learners aware of how rules apply to examples, outperformed the other two. Thus, explicit instruction is indeed the most effective treatment.

Alanen (1995) compared four groups on the acquisition of suffixes in Finnish as a foreign language. All groups were exposed to passages in Finnish with the differences among them as follows:

Group I: It was the control group; it did not receive any focus on form; i.e., there was no alteration of passages and no explicit instruction.

Group II: Subjects in this group received enhanced input; i.e., the targeted structures were printed in italics in the passages.

Group III: This group received a one-page explanation of the suffixes in question, and then read unaltered versions of the passages.
Group IV: This group received the explanation used for group III plus the enhanced passages provided for group II.
Participants were tested with the following measures:

a. A sentence completion test.
b. A comprehension test
c. A grammaticality judgement test
d. A word translation test
e. A rule statement test

The results showed that subjects in group III and group IV performed better than those in group I and group II on all measures except the grammaticality judgement test. On this measure, group III outperformed all others, but group IV performed similarly to them. Alanen supposes that the differences in performance were due to the provision of explicit instruction. She concluded that group III and group IV did well on all measures because they possessed conscious knowledge which helped them on the different tests administered.

DeKeyser (1995) conducted a computerized experiment with an artificial language called Implexan. It was hypothesized that explicit deductive learning would be better than implicit inductive learning for categorical grammar rules, and implicit inductive learning would be better than explicit deductive learning for prototypical rules. There were two groups:
Group I *(the implicit inductive condition)*: Subjects received a mere exposure to picture-sentence pairs.
Group II *(the explicit deductive condition)*: Subjects received explicit explanation of the relevant rules, followed by picture-sentence pairing.

The results indicated that there was a slight advantage for group I with regard to the prototypical rules, but group II strongly outperformed group I on the categorical rules. DeKeyser concluded that explicit teaching is superior to having students induce the rules for themselves because "even after exposure to thousands of relevant examples, the performance of the implicit group was essentially random" (DeKeyser, 2003: 323).

Robinson (1996) investigated the performance of four groups on 'simple' versus 'complex' rules in English. The subjects viewed sentences on a computer screen under varying conditions.

Group I *(the implicit condition)*: Subjects were told to remember the sentences. Each sentence was followed by the question "Were the words… and … next to each other in the sentence?" After responding 'yes' or 'no' to this question, they were given feedback on whether their answers were correct or not.

Group II *(the incidental condition)*: subjects in this group were asked 'yes' or 'no' comprehension questions about the same sentences. They were given correct or incorrect feedback after each response.

Group III *(The rule-search condition)*: Subjects were urged to identify two rules as they examined the sentences. Each sentence was followed by a 'yes' or 'no' question "Have you identified the rules yet?" or "Are you looking for the rules?" After answering, subjects moved on to the next stimulus sentence without receiving any feedback.

Group IV *(the instructed condition)*: Before viewing any sentence, subjects first received an explanation of the rules, and were informed that they needed this information to answer questions. After viewing each sentence, they were asked questions such as "Did the verbs used agree in tense?" or "Did the subject of the sentence come after the verb?" As in group I and group II, subjects received correct or incorrect feedback to each 'yes' or 'no' response, and then continued on to the next stimulus sentence.

The effects of the four treatments were tested by Robinson through a grammaticality judgement test. The results indicated that group IV, the one receiving explicit explanations, outperformed all the other groups on simple rules. For complex rules, group IV did better than group III, but performed similarly to the other groups (it was hypothesized that implicit learners will outperform explicit learners on complex rules). Clearly, there were no advantages for implicit learning with complex rules. This experiment agrees with the others in the sense that the groups with rule awareness usually do best. As Robinson (1995: 334) puts it, "consciousness at the level of rule awareness facilitates learning."

Advantages of explicit instruction were also found in another computerized experiment conducted by DeGraaff (1997). He compared two groups of monolingual native speakers of Dutch on the acquisition of four grammar structures in an artificial language called Experanto. Among the hypotheses that were tested, there was one of interest to the present section which is: "Participants receiving explicit instruction will perform better on tests measuring proficiency in the target structures than those not receiving explicit instruction" (DeGraaff, 1997: 253). Two groups were involved in the experiment:

Group I *(the explicit group)*: Participants in this group received explicit grammatical explanations on the targeted structures.

Group II *(the implicit group)*: It only rehearsed sentences containing the targeted structures.

Participants were tested three times: one halfway through the experiment, one immediately after the experiment, which lasted ten weeks, and one five weeks later. The proficiency tests included the following tasks:

a. A time constrained grammaticality judgement task.

b. A gap-filling task.

c. A contextualized Dutch-Experanto vocabulary translation task.

d. A sentence judgement and correction task not constrained by time.

DeGraaff found that group I scored higher than group II on all assessment tasks on both immediate and delayed post-tests. Evidently, the hypothesis was largely confirmed, and explicit instruction was simply better overall.

DeKeyser (1997) went a further step by addressing the issue of the automatization of explicitly learned rules of morphosyntax in a second language. He (1997: 199) hypothesized that once L2 grammar rules have been explicitly assimilated, practice will lead to gradual automatization, as measured by reduced reaction time and reduced error-rate. In his study, 61 participants were explicitly taught four grammatical rules plus 32 vocabulary items twice in an artificial language. Then they were tested on their explicit knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and given detailed explicit feedback on their errors. To ensure complete vocabulary and grammar knowledge, subjects were tested once again, and finally assigned to one of the three practice conditions.

Condition A: Learners practised comprehension of two targeted rules and production of other two targeted rules.

Condition B: This condition the opposite of A. That is, learners practised comprehension of the two targeted rules practised by A in production and vice versa.

Condition C: Learners under this condition practiced all four targeted rules in both comprehension and production.

DeKeyser found that the hypothesis of gradual automatization of explicitly learned rules as a function of practice was largely confirmed. For both reaction time and error rates in both comprehension and production, a clear and gradual drop-off took place, which slowed down over time, from a dramatic decrease between sessions 1 and 2 to a gradual decline for the last few sessions (Figures 6-7).

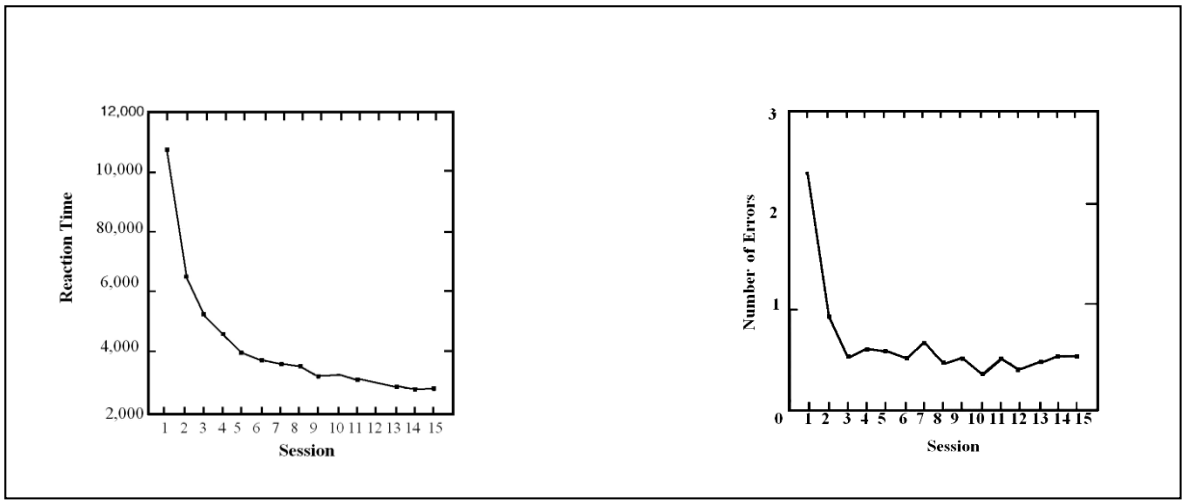


Figure 6 : Learners' reaction time and error rate throughout sessions in the comprehension task as a function of practice (DeKeyser, 1997: 205-206)

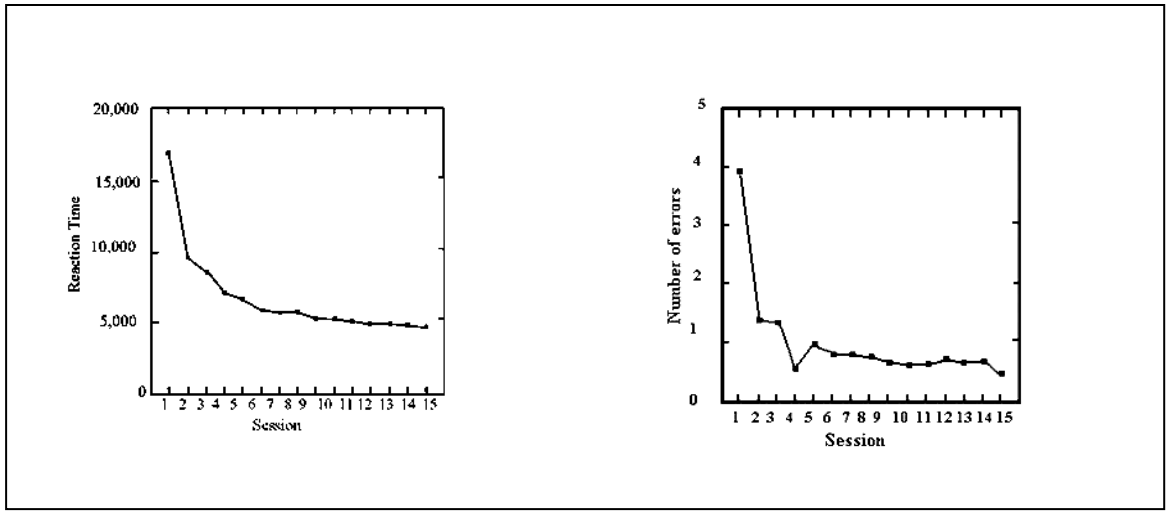


Figure 7: Learners' reaction time and error rate throughout sessions in the production task as a function of practice (DeKeyser, 1997: 205-207)

Ellis (1990) suggests that the main mechanism by which explicit instruction works is by developing explicit knowledge of rules which, subsequently, helps learners to acquire implicit knowledge. That is, after learners have explicit knowledge of a specific feature, their consciousness of the new feature has been

raised, and very often they continue to be aware of the feature and notice it in subsequent input, and therefore, acquire it as implicit knowledge. Evidently, consciousness-raising and noticing appear to be important components of successful language learning.

2.6 The Role of Consciousness-Raising and Noticing in SLL

2.6.1 Consciousness-Raising (CR)

The term consciousness-raising was first introduced in SLA literature by Sharwood-Smith (1981). It refers to deliberate attempts on the part of teachers to raise learners' awareness of the formal features of the language with a view of promoting the development of their L2 knowledge. Therefore, it implies that direct manipulation of learners' mental state is possible.

Rutherford (1987) was also among the first SLA researchers to discuss the assumption that raising students' consciousness about TL rules facilitates L2 acquisition. Rutherford (1987: 189) provides a short and broad definition of the term: "the drawing of the learner's attention to features of the target language." He refers to the tasks learners perform in order to induce an appropriate generalization. So, Rutherford's consciousness-raising focuses on aspects of grammar without necessarily using explicit rules. Instead of trying to impart rules and principles directly as in the traditional grammar lessons, it seeks to help learners discover them for themselves by focusing on aspects of the target structures.

Ellis (1993) claims that grammar teaching should be directed at consciousness-raising rather than practice. CR attempts to provide the learner with an understanding of a particular grammatical feature by helping him develop a cognitive representation of how it works, what it consists of, and so on, but does not require the learner to actually produce sentences manifesting that particular structure. Practice, however, has the aim of producing sentences exemplifying the

target structure in controlled and free language use in order to develop implicit knowledge.

Ellis (1993) identifies two types of consciousness-raising:

Consciousness-raising for comprehension: It aims at focusing the learner's attention on the meaning(s) performed by specific grammatical properties. This type of CR can help the process of intake. To achieve this aim, the use of activities that induce the learner to notice and understand the feature in input is advocated.

Consciousness-raising for explicit knowledge: It aims at helping the learner learn about a particular grammatical feature by developing an explicit representation of how it works in L2. It has been suggested that explicit knowledge also aids the process of intake formation by facilitating noticing and noticing the gap. In Ellis' view, this type of CR might be achieved in two ways: (1) by the teaching of explicit grammar rules which result in gains in explicit knowledge, and (2) through the use of what Fotos and Ellis (1991) called *communicative grammar discovery tasks*, which provide learners with the data they need to discover the rules for themselves. If these tasks are carried out in the TL, they can raise the learners' consciousness about a specific grammatical item in the input, so that the students will develop explicit knowledge, while simultaneously providing opportunities for communicating in TL. Hence, communicative grammar discovery tasks would help learners gain cognitive understanding of grammar, complemented by plentiful opportunities for communicative activities to develop implicit knowledge.

Fotos (1993) investigated the amount of learners' noticing produced by two types of grammar consciousness-raising treatments designed to develop explicit knowledge of some grammar structures: teacher-fronted grammar lessons and interactive, grammar problem-solving tasks. The frequency of noticing the target

forms a few weeks after the two treatments was also compared with that of a control group which was not exposed to either of the treatments.

Fotos concluded from the results that both treatments were equally effective in promoting significant amounts of noticing the targeted structures as compared to the noticing produced by the control group. Fotos' findings also demonstrate that a number of learners who developed knowledge about grammar structures went on to notice those structures in later input after their consciousness had been raised.

Evidently, Fotos' research suggests that (1) consciousness-raising directed at specific structures can result in subsequent noticing of these structures in input, and (2) this noticing may help retention of the structures (Ellis, 1994: 644).

2.6.2 Noticing

Schmidt (1990) identifies three aspects of consciousness involved in language learning: awareness, attention, and knowledge. The first sense, consciousness as awareness, embraces noticing as its second level. Schmidt (1990) also claims in his 'noticing hypothesis' that consciousness, in the sense of awareness of specific forms in the input at the level of noticing (conscious attention), is necessary for language learning to take place. In other words, L2 learners must first consciously 'notice' a particular feature in the input before any subsequent processing of that feature can occur. Hence, noticing is a critical first step in the conversion of input into intake for L2 acquisition.

While such a theoretical assumption is useful for offering insights into L2 acquisition, it is only through empirical research that it is validated. The earliest data related to the role of noticing in SLA appears to be that of Schmidt and Frota (1986), in which Schmidt analysed his own acquisition of Portuguese during a five-month stay in Brazil. Schmidt kept a diary of what he had noticed through

instruction, and also recorded his conversation with a native speaker. Analysis and correlation of the two sources indicated that it was only after Schmidt noticed the target form in communicative input that the form showed up in his own production. He (1990: 141) observes:

> I heard them and processed them for meaning from the beginning, but did not notice the form for five months. When I finally did notice the form, I began to use it.

Furthermore, Schmidt and Frota (1986) suggested that two kinds of noticing are necessary conditions for acquisition:

1. Learners must attend to linguistic features of the input that they are exposed to, without which input can not become 'intake'.
2. Learners must 'notice the gap'; i.e., make comparisons between the current state of their developing linguistic system, as realized in their output, and the TL system, available as input.

To help clarify Schmidt's hypothesis and the place of noticing in L2 acquisition, the following model, proposed by Ellis (1997), is useful (Figure 8).

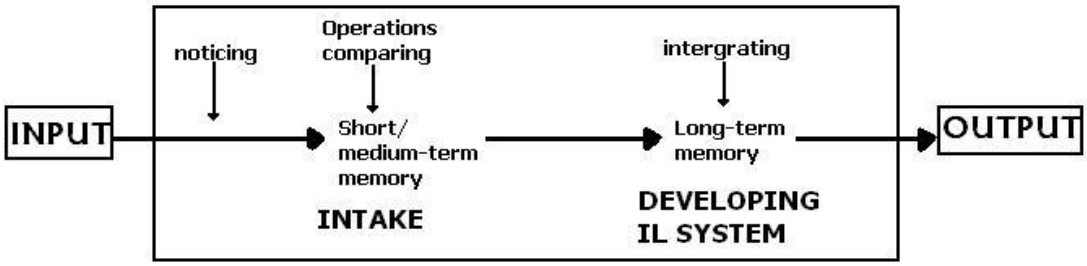


Figure 8: The process of learning implicit knowledge (Ellis, 1997: 119)

In Ellis' model, two main stages are seen to be involved in the process of input becoming implicit knowledge. The first stage, in which input becomes intake, involves learners noticing language features in the input, absorbing them into their short-term memories and comparing them to features produced as output. The second stage is the one in which intake is absorbed into the learner's interlanguage system, and change to this system only occurs when language features become part of long-term memory.

To summarize, noticing appears to have a mediating role in the acquisition process; it is an important component of successful language learning.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that formal instruction has a beneficial effect on the language acquisition of L2 learners. This effect can be observed in various ways including rapid learning, the development of higher levels of L2 proficiency, and the improvement of language accuracy. Consequently, the answer to whether formal instruction works is a tentative 'yes' (Ellis, 1990: 165).

In fact, grammar teaching has been treated in many different ways, and at present, many researchers give a favourable account of explicit instruction. It may help learners with their language acquisition mainly through the construction of explicit knowledge. The latter is necessary for learners to be able to notice features in the input which they receive, which can then become part of their acquired knowledge.

Furthermore, there is substantial evidence to suggest that EGI is successful if the learning outcomes are measured by specific grammar-related tasks (eg. a sentence joining task, a grammaticality judgement task, a gap-filling task). It is in these tasks that learners are able to draw their explicit knowledge. Studies by

Scott (1989, 1990); Doughty (1991) ; N.Ellis (1993); Alanen (1995); DeKeyser (1995); Robinson (1996); DeGraaff (1997); DeKeyser (1997) all support such a conclusion.

However, disagreements exist among L2 scholars and teachers about whether EGI is a useful means of bringing about gains in the accuracy of production tasks including written compositions. Therefore, the question *"Is explicit grammar instruction effective for improving the accuracy of students' writing?"* will be dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPLICIT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION AND WRITING ACCURACY

Introduction

As pointed out in the previous chapters, grammar gains its prominence in language teaching, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL), in that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained. Additionally, grammar is thought to furnish the basis for a set of language skills including writing. In this regard, "grammar allows the learners to put their ideas into intelligible sentences so that they can successfully communicate in a written form" (Widodo, 2006: 122).

Although writing is impacted by the learners' knowledge of grammar, the role of explicit grammar instruction in the improvement of writing accuracy continues to be a highly contested and controversial issue in FL instruction. Interestingly, in this chapter, the debate about whether explicit grammar teaching is necessary or effective for improving the accuracy of student writing, and the related studies in this regard are reviewed. Yet before doing that, the chapter presents some theoretical issues which are of concern to this study, as follows: First, it explores as much data as possible about the nature of writing and its place in FL learning. Moreover, it looks at the relationship between speaking and writing. Further, it offers some discussion on two writing approaches which are, according to us, of primary importance: the product approach and the process approach. After that, the importance of accuracy in L2 writing is highlighted.

3.1 The Nature of Writing

A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language, and that written performance is much like oral performance, the only difference lying in graphic instead of auditory

signals (Brown, 2001: 335). Fortunately, as Brown (2001: 335) adds, "no one holds this view today." Currently, writing is considered among the most complex human activities. According to Byrne (1979: 52),

> Writing is transforming our thought into language, therefore, it is a complex skill that requires physical and mental activity on the part of the writer.

Horvath (2001: 5) maintained that:

> It [writing] involves the development of a design idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects.

Furthermore, writing is not an end in itself, but rather a purposeful activity; it is a means of communication. As Rozakis (2004: 21) pointed out:

> Writing is a powerful means of communication because it forms and shapes human thought. In an open society, everyone is free to write and thereby share information with others.

This view converges with Miller's (2001; in Zidat, 2005: 1) view which asserts that:

> …even though the writing production is an expression of one's individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people.

3.2 The Role of Writing in Second/Foreign Language Learning

In recent years, writing has come to occupy the prominent role that it deserves in second and foreign language teaching and learning. Zamel (1992: 481), relating writing to a set of language skills and abilities, argued that:

> Writing, because it allows us to represent to ourselves our learning, our ways of making meaning, teaches us the most profound lesson about how we read, write, and use language, about what it means to know.

Significantly, writing fulfills more than one role in the area of ESL/EFL. To begin with, writing consolidates language learnt orally, and imprints information on learners' minds. As Emig (1977; in Lockchart and Shaw, 2006: 132-133) put it: "Writing --through its inherent reinforcement of hand, eye, and brain-- marks a uniquely powerful multirepresentational mode of learning."

Moreover, writing provides a means for learners to explore their thoughts as they communicate their ideas. Likewise, as Raimes (1983: 261) posited, writing is a cognitive and learning experience that helps us to "find out what we want to say." Furthermore, writing makes thoughts visible and concrete, for it is a way to get what inside one's head outside, on paper (Elbow, 2000: 155-156). In a similar vein, Dunning (1994: 15) notes, "Writing presents opportunities for students to observe what they think as they write it." This in turn helps them to reflect on and clarify their thinking. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and even changed.

Additionally, writing enhances students' thinking skills. As Irmscher (1979; in EL-Koumy, 2002: 68) notes, "Writing stimulates thinking, chiefly because it forces us to concentrate and organize." Finally, writing can enhance students' vocabulary, spelling, and grammar (EL-Koumy, 2002: 68).

3.3 The Relationship Between Spoken and Written Language

Spoken and written language both have as their central function the communication of information about people and the world. However, learners often assume that written language is more difficult to learn, and they perceive the oral language as less complex than the written language. This is not the case,

the oral language is just as linguistically complex as the written language, but the complexity is of a different kind. The inevitable differences in the structures and use of speech and writing come about because they are produced in very different communicative situations. As Halliday (1987; in Eysenck and Keane, 2005: 398) holds:

> Writing is in essence a more conscious process than speaking… spontaneous discourse is usually spoken, self-monitored discourse is usually written.

According to Weigle (2002: 15), the relationship between writing and speaking is important for language testing because of the question to what extent writing can be seen as a special case of L2 language use and to what extent writing represents a distinctly different ability from speaking.

It is worth to note that linguists and educational researchers have historically held contradictory positions about the relationship between writing and speaking. As Grabe and Kaplan (1996) point out, traditional linguistic inquiry has held that speech is primary and written language is merely a reflection of spoken language, while research has taken the stance that the written form of the language is more 'correct', and therefore should be more highly valued than the oral language. Nevertheless, in recent years a consensus has been emerging to reconcile these two positions: neither oral nor written language is inherently superior to the other, but oral and written texts do differ across a number of dimensions, including textual features, sociocultural norms and patterns of use, and the cognitive processes involved in text production and comprehension (Weigle, 2002: 15).

The characteristics that ordinarily differentiate writing from speaking were listed by Brown (1994) as follows:

- **Permanence:** Oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and reread as often as one likes;
- **Production time:** writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation;
- **Distance** between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in ordinarily face-to-face contact and thus necessitates greater explicitness on the part of the writer;
- **Orthography**, which carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (eg. stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pausing, etc.);
- **Complexity:** written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected with coordinators, as well as more redundancy (eg. repetition of nouns and verbs);
- **Formality:** because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking;
- **Vocabulary:** written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and more lower-frequency words, than oral texts.

Undoubtedly, it is an accepted fact that written and spoken language differ.

3.4 Approaches to Writing

Throughout the years, there have been several approaches to teaching writing. These were presented by Raimes (1983) as follows: the Controlled-to-Free Approach, The Free-Writing Approach, The Paragraph-Pattern Approach, The

Communicative Approach, the Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach, and the Process Approach. For reasons of brevity, we shall deal with only two writing approaches that are currently popular in English writing, teaching field: the product approach and the process approach.

3.4.1 The Product Approach

The product approach to writing is primarily concerned with the final product of writing: the essay, the report, the story, and what that product should "look" like (Brown, 2001: 335). In ESL/EFL contexts, this approach was rooted in the behaviourist theory. Pincas (1962: 185-186) stated that:

> The learner is not allowed to 'create' in the target language at all … The use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns; … these patterns are learned by imitation, and … not until they have been learned can originality occur.

In other words, students in this approach are provided a model composition, and are encouraged to mimic it in order to produce a similar product. The student's final product is measured against a set of criteria including content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation. It is thus not surprising that the content and the form which the students deal with are largely controlled by the teacher.

A typical product class might involve the following activities. The teacher would introduce a topic or use guides provided by a textbook, talk about them, and maybe invite a small class discussion, and then explain how students are going to write a composition based on them. Then, the students would be asked to write individually either in class or after class, and turn their writing in to the teacher for marking. The teacher marks the composition with corrections or correction symbols, sometimes with added comments, focusing on form instead of content.

As Silva (1990: 13) puts it, in the product approach

> The writer is simply a manipulator of previously learned language structures; the reader is the ESL teacher in the role of editor or proofreader, not specifically interested in quality of ideas or expression but primarily concerned with formal linguiustic features.

The product approach has been accused of being mindless because it merely results in "mindless copies of a particular organization plan or style" (Eschholz, 1980: 24). In other words, this approach encourages students to use the same plan in a multitude of settings, applying the same form regardless of content, thereby as Eschholz (1980: 24) notes, "stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them." In addition, the approach is said to be repetitive, for the entire activity of writing is seen as "an exercise in habit formation" (Silva, 1990: 13). Moreover, the product approach fails to recognize that students write for an audience and for a purpose, and that ideas are created and formulated during the process of writing.

Notwithstanding, as Xu (2005: 38) points out, the product approach has some advantages that can not be denied. First, it recognizes the need for students to be given linguistic knowledge about texts, so learners will have a clear idea about the organization of a particular text. Second, this approach understands that imitation is one way in which people learn. Finally, the product approach has greatly contributed to the development of students' vocabulary and structure.

3.4.2 The Process Approach

During the early 1980's, the process approach developed by way of reaction to the weaknesses presented by the product approach. As its name suggests, in the process approach, the focus of attention has shifted from the finished product to the

whole process of writing: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Appelebee (1986; in Kroll, 1990: 8) noted that the process approach

> provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (the patterns of organization, spelling, grammar).

Similarly, Badger and White (2000: 154) reported that:

> Writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure.

Interestingly, students in this approach are trained to generate ideas for writing, think of the purpose and audience, write multiple drafts in order to present written products that communicate their thoughts. As such, writing becomes a process of discovery for the students as they discover new ideas and new language forms to express them. In essence, as Raimes (1983: 261) asserts: "composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning. Composing means thinking."

Furthermore, learning to write is seen as a developmental process that helps students to write as professional authors do, choosing their own topics and genres, and writing from their own experiences and observations. Hence, the teacher is no longer required to offer a shining example of the model; he becomes a facilitator in providing formative feedback during the process of each student's composition. Correspondingly, this approach encourages students to assume greater responsibility for making their own improvements.

According to Shih (1986; in Brown, 2001: 335-336), process approaches do most of the following:

a. focus on the process of writing that leads to the final written product;
b. help student writers to understand their own composing process;
c. help them to build repertoires of strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting;
d. give students time to write and rewrite;
e. place central importance on the process of revision;
f. let students discover what they want to say as they write;
g. give students feedback throughout the composing process (not just on the final product) as they attempt to bring their expression closer and closer to intention;
h. encourage feedback from both the instructor and peers;
i. include individual conferences between teacher and student during the process of composition.

Since its foundation, the process approach has been widely accepted because it lays emphasis on the writing process of writers. However, it showed certain limitations which can be summed up as follows:

- It often regards all writing as being produced by the same set of processes; that it gives sufficient importance to the kind of texts writers produce (Xu, 2005: 38).
- It requires a long-time training.
- It is not suitable to be applied to large classes where teachers can not give guidance to every student.

Another problematic area of the process approach is its emphasis on content with little attention to the grammatical accuracy of the students' final products as it assumes that "content, ideas, and the need to communicate would determine form" (Silva, 1990: 15). Raimes (1991; in Muncie, 2002: 181) holds that:

> high-level concerns have often pushed a focus on form completely out of the scene, and there are many writing text and methodology books which contain no grammar reference or instructional component at all.

Needless to say that the production of a clear and communicative piece of writing requires attention to both form and content. The assumption is that what the student as a writer is going to say will become clearer through a focus on form. White and Arndt (1991: 133), while acknowledging the importance of grammar in producing written work, assert that "grammatical accuracy and correctness of form are now important."

Grammatical accuracy and its importance in L2 writing will be dealt with in the next section.

3.5 Accuracy

3.5.1 Definition of Accuracy

To know what we are talking about, it is important to define the term 'accuracy'. A number of existing definitions are chronologically listed as follows:

Buck, Byrnes, and Thompson (1989; in Hadley, 2003: 17) refer to accuracy as "the acceptability, quality and precision of the message conveyed."

Johnson (2001) considers accuracy associated with initially syntactic and subsequently phonetic correctness. Besides, semantic and lexical accuracy should also be taken into account, he adds.

In this regard, Brown (2001: 268) also mentions that accuracy means being "clear, articulate, grammatically and phonologically correct."

Byrd (2005: 551) asserts that "in most cases, accuracy refers to "grammatical accuracy" but other areas of language use can be involved, too: spelling and/ or pronunciation."

It is worth noting that accuracy in our present study is mainly associated with grammatical accuracy involving interrelationships among syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic correctness. In other words, a student will be accurate in the use of a particular target feature if he really manages to use the correct form carrying the correct semantic notion in the appropriate context.

3.5.2 The Importance of Grammatical Accuracy in L2 Writing

Skehan (1996) maintained that ESL students can succeed in catching meaning if they appropriately use communicative strategies that assist comprehension of meaning. However, repeated overuse of these kinds of communicative strategies might lower students' motivation to learn correct forms because they achieve their communicative goals without explicit attention to form. In the long run, it might prevent their interlanguage system from developing, and cause fossilization. In the context of writing, the presence of errors has a negative impact on the readers' perception of the quality of L2 writing. Ferris (1995: 18) stated:

> Though students may be much better at invention, organization, and revision than they were before, too many written products are still riddled with grammatical and lexical inaccuracies. No matter how interesting or original a student's ideas are, an excess of sentence- and discourse-level errors may distract and frustrate instructors and other readers.

Accordingly, Hinkel (2002: 181) notes that, "in evaluations of nonnative speaker (NNS) writing, grammatical accuracy plays an important role." Thus, teachers should realize the need to help and encourage students to pay more attention to accurate forms in their writing in order to communicate effectively. As Muncie (2002: 183) asserts that:

> Grammar is just as important an instrument of communication as content, and a text can not be written cohesively without attention being paid to how meaning is being expressed through the grammar.

Considerably, to attain advanced proficiency in L2 writing, students need to attend to grammar in their compositions particularly that they have the option of going back to the text that they have just produced, and can slowly review the text, and edit it for grammatical accuracy.

Interestingly, the editing of ESL/EFL compositions does not necessarily come at the end of a written text. Instead, editing should be seen as an on-going task, combined with the generation of ideas, drafting, and revising (Muncie, 2002: 183). Furthermore, editing is viewed by some L2 composition specialists as a skill that needs to be taught. In this regard, Dicker (1981; in Speck, Hinnen, and Hinnen, 2006: 151) argued that "editing is not an automatic part of the writing process. It is a skill which, like any other skill, must be specifically taught and reinforced."

To help ESL/EFL students learn editing skills, Dicker proposes a model composed of time and a two-fold focus on communicative accuracy and grammatical accuracy. She points out that learners, when given time to edit their writing for grammatical accuracy, focus instead on communicative accuracy. However, they often fail to precisely convey what they think due to their limited grammatical knowledge. Therefore, Dicker posits that students can learn how to edit by selecting a language rule which they can apply to a discrete-point task, learn other rules they do not know, provide examples of how those rules are applied, and finally apply the rule to their writing. In doing so, learners can easily monitor their written products.

In short, learners need to be consciously aware of the rules governing the use of the target form so that they can successfully edit their written compositions.

Therefore, many researchers have begun to re-examine the role and effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction in improving writing accuracy.

3.6 The Effect of Explicit Grammar Instruction on the Accuracy of Students' Writing

The relationship between EGI and language accuracy in student writing has been hotly debated among experts in FL writing. An early challenge to the prevailing practice of focusing on rules of grammar in written products came in the 1963 " Braddock Report", which concluded that:

> the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing.
>
> (Weaver, 1996: 10)

This view was mainly adopted by writing process researchers and teachers, who began to re-evaluate the tendency in ESL/ EFL writing to "over-focus" on form (Zamel, 1983).

Moreover, the exponents of the anti-grammar position drew on the work of Krashen to make their case. According to Krashen's Monitor Model (1982), learning about grammar rules does not necessarily result in the correct production of those forms in actual language use.

Believing in the ineffectiveness of EGI in improving students' writing accuracy, many L2 composition experts, as Frodesen and Holten (2003: 142) reported on, argued that:

> The "return" on grammar instruction is often disappointing. Teachers find that even a grammatical feature has been covered and practised, students may not use it accurately in their own writing.

This fact was attributed to the assumption that, usually, students fail to attend to multiple concerns at one time. For instance, Flower and Hayes (1980) have found that editing for grammatical accuracy is a relatively low level concern for student writers, especially when this focus competes with idea generation and planning.

Alternatively, writing process researchers suggested that teachers should frequently encourage learners to look at content and organization; these in turn will take care of many grammar problems. To put it another way, grammatical errors will gradually disappear as learners clarify their thoughts on a topic. As Zamel (1982: 207) puts it:

> If, however, students learn that writing is a process through which they can explore and discover their thoughts and ideas, then product is likely to improve as well.

The objection to explicit grammar teaching is clearly fundamental if it is true, but, on the other hand, there are other L2 scholars who swear just the opposite. As Hudson (2001) notes that many researchers have found that when well taught, any kind of grammar can be learned by most students at least at secondary level.

Interestingly, a growing literature of research advocates that EGI is helpful to the improvement of writing accuracy. The assumption is that explicit instruction results in gains in explicit knowledge, and this in turn can help learners improve grammatical accuracy in composing and editing.

For instance, Little (1994) has noted that effective communication in written discourse typically requires a high level of correctness, and native and non-native speakers alike use explicit knowledge, “ whether [they] take it from memory or reference books, when [they] plan, monitor and edit more formal kinds of written and spoken discourse” (Little, 1994: 104).

It is important to note that L2 writers do not have the same "felt sense" of correctness nor intuitive grasp of the grammatical rules of English, so EGI may be more important for them (Frodesen and Holten, 2003).

Within a similar vein, Shih (1998) found that adopting a hands-off approach to grammar editing often leaves students, especially those with the weakest overall language proficiency, with texts replete with language errors. These errors, as he asserts, often lack the editing strategies or grammar knowledge to tackle.

Additionally, Frodesen and Holten (2003: 144) attracted more attention to the fact that, in adopting Krashen's position, L2 compositionists have underemphasized an important aspect of the Monitor Model, namely that the monitor can be used effectively when there is enough time for learners to apply a rule to their output. In other words, if a learner has time to recall and apply formal rules, these can aid in accurate language use. Such conditions, as Krashen himself acknowledges, do not exist in speaking, but can and do hold in writing. This suggests that explicit explanation may be effective in helping learners improve accuracy in writing.

In Wenden's (1991: 311) view, explicit grammatical knowledge is needed by students to translate their ideas into writing. He found --when analysing the processes which 8 learners go through when writing a composition-- that students ask themselves when writing: "What's the grammar rule that applies in this instance? How do I apply this grammar rule?"

Thus, grammar learning can be considered as a strategy to improve writing; however, since most learning processes are circular, writing is also a strategy to improve grammar (Weissberg, 2000). In other words, the application of explicit grammar rules when writing can help learners become more accurate writers.

Frodesen and Holten (2003: 144) reported that:

> Overt and systematic grammar instruction can help students access the grammar rules that they know and use their intuitions about the language judiciously.

Equally, writing can help L2 learners to actively communicate the grammatical rules they have learnt, and thus reinforce them in their minds. Hence, grammar and writing are clearly interconnected.

In the light of the grammar and writing debate, a number of studies investigated the effect of explicit grammar instruction on students' writing accuracy with varying results.

Frantzen (1995) investigated whether explicit grammar teaching and corrective feedback improved grammatical knowledge, accuracy and fluency of writing, as measured by a discrete-point grammar test and an essay before and after the intervention. She used a sample of 44 intermediate students studying a university-level Spanish content course. In the study, students in the experimental group received 10 to 15 minutes a day (three times a week) of grammar review (conducted in the TL) that focused on verb and pronoun usage; they also wrote two in-class essays, on which all of their errors were corrected, and five out-of-class essays on which the location of their errors was indicated but not corrected. For these five essays, the students were asked to correct the errors, and the correct forms were supplied by the instructor at the end. Students in the control group received no grammar review; the errors in all of their essays were circled or underlined, but the correct forms were not supplied. Frantzen compared the beginning- and end-of-semester writing of these two groups; she found that:

a. The experimental group improved more than the control group on the grammar test.
b. There were no significant differences on the essay fluency and accuracy. In fact, the control group outperformed the experimental group on one measure of accuracy, the indicative.

Frantzen concluded that grammar accuracy can be improved by interaction in the TL. Explicit grammar teaching improves explicit grammar knowledge but not accuracy in performance. That is, it is not carried over the performance of language such as writing an essay. She (1995: 339) states that:

> the present study has shown that at least at the intermediate level and in the case of expressing written ideas, grammatical accuracy can be significantly improved by simply interacting in the language in a meaningful context.

Confounding the results of Frantzen's study is the fact that both explicit instruction and error correction feedback were involved. In other words, the study may not have tapped the absolute effect of explicit grammar teaching. As Reichelt (2001: 580) noted:

> there were two different experimental treatments: grammar review and error correction. It is possible that one treatment had positive effects and the other had negative effects, but because the two were combined, it is impossible to determine whether or not this was the case. A better research design would have alternated only one treatment variable.

Manley and Calk (1997) also investigated whether explicit grammar teaching led to reduced errors and improved writing performance. They gave 14 university students in an advanced French composition course, pre- and post-treatment questionnaires regarding their attitudes to explicit grammar teaching. There was no control group. The students wrote four compositions over a period of time, after which some explicit instruction resulting from error patterns detected was provided on the following four rules (i.e., one rule after each composition): the passé composé, noun-adjective agreement, possessive adjectives, and the definite article. The researchers compared the number of student errors made on the selected

grammar point in each of the first four compositions used for analysis with the number of errors on the same four grammar points in the final (fifth) composition. In addition, the first and final essays were scored holistically, with native-French-speaking instructors asked to decide which of the two essays was "better". Manley and Calk found:

1. In the pre-treatment questionnaire, students were favourably disposed to grammar but not able to provide any discernible pattern of what grammar they found easy and difficult.
2. In the post-treatment questionnaire, most students said they found the explicit grammar teaching useful.
3. The fifth composition demonstrated a significant improvement (reduction in errors) in three of the four grammar points targeted --noun-adjective agreement, possessive adjective use, and definite article use-- but not in the use of the passé composé.
4. When compositions were graded 'holistically', there was no significant improvement.

Manley and Calk concluded that EGI has an overall helpful effect on the accuracy of student writing.

Tsang and Wong (2000; in Archibald, 2001: 155) studied the effects of explicit grammar teaching on student writing. They claim that there were indications that the students were able to write with greater readiness and use more mature syntax.

In another study by Macaro and Masterman (2006), the impact of EGI on written accuracy has been examined. In this study, a cohort of 12 students received an intensive course in explicit French grammar immediately before their first-year of study in a United Kingdom university. At the end of the study, the researchers found that after students received explicit explanations on the target structures,

they were unable to write with fewer grammatical errors than the control group which had not received EGI. Hence, as Macaro and Masterman (2006: 319) reported, "there is no evidence that explicit grammar taught on the course led to effective production monitoring."

Macaro and Masterman concluded that the intensive course of explicit grammar teaching was not a sufficiently powerful independent variable in bringing about an improvement in the learners' writing accuracy. In other words, "it did not 'make all the difference'" (Macaro and Masterman, 2006: 321).

Evidently, the studies described above have produced conflicting findings. This very matter leads to a fuzzy picture, and consequently, very little can be said about the effect of EGI on the accuracy of student writing.

Conclusion

The practical value of explicit knowledge, as being the outcome of explicit grammar instruction, to the improvement of student writing accuracy has been the central concern of this chapter. Theoretically, this concern has been the subject of a continuing debate in ESL and EFL contexts. Two extreme positions have been identified. At one extreme, many L2 researchers and teachers have expressed skepticism about the efficacy of explicit grammar teaching noting that this type of grammar instruction may not help students improve their accuracy when composing regardless of the teacher's time and effort. For this reason, writing process researchers suggested that teachers should be concerned more about content when evaluating NNS writing. Hence, the purpose of composing should be to help students express their feelings, experiences, and opinions.

However, at the other extreme, many other researchers have argued that EGI aids writing accuracy. Students can use the explicit knowledge they gained from explicit instruction to monitor their writing for grammatical accuracy. Moreover,

explicit grammatical knowledge assists student writers in expressing exactly what they think.

In the light of the grammar and writing debate and the limited empirical evidence as to the effect of explicit instruction on accuracy in writing, further research is needed before a definite answer could be found. Interestingly, a quasi-experimental study has been conducted to examine the impact of explicit grammar instruction on the learners' (a) grammatical knowledge and (b) writing accuracy in the English language teaching/learning situation in Algeria.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STUDY

4.1 Methodology

Introduction

This study was an attempt to determine whether providing explicit grammar instruction for first-year students of Commerce significantly improved (a) their grammatical knowledge as measured by a discrete-point grammar test, and (b) their writing accuracy as measured by an integrative test (composition). To accomplish this attempt, a review of selected literature was conducted, and essential baseline data were obtained.

In this first part of chapter four, some procedures, such as the choice of the method, the sample, target structures, research design, procedure, instruments, scoring, and statistical analysis of the study will be examined.

4.1.1 Choice of the Method

The quasi-experimental research method was used in the study to achieve the research purposes. Due to the organizational system of classes at the Department of Commerce, random sampling could not be utilized for the study. Under this condition, we decided to use a quasi-experimental design in which two pre-existing classes were randomly assigned as the experimental and control groups.

The noteworthy point is that the present study is said to be a strong quasi-experiment. This very fact was caused by two factors. First, the researcher had control over the independent variable by randomly assigning the explicit condition to one intact classroom (experimental group) and the implicit condition to the other (control group). Second, participant characteristics were likely to be similar as the administration claimed that the assignment of students to different classrooms was almost random (i.e., there was no intentional bias introduced in the assignment). Due to the aforementioned factors, this study could be considered almost as strong as a randomized experiment (table 6). As Gliner and Morgan (2000: 99) put it,

> The strength of this quasi-experimental design is that it is similar to a random experimental design except that participants have not been randomly assigned to groups or conditions.

Hence, the strong quasi-experimental design used for the present study supports causal inferences. In the words of Hedrick *et.al*. (1993; in Gray, 2004: 77), it provides "a mechanism for chipping away at the uncertainty surrounding the evidence of a specific causal relationship." In brief, this method will enable me to examine clearly the effect of explicit grammar instruction on learners' grammatical knowledge and writing accuracy.

Table 6: Issues that determine the strength of quasi-experimental designs (Gliner and Morgan, 2000: 100)

Strength of Design	Random Assignment of treatments to intact Groups	Participant Characteristics likely to be similar
Strong	Yes	Yes, assuming no bias in how participants were assigned to groups
Moderate	No	Maybe
Weak	No	No, because participants self-assigned to groups

4.1.2 The Sample

The target population of the present study is 130 first-year students majoring in Commerce at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi for the academic year 2007/2008. Since it is quite difficult to study the whole population, we have selected a sample of two groups to represent the entire population. As pointed out

by Deldime and Demoulin (1975; in Khanchali, 2005: 8), "sufficient data can be obtained through the study of a proportion of the population: a sample."

We have chosen to carry out our study in the Department of Commerce and not in the Department of English to separate the effect of the independent variable from environmental influence. In other words, if I conducted the study in the Department of English, the participants would be receiving instruction in an environment where it would be possible for them to have exposure to L2 in other modules and with other teachers of English. This factor may confound and even bias the results of the experiment. However, this problem is minimized in the Department of Commerce where English is taught as a compulsory subject with only one teacher per classroom. This means that classroom intervention is the only source of L2 for the learners. Therefore, the study would tap the effect of pure classroom learning.

Furthermore, we have selected first-year and not second year students because they are assumed to be freshmen. In addition, first-year students are at the high-intermediate level of instruction where they are expected to have sufficient linguistic and pragmatic knowledge to be able to focus on the selected target structures.

The students who were initially enrolled for first-year were assigned by the administration into five classes. As mentioned before, since I could not randomly assign subjects to groups, I randomly selected two pre-existing classes as the experimental and control groups. There were 25 students in the experimental group and 18 students in the control group.

Homogeneity among subjects is a pre-requisite for any experimental study, since it increases the likelihood of detecting the significant effect of the independent variable, and therefore reduces any impact of confounding factors, such as some subjects' characteristics. Miller (1975: 12) states:

> Such questions of layout should not be decided arbitrarily. The idea of experimental design is to ensure that the data emerging at the end of the experiment are relevant to the prediction being tested and not contaminated by outside factors.

To ensure homogeneity among groups, participants were asked to fill in a background questionnaire which revealed some of their personal characteristics (see section one in Appendix B). The analysis of this questionnaire confirmed our belief that the students' background in the experimental and control groups was not significantly different. Hence, both groups are homogeneous (see section 4.2.1.1).

4.1.3 The Target Structures

The following grammatical structures were selected as the target of this study: the indefinite article (a / an), the definite article (the), and the zero article (Ø).

We have chosen articles for this study because we wanted to ascertain if they can be explicitly taught particularly that some researchers consider the article system to be unlearnable and therefore unteachable. That is, it can only be acquired through natural exposure to language (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; in Master, 1994: 229). Furthermore, English articles occur very frequently, and their mastery plays a potential role in maintaining successful communication. This suggests the importance for English non-native students to master the use of articles.

The treatment of articles during all grammar lessons focused on three major properties:

- Countable vs Uncountable Nouns
- Indefiniteness vs Definiteness
- Making General Statements

These properties have been selected according to the following criteria:

1. They would be explainable by a set of rules of thumb, so that the students at this level could learn them.
2. They would be complicated enough to be a challenge for learners to master.
3. They would not have been dealt with in the regular course.

The second criterion, that the features would be complicated enough to be a challenge for learners to master may seem to contradict the first. However, the first criterion concerns the simplicity of rule statements, while the second criterion concerns the complexity of how the features are used. If the features' use is too simple, it would be too easy for learners to master, and differences in the quality of learning would be difficult to detect.

Our objective is not that the subjects of this research would acquire the grammatical structures under study as native speakers do, but that their communication when using articles does not carry depressing messages about their level. The subjects of the present study should grasp the major grammatical concepts that are essential for any language user, recognize and produce its form, understand its meaning in context, and produce meaningful sentences (Ur, 1988).

4.1.4 The Research Design

This study focused on the following questions:

1. Does EGI affect the explicit grammatical knowledge of a group of intermediate Algerian EFL learners in comparison with another group not receiving EGI at the same level of language proficiency?
2. Does EGI affect the writing accuracy of a group of intermediate Algerian EFL learners in comparison with another group not receiving EGI at the same level of language proficiency?

Statistically speaking, these questions are read as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference in explicit grammatical knowledge between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction?
2. Is there a significant difference in grammatical accuracy in writing between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction?

To answer these questions, the following hypotheses were set:

H_{1a} : There would be a significant difference in explicit grammatical knowledge between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction.

H_{1b} : There would be a significant difference in grammatical accuracy in writing between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction.

The null hypotheses (H_{0a}) and (H_{0b}) were stated as follows:

H_{0a} : There would be no statistically significant difference in explicit grammatical knowledge between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction.

H_{0b} : There would be no statistically significant difference in grammatical accuracy in writing between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction.

The study consisted of one independent variable (explicit grammar instruction) and two dependent variables (grammatical knowledge and writing accuracy).

The design to carry out this study was quasi-experimental, with three phases: a pre-test, an instructional treatment phase, and an immediate post-test.
The schematic representation of the design is shown as follows:

Experimental group	**Pre-test**	**Treatment 1**	**Post-test**
Control group	**Pre-test**	**Treatment 2**	**Post-test**

Experimental group: It consisted of 25 participants.

Control group : It consisted of 18 participants.

Pre-test: It was done through a discrete-point grammar test (fill-in-the-blank task) and an integrative test (composition task).

Treatment 1: It was in the form of explicit explanations of the target structures.

Treatment 2: It was in the form of exposure to texts that contained the target structures embedded in a natural context.

Post-test: It was done through the same test used in pre-testing.

It should be mentioned that the achievement test was administered both as a pre-test and post-test so that comparisons can be made to see whether there was any significant difference between the scores from the two tests.

4.1.5 Procedure

4.1.5.1 Pre- testing

A week before the administration of the pre-test, participants from the experimental and control groups were informed that they would take part in an experiment for seven consecutive weeks. In addition, they were told that they would be awarded certain points for participation. However, the subjects were unaware of the purpose of the experiment, and they were even kept blind regarding the treatment they would be in. In other words, the instructor of both classes was told that the focus of the experiment would be on English articles, but she was instructed not to inform her students at any time during the experiment. The researcher, in place of the instructor, gave all the tests and instructional treatments in both classes.

Participants were told about their participation in the study for the following two objectives:

a. To prepare themselves psychologically for taking part in the experiment.

b. To avoid absences particularly that they would be compensated for their participation.

The experimental and control group subjects were pre-tested during the first week of class by means of two tasks: a discrete-point grammar task measuring the learners' grammatical knowledge of articles, and an integrative task measuring the accuracy with which the students used articles in their writing.

At the start of the pre-test, subjects were informed that their scores on the test would not affect their scores on the examination; therefore, they had to work individually. They were also told to do their best even though they had not been formally taught the structures. Throughout the administration of the pre-test, students were allowed to ask any questions about the vocabulary on the test. Though they had no time constraints, subjects completed the test in no more than 90 minutes.

4.1.5.2 Treatment

After completing the pre-test, the experimental and control groups received a 90-minute session a week over the period of the study. The content of each session depended on the treatment group the students were in.

4.1.5.2.1 Experimental Group Instruction

The experimental group received EGI throughout five sessions. Since the use of articles is mainly determined by nouns, the students were introduced to countable and uncountable nouns in the first session. Then, the target structures were dealt with in three running sessions. In the fifth session, the students were

provided with some strategies that would facilitate the use of articles. The schedule of all the sessions the experimental group took during the treatment period is given in table 7. In addition, Appendix D lists all the explicit instruction (grammar lessons) as it was provided to the participants in the five sessions. Note that most of the grammar lessons were retrieved from Murphy (2004).

Table 7: Schedule of the experimental group sessions

Session	Lesson
I	Countable and uncountable nouns
II	The indefinite article
III	The definite article
IV	The zero article
V	Strategies determining the use of articles

In line with the definition of explicit knowledge given in 2.2.1.1, the objective of this study, and the students' learning preferences stated in the administered questionnaire --they preferred the teacher to explain the rules for them-- the aim of explicit instruction was to create an understanding of the target structures.

During each grammar lesson, the teacher presents and explains the pedagogical rule governing the functional use of the structure. The instruction usually follows a deductive path in that the rule presentation is always accompanied by examples, and if possible, visible objects. Then, the teacher draws the learners' attention to the structural differences between Arabic, either standard or colloquial, and English. In doing that, the investigator aims at helping learners avoid confusion. Next, the learners are provided with opportunities to practise the rules actively. According to Ellis (2002; in Widodo, 2006: 123-124), practice is one of the keys to learning incorporated into methodology with the following features:

1. A specific grammatical feature is isolated for focused attention;
2. the learners are required to produce sentences or statements comprising the targeted feature;
3. the learners will be provided with opportunities for repetition of the targeted feature;
4. there is expectation that the learners will perform the grammatical feature correctly; and
5. the learners receive feedback (immediate or delayed) on whether their performance of the grammatical structure is correct or incorrect.

It should be mentioned that before providing feedback on the learner's performance, the teacher urges the learner to explain the use of the target structure in the example he has provided. In addition, the students are constantly encouraged to take part in the lesson and ask whatever questions they may have about the structure under study.

Furthermore, the objectives of the grammar lessons have been established right from the beginning of the experiment as follows:

1. To help learners comprehend the meaning (s) realized by a specific grammatical feature: that is, to enable them establish a form-function relationship. For instance, on hearing or reading the sentence: Have you finished with *the book* I lent you? the learners should understand the function of *the* as being used before a specific noun.
2. To help learners to notice a grammatical feature in the input and also to notice the meaning that it realizes. For example, if learners know that *a /an* is used with singular nouns, they are more likely to notice *a/an* before the singular nouns they hear or read in the input and also more likely to associate *a/an* with the meaning unspecific.
3. To encourage learners to notice the gap between the way a particular form works to convey meaning in the input and the way they are using it. This

objective is usually achieved by drawing the learners' attention to the kinds of errors they typically make when practising a specific feature, and even after analysing their performance on the test that ends up any grammar lesson.

4. To enable students to monitor their output.

These objectives are underlined by the principle that grammar is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Alexander (1990: 381) holds:

> Communication is the be-all and end-all of language learning, and grammar is the by-product of this endeavour. It is taught to facilitate communication and not as the object of teaching.

After an explicit presentation of the rules complemented by active classroom interaction, the teacher presents a series of exercises, checks for students' comprehension, encourages active student involvement, and provides feedback. The learners are expected to answer on the exercise sheet and keep the paper for future revision. The exercises consist in fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice exercises.

In the end of the grammar session, the teacher provides an assessment of whether the students completely grasp what they have been taught. The evaluation takes the form of sentence construction that is intended to have the students apply the rules of the grammatical item productively; therefore, they are required to work individually. The teacher coaches individual students during the task and gives feedback to the whole class.

4.1.5.2.2 Control Group Instruction

In the control group, the learners' attention is focused on understanding the meaning of an authentic text which has been previously typed and presented as input. The implicit instruction is achieved by presenting the target structures in the text. The aim is to invite the students to process the structures while interacting

with the input. However, the students are never made aware of this: the focus is entirely on meaning in the perception of the participants and there are no explicit attempts to get the language learner to notice the target forms that are abundantly present in the text. In short, it was hoped that the input alone would push the learners to infer rules. Appendix E provides an example of the instruction that the control group received.

Furthermore, the learners are asked to complete a series of comprehension exercises the answer of which simply required remembering or checking the facts in the text. The session ends up with a brief controlled production test asking for the translation of one sentence from English into French and Arabic. During the focused exercises, immediate feedback was provided.

4.1.5.3 Post-testing

The post-test was administered during the seventh week of each of the classes. This was sufficient time to remove any danger of the effect of the pre-test; that is, subjects remembering what they had written on the pre-test. The conditions applied in the post-test were similar to those surrounding the pre-test.

4.1.6 Instruments

4.1.6.1 Questionnaire

In attempting to have a comprehensive perspective of our present work, we have used a questionnaire with the participants who made up this research and whose total number was 43 (25 in the experimental group and 18 in the control group). We decided to go directly to the students themselves to learn about their attitudes and perceptions towards EGI. It is believed that more detailed information about the students, their own learning style, and their beliefs about learning grammar is necessary to understand their needs, and consequently be able to assist them in their study of grammar.

4.1.6.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire includes 14 items (see Appendix B). It consists of two sections, each one is designed to provide us with a specific set of information but with a relative aim.

The following is a brief description of each section:

Section one: Background Information about participants (01→08)

This section seeks to find out whether the experimental and control groups are homogeneous in regard to the following characteristics: students' gender, age, native language, the year of passing the BAC exam, secondary school streaming, appreciation of English, mark of English in the BAC exam, and academic background.

Section Two: Students' attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction (09→14)

This section examines in more detail what students think about grammar in their language study, how they learn it, and whether they apply their grammatical knowledge in different situations. In doing so, it aims at revealing students' needs and making sure that EGI is the right tool to facilitate their learning of grammar.

The questionnaire seems to be short, but it fulfilled the target objectives. As a general rule, the questionnaire should be as short as possible to achieve its purpose (G. Anderson and Arsenault, 1998: 177). More important than length is the question of content which should be motivational to the respondent. Certainly, if respondents believe that the results will affect them or something they believe in, they will be inclined to give the questionnaire their full attention (*ibid*.). In this respect, the present questionnaire was designed to directly address the goals of the study.

4.1.6.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered immediately after the pre-test. By introducing it, we insisted on the fact that students were relatively free to express their attitudes and points of view. The questions were mostly short and easy to understand so that students could easily answer them in English or Arabic. Moreover, the questionnaire was orally translated into Arabic by the investigator when being answered by students in order to avoid misunderstandings.

4.1.6.2 Test Used in Pre-testing and Post-testing

The test consisted of two tasks: a discrete-point grammar test (a fill-in-the-blank task) and an integrative test (a composition task). The same test was used for both the pre- and post-test (see Appendix A).

4.1.6.2.1 The Discrete-Point Grammar Task

This test is made up of thirteen (13) sentences containing either a single blank in a single sentence or two pairs of blanks (04) in a pair of sentences for discourse-dependent subsequent-mention conditions. For example:

__Oranges contain vitamin C.
This morning I bought ___newspaper and ___magazine. ____newspaper is in my bag, but I can't remember where I put ___ magazine.

The subjects were asked to fill in a total of sixteen (16) blanks with a, an, the, and if no word was necessary, they had simply to leave the space empty. The correct answers contain one (01) instance of *an*, three (03) instances of *a*, four (04) of Ø, and eight (08) of *the* (see Appendix C).

In this task, we could have asked students to state the grammatical rule after filling in each blank with the appropriate article, yet the treatment period seems too short to achieve this ability. As Sorace (1985: 245) observes:

> the ability to make rules explicit is a relatively late achievement, even in a formal classroom environment where students receive a great amount of metalinguistic information.

4.1.6.2.2 The Integrative Task

The participants were asked to complete a composition task, the purpose of which was to test their grammatical accuracy in the use of articles. The instructions in the packet asked the students to write a minimum of eight to ten sentences about the advantages of the Internet. Moreover, the participants were told to stop before every noun they used, and ask themselves whether they had to put *a, an, the,* or *no word* there. This instruction was intended to accomplish two objectives:

1. To urge students to use articles in their compositions.
2. To focus the learners' attention on the target structures while communicating their ideas.

4.1.7 Scoring

The same scoring measures were used in the pre- and post-test.

4.1.7.1 The Discrete-Point Grammar Test

The maximum score was sixteen (16). Each article was scored on a 0 to 1 point scale. One point was awarded for the use of the appropriate article. No point was awarded if the participant used the wrong article.

4.1.7.2 The Integrative Test

Only the target items were scored. The maximum score was twelve (12). Only the first six different articles in the composition were selected to be scored. Each article was scored on a 0 to 2 point scale. Two points were awarded if the participant used the correct article (a, an, the, or Ø) depending on the noun and the semantic notion the article seems to express in the sentence context. No points

were awarded for the unnecessary insertion of articles, nor were points awarded for the confusion about the correct article (i.e., the use of one article instead of another).

The researcher of the present study decided to select and score the first six articles in each composition for two reasons. First, the instances of articles differ among students' compositions either in pre- or post-test. That is, one may find ten (10) articles in a composition, and only eight (08) in another. Second, a student may use different articles in the post-test composition when compared to the pre-test composition.

It is worth noting that the test used in pre-testing and post-testing was piloted with five freshmen of Economics, whose proficiency level could be considered close to that of the sample. The pilot study helped the investigator to make sure that:

a. The subjects had no time constraints since they were able to complete the test in the time allowed.
b. The vocabulary which was employed in the test was simple.
c. The instructions of the test were clear in that they made the subjects' attention focused on the information needed.
d. The topic of the composition required the use of articles.

4.1.8 Statistical Analysis

Due to the aforementioned research questions, alternative and null hypotheses, as well as the design of the study, a t-test for independent samples was used. This parametric test for significance allowed the researcher to determine whether, at a selected probability level, significant difference existed between students who received explicit explanations about the target structures, compared with students who did not receive explicit explanations. Further, a paired-samples

t-test was used to find out whether providing students with EGI significantly improved their post-test performance as compared to their pre-test performance.

All these analyses will be presented in detail in the next section.

4.2 Results

In this second part of chapter 4, the statistical analysis will be presented. First, the questionnaire data will be reported and analysed. Second, the results of the fill-in-the-blank task will be shown. Third, the findings of the composition task will be dealt with. Finally, the general discussion will appear.

4.2.1 Results of the Questionnaire

In this section, the questionnaire data is reported, analysed and interpreted.

4.2.1.1 Section One: (01→08)

Item 01: Gender

Table 8: Students' gender

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
Male	**09**	**36%**	**06**	**33.33%**
Female	**16**	**64%**	**12**	**66.66%**
Total	**25**	**100%**	**18**	**100%**

Table 8 shows that the students' gender in the experimental and control groups is not significantly different.

Item 02: Age

Table 9: Students' age

	Group	
	Experimental	Control
Mean	**19.84**	**19.61**

Looking at the means in table 9, it is apparent that there is no significant difference between the two groups regarding their age.

Item 03: Native language

Table 10: Students' native language

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
Arabic	25	100%	18	100%
Other languages	00	00%	00	00%

By examining table 10, it can be seen that students in both groups indicated Arabic as their mother tongue.

Item 04: When did you get your BAC?

Through this question, we wanted to make sure that learners freshly come from the secondary school.

Table 11: The year of passing the BAC exam

	Group			
	Experimental		control	
	N	%	N	%
In 2007	25	100%	18	100%

Table 11 shows that the students in both groups passed their BAC exam in 2007. This confirms our belief that all participants are freshmen.

Item 05: What was your stream in the secondary school?

This question is intended to learn about the learners' proficiency level in English. That is, learners who were enrolled in literary streams are expected to have better levels of language proficiency when compared to those who studied in

scientific and technical streams, since the time allotted to the English language in literary classes is more important compared to the scientific and technical ones.

Table 12: Students' streaming

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
Literary	00	00%	00	00%
Scientific	12	48%	08	44.44%
Technical	13	52%	10	55.55%
Total	25	100%	18	100%

By looking at table 12, we can see that 48% of students in the experimental group vs 44.44% in the control group came from scientific streams, and 52% in the experimental group vs 55.55% in the control group studied in technical streams. It is clear that there are no significant differences between the two groups concerning their secondary school streaming. Thus, we can conclude that students in both groups have similar proficiency levels in English.

Item 06: Do you like English?

Since interest and motivation are key factors for better achievement, we sought, by asking this question, to identify students' appreciation of English.

Table 13: Students' appreciation of English

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	20	80%	15	83.33%
No	04	16%	03	16.66%
No answer	01	04%	00	00%
Total	25	100%	18	100%

According to table 13, the majority of students in both groups, 80% in the experimental group vs 83.33% in the control group, like English.

Item 07: What was your mark of English in the BAC exam?

Table 14: Students' mark of English in the BAC exam

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
Above the average	10	40%	06	33.33%
Below the average	15	60%	10	55.55%
No answer	00	00%	02	11.11%
Total	25	100%	18	100%

The similarity in language proficiency level can also be appreciated in table 14 where the students' marks of English in the BAC exam are reported. Both groups recorded more scores below the average than above the average.

Item 08: How long have you been studying English?

Table 15: Students' academic background

	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	N	%	N	%
5 years	03	12%	02	11.11%
6 years	12	48%	10	55.55%
7 years	10	40%	06	33.33%
Total	25	100%	18	100%

By examining table 15, it is clear that the number of years which students in both groups have studied English is quite similar, ranging from 5 to 7 years.

The analysis of this first section of the questionnaire allowed us to confirm our belief that the experimental and control groups are homogeneous in regard to gender, age, native language, the year of passing the BAC exam, secondary school streaming, appreciation of English, marks of English in the BAC exam, and academic background.

4.2.1.2 Section Two: (09→14)

Item 09: Do you think that learning grammar is essential for learning English?

Table 16: Students' perception of the importance of grammar in language learning

	N	%
Yes	**43**	**100%**
No	**00**	**00%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

43 students (100%), representing the whole sample of the present study, believe that learning grammar is essential for learning English.

Item 10: When learning a new grammar point, do you like the teacher to explain the rules for you?

This question was intended to learn about the students' attitudes towards explicit instruction.

Table 17: Students' attitudes towards explicit explanations of grammatical rules

	N	%
Yes	**41**	**95.34%**
No	**02**	**04.65%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

According to table17, 41(95.34%) students prefer the teacher to explain the grammatical points, whereas 02 (04.65%) students do not.

These results confirm what all FL teachers already know: learners usually expect explanations. Sharwood-Smith (1981: 159-160) observes that:

> … it is notoriously difficult to deny adult learners explicit information about the target language since their intellectual maturity as well as their previous teaching/ learning experience makes them cry out for explanations.

Item 11: Can you discover grammatical rules correctly from texts and examples, without the help of a teacher or a grammar book?

This question is designed to assist learners in revealing their need for implicit grammar instruction.

Table 18: Students' ability to discover grammatical rules

	N	%
Yes	**03**	**06.97%**
No	**40**	**93.02%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

It is clear that the leading majority of students with 40 (93.02%) indicated that they could not find out grammatical rules from texts and examples, yet 03 (06.97%) said the opposite.

Item 12: Do you apply the grammatical rules you have learnt in grammar exercises?

Table 19 : Students' application of rules in grammar exercises

	N	%
Yes	**43**	**100%**
No	**00**	**00%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

Table 19 shows that all participants (43) representing 100% reported that they apply rules in grammar exercises.

Item 13: Do you apply the rules you have learnt when you write in English or read what you have written?

Table 20: Students' application of rules in writing

	N	%
Yes	**17**	**39.53%**
No	**26**	**60.46%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

According to table 20, only 17 (39.53%) students think about rules either when they write or when they revise their writing, whereas 26 (60.46%) do not.

Furthermore, we tried to investigate reasons for students' application and non-application of rules in writing. The results are shown in the following table:

- If yes, is it because the application of rules helps you to:

Table 21: Reasons for the application of grammatical rules in writing

Suggestions	N	%
a- express your ideas clearly	**01**	**05.88%**
b- reduce your grammatical mistakes	**07**	**41.17%**
c- both of them	**09**	**52.94%**
Total	**17**	**100%**

Within the first category of students who apply grammatical rules when writing, only 01(05.88%) student reports that thinking about rules enables him to express his ideas clearly. A larger number of students, 07(41.17%), seem to be willing to reduce their grammatical mistakes, and 09 students representing 52.94% do write with grammar rules in minds because this helps them to minimize mistakes and maintain successful expression of ideas.

- If no, is it because your focus is on:

Table 22: Reasons for the non-application of rules in writing

Suggestions	N	%
a- the meaning you want to convey	**01**	**03.84%**
b- using appropriate vocabulary	**06**	**23.07%**
c- both of them	**19**	**73.07%**
Total	**26**	**100%**

Within the second category of students, only 01 (03.84%) student focuses on the meaning he wants to convey, whereas 06 students representing 23.07% are much more concerned with the use of appropriate vocabulary. The majority is formed by those students whose focus is on both meaning and vocabulary and are 19 (73.07%) out of 26.

Item 14: If you apply the rules you have learnt when you write, can you detect and correct your grammatical mistakes?

Through this question, we wanted to identify students' ability to monitor their writing.

Table 23: Students' ability to monitor their writing for grammatical mistakes

	N	%
Yes	**39**	**90.69%**
No	**04**	**09.30%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

According to the results presented in table 23, 39 students representing 90.69% claim that writing with grammar rules in minds enables them to monitor their output, detecting and correcting their grammatical mistakes. Yet only 04 (9.30%) students assume the opposite.

4.2.1.3 Conclusion

After analysing the questionnaire, we were able to draw the following conclusions. Firstly, learners do recognize the importance of grammar in FL learning. Secondly, with regard to their learning style, students prefer the teacher to explain the grammatical points, and their ability to induce rules from texts and examples is quite low. In other words, learners believe that they can not learn grammatical rules without explicit instruction. This result points out to the need of providing learners with explicit grammar rules, and even the necessity of helping them to become more autonomous. Thirdly, students usually apply their grammatical knowledge in grammar exercises, but they seldom write with grammar in minds because their emphasis is often placed on meaning and vocabulary. This finding points out to the need of focusing the learners' attention on the form so that monitoring can take place.

4.2.2 Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Task

Table 24 : The frequency of the experimental and control groups' scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
3	1	-	1	1
4	5	-	3	5
5	6	-	2	3
6	6	-	-	2
7	3	-	1	1
8	1	-	3	-
9	3	-	4	2
10	-	1	-	1
11	-	-	2	1
12	-	1	1	1
13	-	2	-	1
14	-	12	1	-
15	-	7	-	-
16	-	2	-	-
	25	25	18	18

4.2.2.1 Control Group Vs Experimental Group Scores on the Pre-test

Table 24 shows that the control group outscored the experimental group on the pre-test. The former with a mean $\overline{X}c$ =7.77 (a score fairly equivalent to the average 8/16) and the latter with a mean $\overline{X}_E$ =5.80 (a score less than the average).

For the total 43 scores, we have as follows:

Control group: $11 \geq 8 \rightarrow 61.11\% \geq 8$

$7 < 8 \rightarrow 38.88\% < 8$

Experimental group: $4 \geq 8 \rightarrow 16\% \geq 8$

$21 < 8 \rightarrow 84\% < 8$

From frequency polygon 1, it could be noted that the control group's frequency polygon starts at 3 (the lowest score) and ends at 14 (the biggest score) with a peak at 9 (the most frequent score). On the other hand, the experimental group's frequency polygon begins at 3 and ends at 9 with two peaks at 5 and 6. The most frequent scores of the control group are bounded by 4 and 9; however, the experimental group's most frequent scores are bounded by 4 and 6.

4.2.2.2 Control Group Post-test Vs Control Group Pre-test

Frequency polygon 2 shows that while pre-test control group scores have a peak at 9, post-test scores have a peak at 4. In addition, scores above the average in the pre-test are more frequent than those below the average. However, post-test scores show the opposite.

For the total 18 scores, we have:

Pre-test: $11 \geq 8 \rightarrow 61.11\% \geq 8$

$7 < 8 \rightarrow 38.88\% < 8$

Post-test: $6 > 8 \rightarrow 33.33\% > 8$

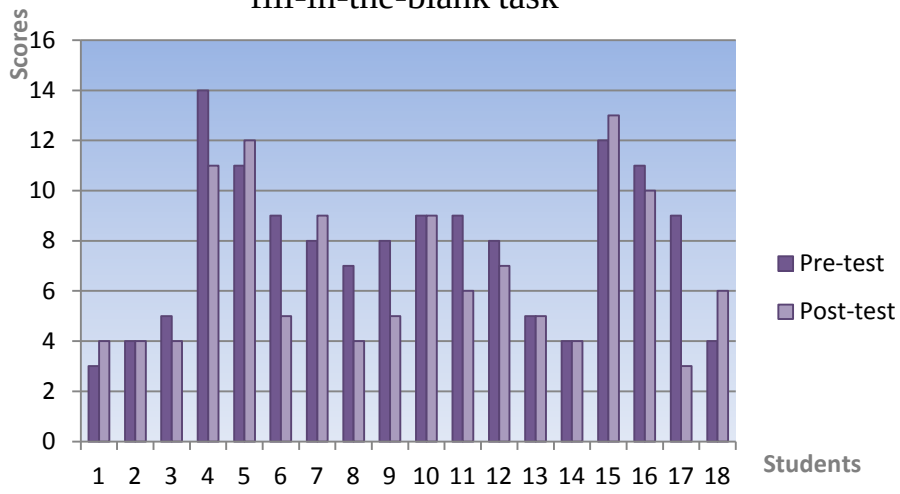
$12 < 8 \rightarrow 66.66\% < 8$

The control group recorded a post-test mean $\overline{X}po = 6.72$ lower than the pre-test mean $\overline{X}pr = 7.77$. To examine the amount of improvement from pre-test to post-test, difference scores were calculated for each subject by substracting the pre- from the post-test score (table 25) .The mean difference score is $\bar{d} = -1.05$. This means that the improvement in the learners' ability to fill-in-the-blank with the correct target structures was less marked and even declined between pre-and post-test (Figure 9). Since the control group did not show any improvement in the mastery of the target forms though these were embedded in texts, we can conclude that the treatment (implicit instruction) has no significant effect on subjects' grammatical knowledge.

Table 25: Control group's pre-test, post-test, and difference scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

Individual Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
01	03	04	+01
02	04	04	00
03	05	04	-01
04	14	11	-03
05	11	12	+01
06	09	05	-04
07	08	09	+01
08	07	04	-03
09	08	05	-03
10	09	09	00
11	09	06	-03
12	08	07	-01
13	05	05	00
14	04	04	00
15	12	13	+01
16	11	10	-01
17	09	03	-06
18	04	06	+02
	$\overline{X}$= 7.77	$\overline{X}$= 6.72	$\overline{d}$= −1.05

Figure 9. Control group's scores on the fill-in-the-blank task



4.2.2.3 Experimental Group Post-test Vs Experimental Group Pre-test

Table 26 and figure 10 denote that the experimental group's scores improved significantly between pre- and post-test. All post-test scores are above the average whereas nearly all pre-test scores are below the average.

For the total 25 scores, we have:

Pre-test: $4 \geq 8 \rightarrow \ 16\% \geq 8$

$21 < 8 \rightarrow \ 84\% < 8$

Post-test: $25 > 8 \rightarrow 100\% > 8$

Table 26 : Experimental group's pre-test, post-test, and difference scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

Individual Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
01	05	12	+07
02	06	15	+09
03	04	14	+10
04	05	14	+09
05	07	14	+07
06	09	15	+06
07	03	14	+11
08	06	14	+08
09	06	14	+08
10	07	15	+08
11	08	16	+08
12	09	15	+06
13	05	15	+10
14	04	13	+09
15	06	14	+08
16	05	13	+08
17	04	14	+10
18	05	15	+10
19	06	14	+08
20	04	14	+10
21	05	16	+11
22	09	14	+05
23	07	14	+07
24	06	15	+09
25	04	10	+06
	$\overline{X}$= 5.80	$\overline{X}$= 14.12	$\overline{d}$= 8.32

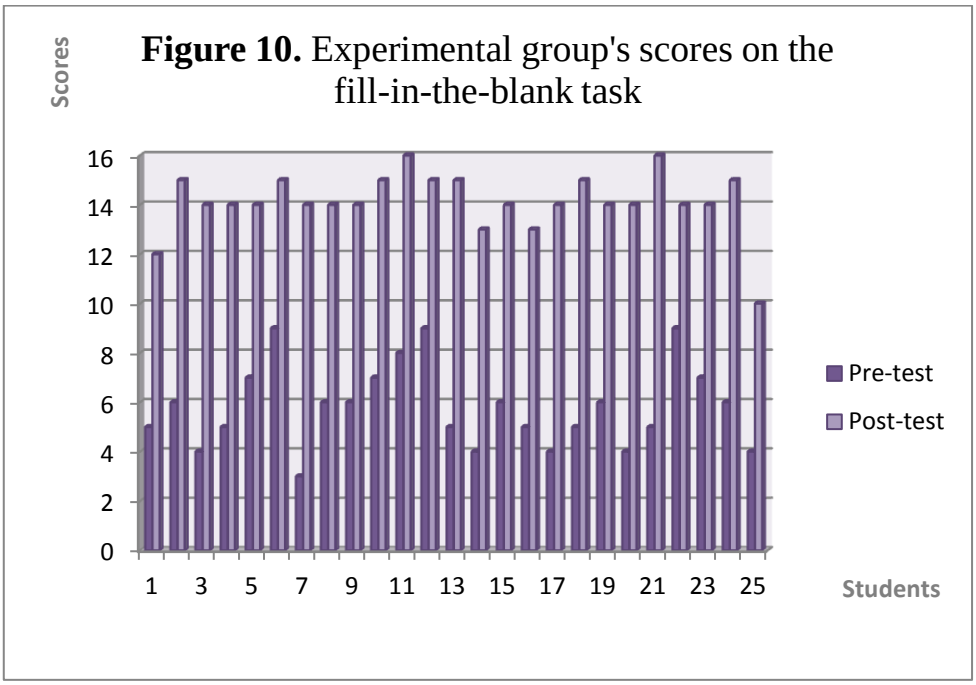


Figure 10. Experimental group's scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

In addition, the experimental group's pre-test frequency polygon starts at 3, and ends at 9 with two peaks at 5 and 7. However, the post-test frequency polygon begins at 10 and ends at 16 with a peak at 14 (frequency polygon 3).

Furthermore, the experimental group recorded a post-test mean $\overline{X}po = 14.12$ higher than the pre-test mean $\overline{X}pr = 5.80$. The mean difference $\overline{d} = 8.32$; it is extremely significant. This finding suggests that the subjects' performance on the fill-in-the-blank task was largely affected by the treatment (explicit instruction).

To examine whether the differences between the experimental group's pre-test scores and post-test scores have been caused by the manipulation of the independent variable namely explicit grammar teaching (the alternative hypothesis) or simply due to chance (the null hypothesis), we carried out a statistical test; it is the paired-samples t-test.

4.2.2.3.1 The Paired-Samples t-test

The paired-sample t-test applies to situations in which each participant contributes two test scores, and the participants are considered to belong to the same group. A common scenario in SLA research is a group of subjects with a pre- and a post-test and a treatment or intervention between the two tests; the research interest is to examine whether the treatment has any effect (Chen, 2005: 32).

The reasons why the paired-samples t-test has been chosen can be summed up as follows:

a. It is a parametric test; it deals with countable scores and ratios; that is, quantitative values and figures rather than qualitative rankings.

b. It is used to compare a sample group's scores before and after an intervention.

c. The comparison of the paired-samples t-test results with those reported in the t-tables helps the investigator to decide whether the differences obtained are due to the impact of EGI or merely to chance.

4.2.2.3.2 Procedure for Carrying out a Paired-Samples t-test

To test the null hypothesis that the difference between a sample group's scores before and after intervention is likely to have been a chance finding, the following procedure is followed:

1. Calculate the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for each participant by substracting the pre- from the post-test score. It is important to distinguish positive and negative differences.

2. Calculate the mean difference, $\bar{d}$.

3. Calculate the standard deviation of the differences, S_d, and use this to calculate the standard error of the mean difference, $SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$

4. Calculate the t-statistic, which is given by the formula: $t = \frac{\bar{d}}{SE\,(\bar{d})}$. Under the null hypothesis, this statistic follows a t-distribution at N-1 degrees of freedom.
5. Enter a table of the t-distribution at N-1 degrees of freedom, choose the level of significance required (normally p = 0.05) and read the critical t-value.
6. If the calculated (observed) t-value exceeds the critical t-value, it can be said that the differences between the two tests' scores are significant at that level of probability. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

Following the aforementioned procedure, a paired-samples t-test has been carried out to compare the experimental group's pre- and post-test scores.

The mean difference

$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{N}$; where $\bar{d}$ = mean, d= difference scores, N= number of subjects, and $\sum$= sum

$\bar{d} = \frac{208}{25}$

$\bar{d}$= 8.32

The standard deviation of the differences

$S_d = \sqrt{s^2} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$

Where S= variance, and $\sum d^2$ = sum of the square difference scores

$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{1794}{25} - (8.32 \times 8.32)} = \sqrt{71.76 - 69.32} = \sqrt{2.54}$

S_d= 1.594

Table 27: The experimental group's square difference scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

Student	Difference scores d	Square difference scores d^2
1	+07	46
2	+09	81
3	+10	100
4	+09	81
5	+07	49
6	+06	36
7	+11	121
8	+08	64
9	+08	64
10	+08	64
11	+08	64
12	+06	36
13	+10	100
14	+09	81
15	+08	64
16	+08	64
17	+10	100
18	+09	100
19	+08	64
20	+10	100
21	+11	121
22	+05	25
23	+07	49
24	+09	81
25	+06	36
	$\sum$d=208	$\sum d^2$=1794

The standard error of the mean difference

$$SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{1.594}{\sqrt{25}} = \frac{1.594}{5}$$

$$SE(\bar{d}) = 0.318$$

The t-statistic

$$t_{N-1}=\frac{\overline{d}}{SE(\overline{d})}$$

$$t_{25-1}=\frac{8.32}{0.318}$$

$$t_{24}=26.16$$

Consulting a table of critical values of t provides us with the value our t-ratio should exceed to be statistically significant. The experimental group size is 25, which makes a degree of freedom (df = N−1) of 24. This means that with this group size, any t value below the critical value would have occurred by chance alone. The level of probability we set for this study is p = 0.01; therefore the t critical value is 2.80. It is obvious that the observed t-value largely exceeds the critical t-value.

$$t_{obs} > t_{crit} \ (26.16>2.80)$$

Thus, the difference between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores is highly significant. This means that the obtained results were due to the manipulation of the independent variable and not to chance. This permits the rejection of the null hypothesis. It can be concluded that EGI does bring about a significant improvement in the learners' explicit grammatical knowledge.

4.2.2.4 Experimental Group Vs Control Group on the Post-test

Table 24 and frequency polygon 4 show that the experimental group obtained significantly higher scores than the control group. Note that the control group outperformed the experimental group on the pre-test. The experimental group recorded a post-test mean $\overline{X}_E = 14.12$ higher than that of the control group $\overline{X}c = 6.72$.

For the total 43 scores, we have:

Control group: $6 > 8 \rightarrow 33.33\% > 8$

$12 < 8 \rightarrow 66.66\% < 8$

Experimental group: $25 > 8 \rightarrow 100\% > 8$

While the control group's post-test frequency polygon starts at 3 and ends at 13 with a peak at 4, the experimental group's frequency polygon starts at 10 and ends at 16 with a peak at 14 extremely bigger than the controls' peak.

To examine the significance of the difference between the experimental and control groups' post-test mean scores, we have used the independent-samples t-test.

4.2.2.4.1 The Independent-Samples t-test

The independent-samples t-test is used to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two groups --say an experimental group and a control group with different subjects in each.

Like the paired-samples t-test, the independent-samples t-test reveals, with a very tiny error probability, the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This t-test is denoted by the formula:

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

The calculated t must exceed the tabulated t at a particular level of probability (the level we set for this study was p = 0.01) to affirm the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, and consequently reject the null hypothesis.

Xx= individual score
$\overline{X}n$ = group mean
X_X^2 = square score
Nx= number of subjects
∑Xx = sum of the individual scores
$\sum X_X^2$= sum of square scores
Sx= sample variance

Pre-test

Experimental group	**Control group**
$\sum X_1$=145	$\sum X_2$=140
$\sum X_1^2$=909	$\sum X_2^2$=1254
$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1}$	$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2}$
$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{145}{25}$	$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{140}{18}$
$\overline{X}_1 = 5.80$	$\overline{X}_2 = 7.77$

Post-test

$\sum X_1$=353	$\sum X_2$=121
$\sum X_1^2$=5021	$\sum X_2^2$=981
$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} = \frac{353}{25}$	$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} = \frac{121}{18}$
$\overline{X}_1 = 14.12$	$\overline{X}_2 = 6.72$

The sample variance

Experimental group

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{5021}{25} - 14.12 \times 14.12$$

$$S_1^2 = 200.84 - 199.37$$

$$S_1^2 = 1.47$$

Control group:

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{981}{18} - 6.72 \times 6.72$$

$$S_2^2 = 54.5 - 45.15$$

$$S_2^2 = 9.35$$

Table 28: Square post-test scores of both groups on the fill-in-the-blank task

Student	Experimental group's scores X_1	Square scores X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square Scores X_2^2
1	12	144	04	16
2	15	225	04	16
3	14	196	04	16
4	14	196	11	121
5	14	196	12	144
6	15	225	05	25
7	14	196	09	81
8	14	196	04	16
9	14	196	05	25
10	15	225	09	81
11	16	256	06	36
12	15	225	07	49
13	15	225	05	25
14	13	169	04	16
15	14	196	13	169
16	13	225	10	100
17	14	196	03	09
18	15	225	06	36
19	14	196		
20	14	196		
21	16	256		
22	14	196		
23	14	196		
24	15	225		
25	10	100		
	$\sum X_1 = 353$	$\sum X_1^2 = 5021$	$\sum X_2 = 121$	$\sum X_2^2 = 981$

The t-value

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\overline{X}_1-\overline{X}_2\sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2+N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$$t_{25+18-2} = \frac{14.12-6.72\sqrt{(25+18-2)\times(25\times18)}}{\sqrt{(25\times1.47+18\times9.35)(25+18)}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{7.4\sqrt{41\times450}}{\sqrt{(36.75+120.96)\times43}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{7.4\sqrt{18450}}{\sqrt{157.71\times43}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{7.4\times135.83}{\sqrt{6781.53}} = \frac{1005.142}{82.35}$$

$$\mathbf{t_{41} = 12.20}$$

Entering a t-table at 41 degrees of freedom, we find a tabulated t-value of 2.70 at the 0.01 level of significance. Evidently the t observed is largely higher than the t critical.

$$t_{obs} > t_{crit} \ (12.20>2.70)$$

Hence, the difference between the two groups' post-test means is highly significant. Therefore, H_{0a} is rejected, and H_{1a} is strongly supported, so there is only a 1% probability that the observed mean difference occurred by chance alone. In other words, we have 99% probability that it was due to the manipulation of the independent variable.

It can be claimed that EGI has a significant impact on the learners' grammatical knowledge.

4.2.3 Results of the Composition Task

Table 29: The frequency of both groups' scores on the composition task

Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
2	3	-	1	3
4	14	3	8	8
6	5	4	6	5
8	3	12	3	2
10	-	6	-	-
12	-	-	-	-
	25	25	18	18

4.2.3.1 Control Group Vs Experimental Group on the Pre-test

Table 29 shows that there was no significant difference between both groups' pre-test scores. The experimental group recorded a mean $\overline{X}_E = 4.64$ not significantly different from that of the control group $\overline{X}_C = 5.22$. Note that both arithmetic means are below the average (6/12).

For the total 43 scores, we have as follows:

Control group: $9 \geq 6 \rightarrow 50\% \geq 6$

$9 < 6 \rightarrow 50\% < 6$

Experimental group: $8 \geq 6 \rightarrow 32\% \geq 6$

$17 < 6 \rightarrow 68\% < 6$

Frequency polygon 5 shows that both groups' frequency polygons start at 2 and end at 8 with a peak at 4.

4.2.3.2 Control Group Post-test Vs Control Group Pre-test

Frequency polygon 6 shows that both pre- and post-test frequency polygons of the control group start at 2 and end at 8 with a peak at 4.

For the total 18 scores, we have:

Pre-test: $9 \geq 6 \rightarrow \quad 50\% \geq 6$

$9 < 6 \rightarrow \quad 50\% < 6$

Post-test: $7 \geq 6 \rightarrow 38.88\% \geq 6$

$11 < 6 \rightarrow 61.11\% < 6$

The control group recorded a post-test mean $\overline{X}_{po} = 4.66$, a score that is slightly lower than the pre-test mean $\overline{X}_{pr} = 5.22$. To check whether there was an improvement from pre- to post-test accuracy, difference scores were calculated (table 30). The mean difference score is $\overline{d} = -0.55$; hence, there was no significant improvement in the learners' ability to use the target structures accurately in their written compositions. This has also been shown in figure 11. It can be concluded that implicit instruction does not lead to significantly improved writing accuracy.

Table 30: Control group's pre-test, post-test, and difference scores on the composition task

Individual Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
01	06	04	-02
02	04	04	00
03	04	04	00
04	08	04	-04
05	06	06	00
06	04	04	00
07	04	04	00
08	04	02	-02
09	02	02	00
10	04	06	+02
11	06	06	00
12	04	06	+02
13	06	06	00
14	04	04	00
15	08	08	00
16	08	08	00
17	06	02	-04
18	06	04	-02
	$\overline{X}$= 5.22	$\overline{X}$= 4.66	$\overline{d}$= – 0.55

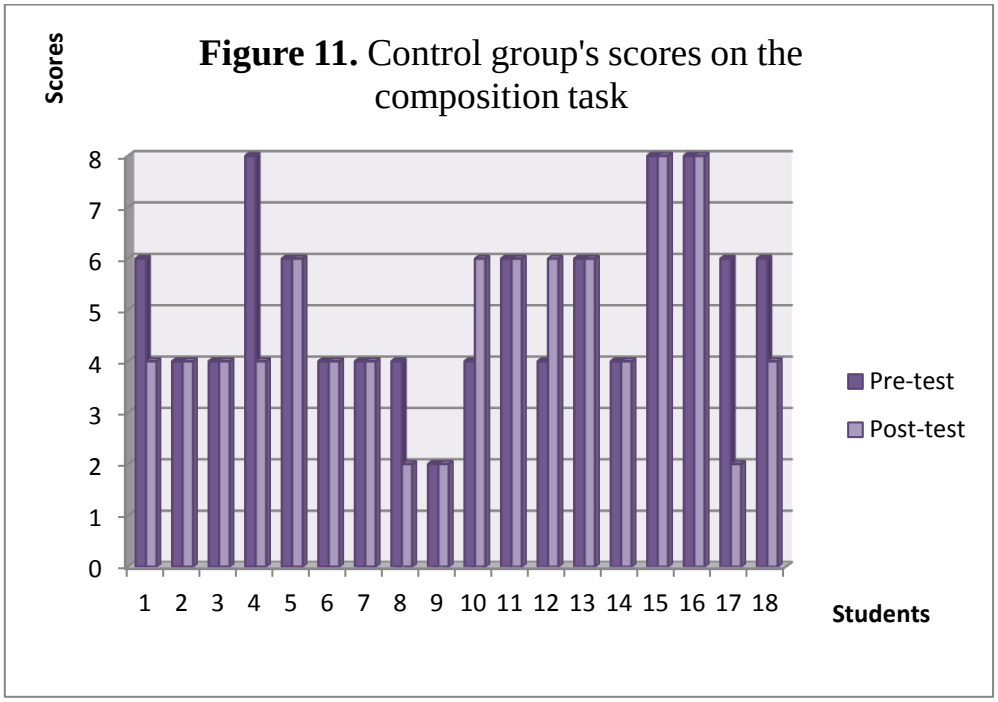


Figure 11. Control group's scores on the composition task

4.2.3.3 Experimental Group Post-test Vs Experimental Group Pre-test

Table 29 and figure 12 show that the experimental group's scores improved significantly between the pre- and post-test. Most post-test scores are above the average in comparison to the pre-test scores.

For the total 25 scores, we have:

Pre-test: $8 \geq 6 \rightarrow 32\% \geq 6$

$17 < 6 \rightarrow 68\% < 6$

Post-test: $22 \geq 6 \rightarrow 88\% \geq 6$

$3 < 6 \rightarrow 12\% < 6$

Table 31: Experimental group's pre-test, post-test, and difference scores on the composition task

Individual Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
01	04	08	+04
02	02	06	+04
03	06	04	-02
04	04	08	+04
05	04	08	+04
06	08	10	+02
07	04	08	+04
08	06	08	+02
09	04	06	+02
10	04	06	+02
11	06	10	+04
12	08	10	+02
13	04	08	+04
14	02	06	+04
15	04	08	+04
16	06	08	+02
17	04	08	+04
18	04	08	+04
19	08	10	+02
20	04	10	+06
21	06	10	+04
22	02	08	+06
23	04	08	+04
24	04	04	00
25	04	04	00
	$\overline{X}$= 4.64	$\overline{X}$= 7.68	$\overline{d}$= 2.96

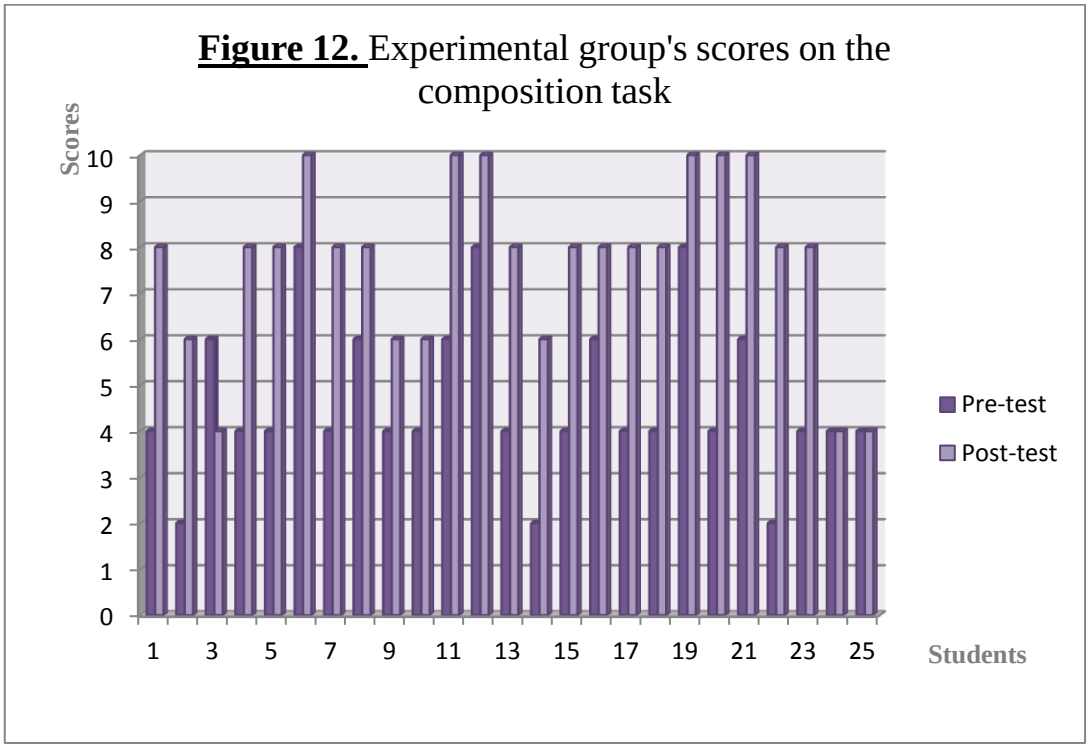


Figure 12. Experimental group's scores on the composition task

It should be noted that while the experimental group's pre-test frequency polygon starts at 2 and ends at 8 with a peak at 4, the post-test frequency polygon begins at 4 and ends at 10 with a peak at 8 (frequency polygon 7).

Moreover the experimental group's post-test mean $\overline{X}_{po}$= 7.68 is higher than the pre-test mean $\overline{X}_{pr}$= 4.64. Difference scores were calculated to check whether there was an improvement in the learners' performance on the composition task (table 31). The mean difference $\overline{d}$= 2.96 is significant. This means that EGI has a positive impact on the learners' accurate use of the target structures in their written compositions.

To verify whether there are statistically significant differences between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores, the investigator used the paired-samples t-test. Once applied, this test reveals whether the obtained results are due to EGI (alternative hypothesis) or simply to chance (null hypothesis). The paired samples t-test entails a series of calculations before the t-value is calculated. These are as follows:

The mean difference

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{N}$$

$$\bar{d} = \frac{74}{25}$$

$$\bar{d} = 2.96$$

The standard deviation of the differences

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{300}{25} - 2.96 \times 2.96}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{12 - 8.76}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{3.24}$$

$$S_d = 1.80$$

Table 32: The experimental group's square difference scores on the composition task

Student	Difference scores, d	Square difference scores d^2
1	+04	16
2	+04	16
3	-02	04
4	+04	16
5	+04	16
6	+02	04
7	+04	16
8	+02	04
9	+02	04
10	+02	04
11	+04	16
12	+02	04
13	+04	16
14	+04	16
15	+04	16
16	+02	04
17	+02	04
18	+04	16
19	+02	04
20	+06	36
21	+04	16
22	+06	36
23	+04	16
24	00	00
25	00	00
	$\sum d=74$	$\sum d^2=300$

The standard error of the mean difference

$$SE(\overline{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$SE(\overline{d}) = \frac{1.80}{\sqrt{25}} = \frac{1.80}{5}$$

$$SE(\overline{d}) = 0.36$$

The t-value

$$t_{N-1} = \frac{\overline{d}}{SE(\overline{d})}$$

$$t_{25-1} = \frac{2.96}{0.36}$$

$$\mathbf{t_{24} = 8.22}$$

Entering a t-table at 24 degrees of freedom (df = N−1), we find a tabulated t-value of 2.80 at the 0.01 level of significance. Obviously the observed t-value is much bigger than the critical t-value.

$$t_{obs} > t_{crit}\ (8.22 > 2.80)$$

Hence, the difference between the experimental group's pre- and post-test scores is highly significant. At p= 0.01, there is only a 1% probability that the observed differences between the pre- and post-test scores were due to chance. This result permits the rejection of the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It can be claimed that EGI has a significantly positive effect on the learners' writing accuracy as there was a greater ability to use the target forms accurately in written compositions.

4.2.3.4 Experimental Group Vs Control Group on the Post-test

As table 29 shows, the experimental group, with a mean $\overline{X}_E = 7.68$, outperformed the control group, with a mean $\overline{X}_C$=4.66, on the post-test.

For the total 43 scores, we have as follows:

Control group: $7 \geq 6 \rightarrow 38.88\% \geq 6$

$11 < 6 \rightarrow 61.11\% < 6$

Experimental group: $22 \geq 6 \rightarrow 88\% \geq 6$

$3 < 6 \rightarrow 12\% < 6$

Frequency polygon 8 shows that the control group's post-test frequency polygon starts at 2, and ends at 4 with a peak at 4. On the other hand, the experimental group's post-test frequency polygon starts at 4, and ends at 10 with a peak at 8. The most frequent scores of the experimental group are bounded by 8 and 10, whereas the control group's most frequent scores are bounded by 4 and 6.

To examine the significance of the difference between the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups, an independent-samples t-test is carried out.

Pre-test

Experimental group	**Control group**
$\sum X_1=116$	$\sum X_2=94$
$\sum X_1^2=608$	$\sum X_2^2=540$
$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} = \frac{116}{25}$	$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} = \frac{94}{18}$
$\overline{X}_1 = 4.64$	$\overline{X}_2 = 5.22$

Post-test

$\sum X_1=192$	$\sum X_2=84$
$\sum X_1^2=1560$	$\sum X_2^2=448$
$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} = \frac{192}{25}$	$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} = \frac{84}{18}$
$\overline{X}_1 = 7.68$	$\overline{X}_2 = 4.66$

The sample variance

Experimental group

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \overline{X}_1^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{1560}{25} - 7.68 \times 7.68$$

$$S_1^2 = 62.4 - 58.98$$

$$S_1^2 = 3.42$$

Control group

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \overline{X}_2^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{448}{18} - (4.66 \times 4.66)$$

$$S_2^2 = 24.88 - 21.71$$

$$S_2^2 = 3.17$$

Table 33: Square post-test scores of both groups on the composition task

Student	Experimental group's scores X_1	Square scores X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square Scores X_2^2
1	08	64	04	16
2	06	36	04	16
3	04	16	04	16
4	08	64	04	16
5	08	64	06	36
6	10	100	04	16
7	08	64	04	16
8	08	64	02	04
9	06	36	02	04
10	06	36	06	36
11	10	100	06	36
12	10	100	06	36
13	10	64	06	36
14	08	36	04	16
15	06	64	08	64
16	08	64	08	64
17	08	64	02	04
18	08	64	04	16
19	10	100		
20	10	100		
21	10	100		
22	08	64		
23	08	64		
24	04	16		
25	04	16		
	$\sum X_1 = 192$	$\sum X_1^2 = 1560$	$\sum X_2 = 84$	$\sum X_2^2 = 448$

The t-value

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2\sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2+N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$$t_{25+18-2} = \frac{(7.68-4.66)\sqrt{(25+18-2)\times(25\times18)}}{\sqrt{(25\times3.42+18\times3.17)(25+18)}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{3.02\sqrt{41\times450}}{\sqrt{(85.5+57.06)\times43}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{3.02\times135.83}{\sqrt{6130.08}}$$

$$t_{41} = \frac{410.20}{78.29}$$

$$\mathbf{t_{41} = 5.23}$$

Consulting a t-table at 41 degrees of freedom (df = $N_1 + N_2 - 2$), we find a critical t-value of 2.70 at the 0.01 level of significance. Clearly, the observed t-value exceeds the critical t-value .

$$t_{obs} > t_{crit}\ (5.23>2.70)$$

Consequently, the difference between the two groups' post-test means is highly significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{0b}, saying that there would be no statistically significant difference in grammatical accuracy in writing between the students who receive EGI and those who receive implicit instruction, is rejected. It can be concluded that EGI makes a decisive contribution to a significant increase in writing accuracy.

4.2.4 General Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of EGI in improving grammatical knowledge and grammatical accuracy in writing. The present study tested the following hypotheses:

1. The students who receive EGI about the target structures would show a significantly higher improvement in their explicit grammatical knowledge than those who do not receive EGI.

2. The students who receive EGI about the target structures would show a significantly higher improvement in their grammatical accuracy in writing than those who do not receive EGI.

Interestingly, the findings of this study suggest that the experimental group outperformed the control group on both post-test measures: the discrete-point grammar test, measuring the learners' grammatical knowledge, and the integrative test, measuring the students' grammatical accuracy in writing. This significant improvement might be attributed to the presentation of explicit explanations about the target structures and not to the implicit presentation provided during the treatment period. In other words, the EGI received by the experimental group was more immediate, and this very matter could be put forward as a reason for the better performance of the group on the post-test. If implicit instruction had been effective, we should have seen the control group's mean scores improve; however, such improvement was not found. Considering these findings, the aforementioned hypotheses could be supported unequivocally.

Significantly, the major findings will be discussed in detail within two categories: (a) non-significant improvement for the control group, and (b) significant improvement for the experimental group.

Non-Significant Improvement for the Control Group

As stated earlier, it was evident that the learning condition of the control group did not bring about a significant improvement in (a) the learners' grammatical knowledge, as there was little ability to fill in the blanks with the appropriate target forms, and (b) the accuracy with which the subjects used the

target structures in their writing when compared to the experimental group. One possible explanation may reside in the probability that the subjects did not notice the forms that were embedded in texts, and therefore did not show any progress towards the mastery of the structures.

It is important to note that this study provides some evidence against Krashen's Acquisition Hypothesis (1981, 1982, 1985). According to this hypothesis, acquisition involves the naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding language and through using language for meaningful communication (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 131). Hence, acquisition occurs as a result of participating in natural communication where the focus is on meaning (Ellis, 1985: 261). Considerably, the acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules, but rather develop a "feel" for correctness. Seemingly, as the controls' post-test performance indicates neither the acquisition of the target features did occur nor a feel for correctness was developed. Therefore, it can be claimed that the performance of the control group was largely random.

Similarly, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) posits that comprehending messages is the only way a language is acquired. This has been recently expressed lucidly by Krashen (2003: 4): "we acquire a language in only one way: when we understand messages; that is, when we obtain 'comprehensible input"'. Apparently, the control group students did not acquire the target structures though they were provided with large amounts of comprehensible input.

It should be also mentioned that though the learners were asked to focus on form on both assessment tasks, they did not show a mastery of the target features. This contradicts what Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) found in a study of the learning of two Dutch word-order rules. They (1984: 41) state that:

> even L2 learners with only an implicit knowledge of rules were able to boost the correctness of their performance significantly when asked to pay attention to form.

Significant Improvement for the Experimental Group

Fill-in-the-Blank Task

The findings of this study suggest that explicit instruction did bring about a significant improvement in the learners' grammatical knowledge as there was a greater ability to fill in the blanks with the correct target structures when compared to the control group. Importantly, the present study lends support to the findings of Scott (1989, 1990), Doughty (1991), N. Ellis (1993), Alanen (1995), Dekeyser (1995, 1997), Robinson (1996), and DeGraaff (1997) whose explicit groups showed more mastery of the target features when compared to implicit groups.

These positive results might be due to the fact that explicit information about rules could have provided learners with explicit knowledge which was easily brought back when necessary. This converges with Green and Hecht's (1992) view that there may be some link between explicit learning and its application in discrete-point grammar tasks. Green and Hecht (1992: 178) hold that:

> What does seem to be the case here is that classroom learners with learned rules under their belt and confronted by a grammar test…operated to a large extent by feel. That is to say, they corrected largely by implicit rules, which very possibly had been facilitated by explicit rules. The explicit rules surfaced when they were specifically called for.

Composition task

The results of the present study indicate that the explicit teaching of the target features resulted in increased accuracy in students' written use of these features. This finding corresponds to the findings of Manley and Calk (1997), and Tsang and Wong (2000) whose explicit grammar groups showed a significant improvement in their grammatical accuracy in written compositions. Significantly, it is worth noting that the results of this study are different from those of Macaro and Masterman (2006), who found that EGI was unhelpful to the improvement of writing accuracy.

The significantly greater improvement achieved by the students in the experimental group on the composition task might be due to the speculation that the learners could have directly applied the explicit knowledge they gained from explicit presentations of grammatical rules. Note that the students were asked to stop before each noun and ask themselves about which target structure they had to use. In doing so, the learners could have possibly asked themselves about the grammar rules that applied in the instances found in their compositions and consequently managed to remember and apply those rules. In short, the accurate production of the target forms in writing might be attributed to the direct application of explicit knowledge.

Both Assessment Tasks Combined

As having been stated earlier, the EGI received by the experimental group during the treatment period turned out to cause more gains in (a) the learners' grammatical knowledge as measured by a discrete-point grammar test, and (b) the accuracy with which the subjects performed the target features in an integrative test (composition task). This finding is specifically against Bialystok's (1982) view that different types of language use draw on different types of knowledge.

For instance, learners can apply their explicit grammatical knowledge in discrete-point grammar tasks but not in integrative tasks (eg. writing and speaking).

One possibility for the positive results on both tasks would be that explicit information about rules could have drawn the learners' attention to the target forms in that it constituted a source of consciousness raising. Once their consciousness of the forms had been raised, the subjects continued to be aware of the structures, and went on to notice them in subsequent communicative input. Importantly, it is worth noting that the production of the structures on both post-test measures could have served as communicative input for the students. Then, such a noticing could have facilitated the processing, and thus the mastery of the features in the fill-in-the-blanks task as well as the composition task. This possibility converges with Ellis' (1990) and Fotos' (1993) view that explicit instruction raises consciousness of a feature, making the learner notice the feature in future communicative input.

Furthermore, it is possible that the learners could have used their explicit knowledge to monitor or edit their own output, particularly that on both post-test measures, the students had enough time to edit, were focused on form, and they knew the rules. Undoubtedly, this possibility appears to be in favour of Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis (1981, 1982, 1985).

Additionally, the better performance of the experimental group on the post-test is probably due to the interaction of a number of factors. These are:

1. Providing limited amounts of information about a new target feature during each grammar session could have helped the learners to retain the feature, and use it without being confused.
2. The grammatical explanations were related to meaningful contexts and aided by certain objects in the classroom. This fact may have consolidated the learners' explicit knowledge of the target forms, and thus facilitated its application in the grammar as well as integrative tests.

3. The students' interaction with the teacher could have accelerated their understanding of the structures.
4. The intensive practice and feedback may have reinforced the learners' grasp of the forms in question, and thus increased the learners' ability to use these forms correctly on the post-test measures. According to Borg (1999), by practicing grammar students consolidate their understanding of grammar and the teacher can be aware of their needs.
5. Pointing out the structural discrepancies between the mother tongue and the target language could have helped the learners to avoid confusion, and consequently apply the rules correctly.

CHAPTER FIVE

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has demonstrated the superiority of explicit grammar instruction. This converges with Alexander's (1990: 381) view which posits that:

> There is only one (and there only ever was one) method for teaching grammar and that is through explanation. That explanation might be direct, or induced, but explanation is the only method available.

5.1 Justifications for Incorporating Explicit Grammar Instruction in Second Language Learning Curricula

Explicit instruction can be a valuable added ingredient in SLL curricula, and this is due to a number of reasons. First of all, EGI, as has been proved by the present study, improves explicit grammatical knowledge and grammatical accuracy in writing in the TL. Thus EGI can be a valuable pedagogical tool because it can promote a significant improvement in the learners' performance on discrete-point grammar tests as well as integrative tests. Furthermore, avoiding fossilization can be a good reason to plea in favour of returning to more explicit types of instruction. As shown in the survey results, most students (93.02%) expressed their incapacity to induce the grammatical rules correctly by a mere exposure to the TL. Importantly, Higgs and Clifford (1982; in Master, 1994: 230) suggested that grammarless instruction could lead to fossilization. This directly challenged Krashen and Terrell's (1983) claim that comprehensible input in a low-risk environment was a sufficient condition for language acquisition. Within a similar vein, Harley and Swain (1984; in White, Spada, Lightbown, and Ranta, 1991: 416) reported that: "input alone does not necessarily lead learners to high levels of development in the L2."

Thus, inducing the grammatical structures is only one step in the learning process since learners may make inaccurate guesses, and induction needs to be explicit in order to avoid fossilization (Dickinson, 1996). Fotos (2002: 137) asserts that:

> explicit instruction is necessary to promote high levels of accuracy in the target language, even when communicative opportunities to encounter target forms are abundant.

Another reason to incorporate EGI in the curriculum is simply that it meets the desires of many learners. As the results of the present study's survey showed, the majority of the students (95.34%) had much more favourable attitudes towards EGI. Interestingly, Truscott (1996: 359) has pointed out that teachers should provide students with what helps them to learn, rather than with what students think helps them to learn. However, Schualtz (1996) argues that Truscott's view ignores the effect of student motivation on learning, and the possibility of not taking learners' beliefs about the importance of grammar instruction into account could affect students' trust in the teacher and the institution, and consequently lower motivation. In short, teachers should not ignore their students' desire to have the grammatical points under consideration in front of them. Brindley (1987; in Zhang, 1998: 7) observes:

> any teacher who deliberately refused to give an explanation would be violating a very basic principle of adult learning, that is, learners should have a choice concerning content and methods of learning. Secondly, even though low level learners do not produce certain structures correctly in spontaneous speech, they may still be made aware of how these structures are used, especially when the structures differ markedly from those of their L1.

In other words, students' failure to apply the rules accurately in communicative or integrative tasks may necessitate a reinforcement of those rules. Some suggestions will be dealt with the next section.

5.2 Suggestions for Effective Teaching of Grammatical Rules

First of all, teachers should avoid the traditional way of teaching that is based on lecturing and students' passive reactions. They should use new methods based on the interaction between teachers and learners. All-Wright (1984; in Ellis, 1994 :565) sees interaction as "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy" because "everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction." Additionally, teachers should augment this interaction by relating the grammar lesson to a context to make the learning experience more enjoyable. This would make the students more comfortable and less stressed. In a more comfortable environment, learners will feel more at ease to ask questions and give answers. As a result, they will reinforce the lesson the teacher is attempting to teach them.

Secondly, providing smaller amounts of new information in meaningful contexts, and allowing students to practise it immediately and get feedback for their production in the same session may allow students to perceive learning grammar as a rewarding game because they can be aware of their success. Moreover, repeating the new structures in different contexts within long intervals of time may help learners to master the structures since different opportunities for their learning are provided.

Thirdly, repeating the explicit knowledge about the grammatical structure every time students practise it may provide them with more chances to understand the structure than if it is only mentioned once.

Finally, pointing out the discrepancies between the native language forms and the TL norms can help learners learn rules, and avoid confusion since for some students L1 is the only reference point available. Therefore, it would be senseless not to take advantage of the L1 linguistic knowledge that learners already possess, and not to compare the systems of the L1 and L2 when helping students learn the L2.

It should also be acknowledged that learners may not apply the rules they have learnt when writing because they might feel that the rules are separate from writing. They may even think that making mistakes in writing is tolerable as long as the messages or utterances are easily understood (Widodo, 2006: 130). As shown in the results of the participants' questionnaire, most of the students (73.07%) focus on meaning and vocabulary when writing, and consequently the attention which they pay to the grammatical structures diminishes. Undoubtedly, monitoring can not take place without paying attention to the form. Therefore, a goal likely to be achieved is that of increasing awareness among students of the necessity of paying more attention to the grammatical features in their careful style of writing, for example, in the writing assignments. Padilla (2006: 583) holds that:

> teachers need to constantly reinforce the idea that language learners need to be engaged in developing accuracy in producing the target language, even tough students appear to comprehend the target language reasonably well.

Most important, learners need to be aware of the fact that writing with grammar in minds helps them to produce more effective compositions, inasmuch as without grammar, writing would be chaotic, and students risk being misunderstood.

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Thirdly, repeating the explicit knowledge about the grammatical structure every time students practise it may provide them with more chances to understand the structure than if it is only mentioned once.

Finally, pointing out the discrepancies between the native language forms and the TL norms can help learners learn rules, and avoid confusion since for some students L1 is the only reference point available. Therefore, it would be senseless not to take advantage of the L1 linguistic knowledge that learners already possess, and not to compare the systems of the L1 and L2 when helping students learn the L2.

It should also be acknowledged that learners may not apply the rules they have learnt when writing because they might feel that the rules are separate from writing. They may even think that making mistakes in writing is tolerable as long as the messages or utterances are easily understood (Widodo, 2006: 130). As shown in the results of the participants' questionnaire, most of the students (73.07%) focus on meaning and vocabulary when writing, and consequently the attention which they pay to the grammatical structures diminishes. Undoubtedly, monitoring can not take place without paying attention to the form. Therefore, a goal likely to be achieved is that of increasing awareness among students of the necessity of paying more attention to the grammatical features in their careful style of writing, for example, in the writing assignments. Padilla (2006: 583) holds that:

> teachers need to constantly reinforce the idea that language learners need to be engaged in developing accuracy in producing the target language, even tough students appear to comprehend the target language reasonably well.

Most important, learners need to be aware of the fact that writing with grammar in minds helps them to produce more effective compositions, inasmuch as without grammar, writing would be chaotic, and students risk being misunderstood.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has come to the conclusion that explicit grammar instruction is of vital importance in L2/FL classrooms. In fact, students are not learning English grammar as much as they should, and this is the core of the problem. Without a firm knowledge of grammar in the TL, learners can not produce meaningful sentences. They risk being misunderstood and making crucial mistakes in communication. As Alexander (1990: 379) puts it, "Communication most frequently breaks down when incorrect syntax and usage make language incomprehensible." This is especially true when the mother tongue is significantly different in grammar and structures.

Interestingly, as the findings of this study revealed, the highest scores both on the discrete-point grammar test and the integrative test were received in the class where significant EGI and exercises were given. This demonstrates that students can not process English without explicit instruction.

Equally, from the results of my research in this dissertation, I strongly believe that without a sound knowledge of the grammatical basis of a second or a foreign language, the learner is in possession of nothing more than a selection of everyday phrases which are adequate for basic greetings and making orders at a restaurant, but which will be deficient when the learner is required to perform any kind of sophisticated linguistic tasks. Those students who say they do not like English or are poor in English just do not know the basic grammar. It is like playing chess or baseball without knowing the rules. They could neither understand the games nor enjoy them. First and foremost, the important thing is to know the rules.

Finally, I present this research with its concrete data to indicate that it is of vital importance for ESL/EFL students to receive EGI. This has a positive impact on learners' explicit grammatical knowledge, and the beneficial effect of EGI is even more strongly observed in the subjects' grammatical accuracy in writing.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to writing, and not to speaking.
2. This study focused on English articles, namely the indefinite article (a/an), the definite article (the), and the zero article (Ø).
3. The participants were Algerian, so the results can not be generalized to learners of other nationalities.
4. Only intermediate learners participated in this study.
5. The number of participants was relatively small.
6. The period of treatment was short.

Suggestions for Further Research

Since this study was narrowed down in terms of its participants, structures in focus, techniques of focus on form, etc., it seems necessary to point out some further research to be done in this regard.

1. Considering the fact that this study focused on explicit instruction, it is suggested that other studies would be conducted with other techniques of focus on form.
2. Since the present study focused on only English articles, similar studies could examine the gains, both in grammatical knowledge and writing accuracy, in terms of other structures in English or any other languages.
3. Similar research could be done regarding the oral recognition and production of articles or any other structures.
4. The need is felt to carry out similar experiments to investigate the long-term effect of explicit grammar instruction.
5. This study could be replicated with learners at higher and lower levels of language proficiency.

Final Remark

By doing this research study to investigate the impact of explicit grammar instruction on learners' grammatical knowledge and accuracy in writing, it is hoped that some contribution is made to the development of language teaching. Besides, it is believed that this study covered a narrow scope of focus on form issue, and other researchers and interested students are recommended to carry out related studies to push the frontiers of knowledge in this regard.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The test used in pre-testing and post-testing

Fill-in-the-blank task

*Fill in the blanks below with **the**, **a**, or **an** where necessary. If **no word** is necessary, leave the blank as it is.*

1. … oranges contain vitamin C.
2. This morning I bought … newspaper and … magazine … newspaper is in my bag, but I can't remember where I put ... magazine.
3. … coffee in my cup is very hot to drink.
4. These are … shoes that I bought.
5. … milk is good for children.
6. I will never forget … meal I had in this restaurant two years ago.
7. They will have … accident because they are driving too fast.
8. I answered … questions of the test without difficulty.
9. … teacher must be patient.
10. My grandmother enjoys … flowers so much.
11. Can you pass … salt, please ?
12. Don't sit on … floor ! It's dirty.
13. …water is essential for survival.

Composition task

Write a short composition (at least 8 to 10 sentences) about the advantages of the Internet. How can the Internet help you? What are the things you can do via the Internet? Give as many details as possible about the topic. Please stop ***before*** *every* ***noun*** *you use and ask yourself "Do I need to use* ***a***, ***an***, ***the***, *or* ***no word*** *here?"*

APPENDIX B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

Please spare a few minutes of your time to fill in this questionnaire.

Section One: Background information about participants

Please tick (✔) the appropriate choices and provide the necessary information below. It will be kept completely confidential.

1. Gender:
   - Male
   - Female
2. Age: ……..……...
3. Native language:

   ……...
4. When did you get your BAC?

   ……..…...
5. What was your stream in the secondary school?
   - Scientific
   - Literary
   - Technical
6. Do you like English?
   - Yes
   - No

7. What was your mark of English in the BAC exam?

……...

8. How long have you been studying English?

……...

Section Two: Students' preferences and attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction

In this section we would like you to indicate your preference or opinion by ticking (✔) the statement that best indicates your attitude.

9. According to you, do you think that learning grammar is essential for learning English?
   - Yes
   - No

10. When learning a new grammar point, do you like the teacher to explain the rules for you?
   - Yes
   - No

11. Can you discover the grammatical rules correctly from texts or examples without the help of a teacher or a grammar book?
   - Yes
   - No

12. Do you apply the grammatical rules you have learnt in grammar exercises?
   - Yes
   - No

13. Do you apply the rules you have learnt when you write in English or read what you have written?

- Yes
- No

- If yes, is it because the application of the rules helps you to:

- express your ideas clearly
- reduce your grammatical mistakes
- both of them

- If no, is it because your focus is on:

- the meaning you want to convey
- using appropriate vocabulary
- both of them

14. If you apply the rules you have learnt when you write, can you detect and correct your grammatical mistakes?

- Yes
- No

Many thanks for your time and attention

APPENDIX C

The correct answers of the fill-in-the-blank task

1. **Ø** oranges contain vitamin C.
2. This morning I brought **a** newspaper and **a** magazine. **The** newspaper is in my bag, but I can't remember where I put **the** magazine.
3. **The** coffee in my cup is too hot to drink.
4. These are **the** shoes that I bought.
5. **Ø** Milk is good for children.
6. I will never forget **the** meal I had in this restaurant two years ago.
7. They will have **an** accident because they are driving too fast.
8. I answered **the** questions of the test without difficulty.
9. **A** teacher must be patient.
10. My grandmother enjoys **Ø** flowers so much.
11. Can you pass **the** salt, please?
12. Don't sit on **the** floor! It's dirty.
13. **Ø** Water is essential for survival.

APPENDIX D1

The explicit instruction the experimental group received in the first session

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

In English, nouns are divided into the categories of ***countable*** and ***uncountable*** *nouns*. The basic distinction between them is whether you can count the things they refer to or not.

1. **Countable Nouns:** They refer to people, places, or things that **can be counted**. It is possible to put a number before a countable noun. If the noun refers to **one** person, place, or thing, it needs to be in the ***singular*** form. If it refers **to more than one** person, place, or thing, it needs to be in the ***plural*** form usually by adding –s or –es to the singular form.

Here is a chart of some countable nouns, the categories in which they fit, and their singular and plural forms.

Countable Nouns					
People		**Places**		**Things**	
Singular	***Plural***	***Singular***	***Plural***	***Singular***	***Plural***
boy	boys	shop	shops	table	tables
teacher	teachers	restaurant	restaurants	watch	watches
president	presidents	office	offices	disk	disks
student	students	garden	gardens	spoon	spoons

2. **Uncountable Nouns:** They refer to food, substances, abstract ideas, or things that can not be counted. They have **only** a ***singular*** form. Here are some examples of uncountable nouns, and the categories in which they fit.

Uncountable Nouns			
Food	**Substances**	**Abstract Ideas**	**Things**
bread, coffee, tea, sugar, butter, fish , fruit, water, milk, cake, rice, cheese	air, oxygen, wood, wool, cotton, aluminium, metal, leather, plastic	courage, work, nature, intelligence, music peace, knowledge, democracy, liberty, information, culture	furniture, money, jewelry, luggage

First session's exercises

Exercise1: *Say whether the following nouns are **countale** or **uncountable** .*

1. Orange
   - *Count*
   - *Uncount*
2. Food
   - *Count*
   - *Uncount*
3. Forest
   - *Count*
   - *Uncount*

4. Hydrogen
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
5. Honesty
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
6. Letter
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
7. Ink
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
8. Job
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
9. Truth
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
10. Behaviour
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
11. Apple
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
12. News
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*

13. Picture
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
14. Beauty
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*
15. Transportation
    - *Count*
    - *Uncount*

Exercise2: *In each space in the following sentences ,indicate whether the noun preceding that space is a countable noun (using the letter **C**) or an uncountable noun (using the letters **UC**).*

1. A vegetarian is a person who does not eat meat … .
2. This restaurant … serves the best food … in the city … .
3. Can you give me advice … about finding work … in Algeria**?**
4. Most women … in my family … don't wear jewelry … .
5. We need money … to buy furniture for our bedroom … .
6. I like music … .
7. There is sand … in my shoes … .
8. There is no electricity … in this house … .
9. She was singing a song … .
10. There is blood … on your shirt … .
11. She eats a banana … every day .
12. Do you take sugar … in your coffee … .
13. I like rice … .
14. It was not your fault. It was an accident … .
15. I don't like chocolate … .

Exercise 3: *Write Five sentences in English. In each sentence try to use either a countable noun or an uncountable noun or both.*

1. ……
2. ……
3. **.....**
4. **.....**
5. **.....**

APPENDIX D2

The explicit instruction the experimental group received in the second session

Articles

English has three types of articles : the *indefinite article* '**a/an'** ,the *definite article* '**the'**, and the *zero article* **Ø** .

The Indefinite Article: a/an

Form: **Using ' a' or 'an' ?**

- **a** + singular countable noun beginning with a **consonant**: **a b**oy, **a c**ar, **a s**tudent, **a g**irl, **a p**roblem, **a m**other, **a t**eacher.
- **an** + singular countable noun beginning with a **vowel**: **an e**gg, **an e**lephant, **an o**rphan, **an i**sland, **an a**ccident, **an a**pple, **an u**mbrella.

Use:

1. The article 'a/an' is called the indefinite article because it is used before a singular countable noun that is not specific (not definite = general) to the listener. In other words, the listener does not know exactly the person or thing the speaker means.
   eg. I live in **a** flat. (= this flat is not known to you, it is unspecific or indefinite to you)

   You seem very ill, so you need to consult **a** doctor. (= doctor is unspecific, you do not know the doctor I mean)

2. The indefinite article a/an is also used before a singular countable noun representing any person or anything.

eg. **A** student must work hard to succeed. (= any student)

A parrot can repeat what you say. (= any parrot)

A teacher must have patience. (= any teacher)

A child needs affection. (= any child)

3. The indefinite article is used before a singular countable noun mentioned for the first time in a conversation.

eg. I met **a** woman. The woman was very kind. (= first mention of woman)

She bought **a** bag. The bag is red and lovely. (= first mention of bag)

Note: The indefinite article **can not** be used with ***plural countable*** nouns or ***uncountable*** nouns.

eg. We **can not** say :

- I have **a *problems***. **or** **An *apples*** are red.
- **A *milk*** is good for you. **or** Do you need **a *money* ?**

Second session's exercises

Exercise 1:

Which article **a** or **an** can be put before the following words or phrases? Write the words or phrases into the correct column.

dog, old comic, bird, English book, exercise book, red apple, cup of coffee, umbrella, animal, elephant

a	an

Exercise2: *Complete the following sentences with the indefinite article* ***a*** *or* ***an****.*

1. Can I ask you … question?
2. You seem very tired; you need … holiday.
3. I have got … idea.
4. They have bought … television.
5. If you want to be healthy, you must eat … apple every day.
6. … dog is faithful to its master.
7. Our neighbours have … cat. The cat is friendly.
8. She has finally found … job.
9. I need … telephone to contact you.
10. They live in … village near Oum El Bouaghi.

Exercise 3: *Write three sentences in English illustrating the use of the* ***indefinite article*****.**

1. **a/an** + singular countable noun that is general or unspecific to the listener

   ……...

2. **a/an** + singular countable noun representing any person or thing

   .....

3. **a/an** + singular countable noun mentioned for the first time

   ……...

APPENDIX D3

The explicit instruction the experimental group received in the third session

The Definite Article: the

The definite article '**the**' is used before singular countable nouns, plural countable nouns, and uncountable nouns that are specific. In other words, the listener knows exactly the person or thing the speaker means. This may be because:

1. The noun has been mentioned before; for instance, in the previous sentence.

eg. - This morning I bought **a *book***. **The *book*** is very interesting.
(a book = first mention, The book = second mention)

- She has got two children: **a *boy*** and **a *girl* .The *boy*** is five, and **the *girl*** is three.
(a boy, a girl = first mention. The boy, the girl = second mention)

2. It is clear in the situation the specific person or thing that the speaker means even if he has not mentioned the noun before. For example, in a room we talk about **the** light/ **the** floor/**the** door/**the** carpet, etc.

eg. - Can you close **the *door***, please? (the listener understands that the speaker means a specific door = the door of this room)

- I took a taxi to **the *station***. (the noun 'station' is specific=the station in this town)
- Could you pass **the *sugar,*** please? (specific sugar = the sugar on this table)

3. There is a clause or a phrase that comes after the noun and makes it specific.

eg. - **The *writer*** **<u>of this book</u>** is famous. (the listener understands that the speaker does not mean any writer; he means a specific writer = the writer of this book)

- **The *flowers*** **<u>you gave me</u>** were wonderful. (specific flowers = the flowers you gave me)

- **The *ink* <u>in my pen</u>** is red. (specific ink = the ink in my pen)

Third session's exercises

Exercise1: *Fill in the blanks below with **a/an** or **the***

1. There are two cars parked outside: … blue one and … grey one … blue one belongs to my neighbours; I don't know who … owner of … grey one is.
2. I think … man is very unfriendly.
3. We went to … station this morning to pick up my grandfather.
4. I'm not keen on … food they serve in the school cafeteria.
5. Where are … scissors?- Sorry; I haven't seen them .
6. I need to go to the library to return … books I borrowed.
7. I saw … accident this morning. … car crashed into … tree. … driver of … car wasn't hurt, but … car was badly damaged .
8. Where's … salt? – Are you blind? It's next to your plate.
9. I think that … coffee which is grown in Keneya tastes the best.
10. … water is dirty. Don't drink it!

Exercise 2: *Choose the appropriate article to complete the sentences below*.

1. Can you please return … pen I gave you yesterday?
    - a
    - an
    - the
2. Please open … window. It's very hot in here.
    - a
    - an
    - the

3. This morning, I had … orange.
    - a
    - an
    - the
4. …orange was sweet.
    - a
    - an
    - the
5. I feel ill. I think it was … pizza I had for dinner.
    - a
    - an
    - the
6. Take your feet off … table, please.
    - a
    - an
    - the
7. I live in a house near … centre of town.
    - a
    - an
    - the
8. Yesterday I met … child.
    - a
    - an
    - the
9. … Child was very intelligent.
    - a
    - an
    - the

10.I don’t like … toothpaste I bought last week. It tastes of onions.

- a
- an
- the

Exercise 3: *Write three sentences in English illustrating the use of the definite article*

1. **the** + a the noun that has been mentioned before

   ……

2. **the** + a noun that is specific in the context

   ……...

3. **the** + a noun that is followed by a clause or phrase.

   ……...

APPENDIX D4

The explicit instruction the experimental group received in the fourth session

The Zero Article : Ø

1. The zero article **Ø** is used with plural countable nouns to make general statements. That is, to talk about people or things in general.

Examples

- **Ø Boys** are stronger than **Ø girls**.
  (=this is a general statement = in general, Ø boys are stronger than Ø girls)

  We **can not** say: **A** boys are stronger than **a** girls.

  Or: **The** boys are stronger than **the** girls.

- **Ø Computers** are expensive. (= the speaker talks about computers in general)
  It is **wrong** to say: **A** computers are expensive.

  Or: **The** computers are expensive.

- **Ø Vegetables** are good for you. (= in general)
  It is **wrong** to say : **A** vegetables are good for you.

  Or : **The** vegetables are good for you.

2. The zero article **Ø** is also used with uncountable nouns to make general statements.

Examples:

- I do not like **Ø tea**. (= in general)

We **can not** say:

I do not like **a** tea.

Or: I do not like **the** tea.

- **Ø Coffee** is not good for you. (= in general)

It is **wrong** to say: **A** coffee is not good for you.

Or: **The** coffee is not good for you.

- **Ø Water** is precious. (= in general)

It is **wrong** to say: **A** water is precious.

Or: **The** water is precious.

Here are more examples illustrating the use of articles to indicate the difference between ***general*** things or people and ***specific*** things or people.

People or Things in General=Not Specific	**Specific People or Things**
I am looking for **a *job***. (= not a specific job)	I found **the *job*** that I applied for. (= a specific job)
I like reading **Ø *books***. (= books in general)	I read **the *books* you gave me**. (=specific books)
Do you like **Ø *coffee***? (= coffee in general)	Did you like **the *coffee* we had after dinner last night**? (= specific coffee)

Fourth session's exercises

Exercise 1: *Fill in the blanks of the sentences with **Ø** or **the***

1. … women live longer than … men.
2. … balloons are full of … air.

3. I'm afraid of … dogs.
4. … sugar isn't very good for you.
5. … children learn from playing.
6. I don't like … chocolate.
7. You need to read … books to improve your English.
8. … life is strange sometimes. Some very strange things happen.
9. He never tells … lies.
10. I like … cheese.

Exercise 2: *Complete the sentences with the appropriate article.*

1. Do you know … people who live next door?
   - Ø
   - a
   - an
   - the
2. We need … patience to teach young children.
   - Ø
   - a
   - an
   - the
3. Don't sit on … grass. It's wet after the rain.
   - Ø
   - a
   - an
   - the

4. Algerians like … democracy.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the
5. … girls do better at school than boys.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the
6. The film wasn't very good, but I liked … music.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the
7. … students need to do their best to succeed.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the
8. What is … freedom?
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the

9. These days … hotels are very expensive.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the
10. I have borrowed … money from her before.
    - Ø
    - a
    - an
    - the

Exercise 3: *Write two sentences that illustrate the use of the **zero article** in English*

1. **Ø** + a plural countable noun

    ……...

2. **Ø** + an uncountable noun

    .....

APPENDIX D5

The explicit instruction the experimental group received in the fifth session

Strategies Determining the Use of Articles

To use the appropriate article, you can ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the noun **countable** or **uncountable** = can the noun be counted in English?
- If countable it is either **singular** or **plural**.
- If **singular**, we may need either the indefinite article **a/an** or the definite article **the**.

  A) We use **a/an** if the **singular** noun:

  1. is ***general***=not known to the listener

  eg. I bought **a dress**.

  2. refers to ***any*** person or thing

  eg. **A mother** must be respected.

  3. Is ***mentioned*** for the ***first*** time.

  eg. I met **a woman.** The woman was very kind.

  B) We use **the** with the **singular** countable noun if the noun is ***definite*** = ***specific*** = known to the listener because:

  1. It has been ***mentioned before***.

  eg. She has got **an idea**. **The idea** is interesting.

  2. It is ***clear*** in the ***situation*** the person or thing that we mean.

  eg. Can you turn off **the light**, please?

  3. It is ***followed by a group of words*** that makes it ***specific.***

  eg. **The *woman* I met this morning** was very kind.

- If **plural**, we may use **Ø** or **the**.

  A) We use **Ø** if we are talking about things or people ***in general***.

  eg. I like ***Ø people***.

  B) We use **the** if we are talking about ***specific people or things***. In this case the ***plural*** noun is usually ***followed by a group of words*** that makes it specific.

  eg. I like **the *people* <u>I work with</u>**.

- If the noun is **uncountable**, we may use either **Ø** or **the**.

  A) We use **Ø** when we refer to things ***in general***.

  eg. **Ø Milk** contains Calcium.

  B) We use **the** when the noun is specific because:

  1. It is ***clear*** in the ***situation*** the thing that we mean.

  eg. Can you pass **the sugar** ,please?

  2. The noun is ***followed by a group of words*** that makes it ***specific*** .

  eg.**The *milk* <u>in my glass</u>** is not good.

<u>Fifth session's exercises</u>

<u>Exercise1</u>: *<u>Complete each sentence with **a, an, the,or Ø**</u>*.

1. It is a nice room, but I don't like … colour of the carpet.
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**

2. Do you like … music ?
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**
3. This morning I ate … orange.
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**
4. Did you like … music of this film?
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**
5. We had dinner in … restaurant.
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**
6. I have … problem. Can you help me?
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**

7. I'm just going to … post office. I won't be long.
   a. **a**
   b. **an**
   c. **the**
   d. **Ø**
8. I had … sandwich and … apple.
   a. **a** a. **a**
   b. **an** b. **an**
   c. **the** c. **the**
   d. **Ø** d. **Ø**
9. … sandwich wasn't very good, but … apple was nice.
   a. **a** a. **a**
   b. **an** b. **an**
   c. **the** c. **the**
   d. **Ø** d. **Ø**
10. I like … milk.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**
11. What time is it? I don't know. I don't have … watch.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**

12. … apples are very good for you.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**
13. Look at … apples on that tree! They are very big.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**
14. I don’t drink … tea.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**
15. You can sit on … floor . It is clean.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**
16. … tea in my cup is very hot.
    a. **a**
    b. **an**
    c. **the**
    d. **Ø**

17. Who are … people in this photograph ?

a. **a**
b. **an**
c. **the**
d. **Ø**

Exercise2: *Put in **a/an or the** where necessary. If no word is necessary, leave the space **empty**. Please **justify** you answer in the space provided below each sentence.*

1. I like … flowers in your garden.

……

……

2. He eats a lot of … meat.

……

……

3. Algerians enjoy … liberty.

……

……

4. … food that you cooked was very good.

……

……

5. She wants … car.

……

……

6. … man and … woman were sitting opposite me.

……

……...

7. … man was British, but I think … woman was French.

……

……...

8. My mother likes … cheese.

……

……...

9. Have you finished with … book I lent you.

……

……...

10. If you drive very fast , you will have … accident.

……

……...

11. … coffee they serve in this café is not good.

……

……...

12. … answers of the questions you asked are very simple.

……

……...

13. You can ask … questions.

……

…….....

14. Please pass … sugar.

……

……...

15. He has … car and … motorbike.

……

……...

16. … car is new, but … motorbike is old.

……

……...

Exercise3: *Say whether you like these things or not*.

cats nature peace

1. ……

2. ……

3. ……

APPENDIX E

An example of the implicit instruction the control group received

What is Money ?

Economists often use words in ways that are not quite the same as the way the words are used in every day speech. 'Money' is such a word. In every day speech, we use the word 'money' in a variety of ways, such as : "My father makes a lot of money", or "Bill Gate has more money than anyone else", or "General Electric made as much money this year as last". In the first sentence above, the word money could be replaced with income, in the second with wealth, and in the third with profit or net income. None is the way economists usually use the word 'money'. The economic definition emphasizes that money is the **medium of exchange**, or what we use to buy things with. That is the coins and currency we give in return for the goods and services we obtain.

The economic activity can take place without money. All transactions can be barter transactions in which people obtain the good or service that they want by trading away another good or service that they value less. Suppose we have the mini-economy in the table below. If Crusoe visits Peter to buy oranges, a trade may not take place. Ahmed wants oranges, but Peter does not want fish. Exchange will take place only when one of the three realizes that he will have to accept the thing he does not want, but which he can trade later. With only three people and three commodities, this realization will soon take place. However if there are a hundred people with a hundred different commodities, the pattern of barter transactions necessary for everyone to end up with what he or she wants may be complex, groups need to find a way to reduce the cost of making transactions.

They spontaneously begin to use one commodity as an intermediary: they invent money.

A Barter Economy		
	Has	**Wants**
Crusoe	Fish	Oranges
Peter	Oranges	Bananas
John	Bananas	Fish

The invention of money makes trading easier. With money, all prices can be expressed in the same way, in terms of how much money is needed to buy the product. The unit of money becomes the measuring stick of value, or what economists call the **standard of value**. In other words, we can use money to determine the value of a good or service. With a standard of value, computing the costs and benefits of various options, that is making choices, becomes easier.

In addition to its function as a medium of exchange, money also serves as a **store of value**. This means that we can save our money and spend it for something in the future. Though this function is not what makes money important in macroeconomics, it is vital in explaining how much money people want to hold. Any item that people consider as a way of holding wealth is a store of value. Lands, stocks, old paintings, factories, and jewelry are just some of the other ways people can hold wealth. When money is a good way to hold wealth compared to these alternatives, people will want to hold a lot of it. On the other hand, when money is a poor way to hold wealth, people try to keep little of it. For example, in the German hyperinflation, people tried to spend money as soon as they got it because it lost its value quickly. This idea, that people are willing to hold large amounts of money when it is a good store of value, but try to hold small amounts when it is a poor way to hold wealth, is the key idea for those who believe that

changes in the amount of money have been an important source of economic disturbance.

Retrieved from: **www.ingrimayne.com**

Comprehension of the Text

A) Choose the most correct answer.

1. An economy which lacks a medium of exchange uses:
   a- a commodity money
   b- a debt money
   c- barter

2. The defining characteristics of money is its use as:
   a- a store of value
   b- a medium of exchange
   c- a bank debt
   d- a standard of value

3. In a barter economy, there:
   a- is no exchange
   b- are no commodities
   c- can be no inflation

4. Textbooks of economics usually list three functions of money and the text mentioned all three. Which of the following was not mentioned as something that money does?
   a- serve as a medium of exchange
   b- serve as an indicator of social status
   c- serve as a standard of value
   d- serve as a way of holding wealth

5. A store of value is:

a- any item that consider a way of holding prestige

b- any item that consider a way of making profits

c- any item that consider a way of holding wealth

6. A medium of exchange is:

a- what people use to store things

b- what people use to import things

c- what people use to export things

d- what people use to buy things

B)<u>Try to match each term with its appropriate definition</u>.

Term	Definition
Economy	It is that which comes in as the periodical product of one's work, business, lands, or investments.
Transaction	The study of economy.
Income	The production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services usually measured in terms of money which facilitates these activities.
Inflation	It constitutes what something is worth.
Economics	It refers to economic issues that concern the performance of the economy on a national scale.
Value	It refers to a general increase in prices usually attributed to a situation in which there is too much money chasing too few goods thus driving up the price of all goods by driving down the value of money.
Macroeconomics	The exchange of goods and services through buying, selling, or barter.
Commodities	Products and materials that are bought and sold especially between countries.

C) Translate the following sentence into French and Arabic.

Money has three functions: it is a medium of exchange, a standard of value, and a store of value .

a- Translation into French:

.....

.....

b- Translation into Arabic:

……

……

APPENDIX F

The experimental and control groups' square pre-test scores on the fill-in-the-blank task

Student	Experimental group's scores X_1	Square scores X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square scores X_2^2
1	05	25	03	09
2	06	36	04	16
3	04	16	05	25
4	05	25	14	196
5	07	49	11	121
6	09	81	09	81
7	03	09	08	64
8	06	36	07	49
9	06	36	08	64
10	07	49	09	81
11	08	64	09	81
12	09	81	08	64
13	05	25	05	25
14	04	16	04	16
15	06	36	12	144
16	05	25	11	121
17	04	16	09	81
18	05	25	04	16
19	06	36		
20	04	16		
21	05	25		
22	09	81		
23	07	49		
24	06	36		
25	04	16		
	$\sum X_1 = 145$	$\sum X_1^2 = 909$	$\sum X_2 = 140$	$\sum X_2^2 = 1254$

APPENDIX G

Square pre-test scores of both groups on the composition task

Student	Experimental group's scores X_1	Square scores X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square scores X_2^2
1	04	16	06	36
2	02	04	04	16
3	06	36	04	16
4	04	16	08	64
5	04	16	06	36
6	08	64	04	16
7	04	16	04	16
8	06	36	04	16
9	04	16	02	04
10	04	16	04	16
11	06	36	06	36
12	08	64	04	16
13	04	16	06	36
14	02	04	04	16
15	04	16	08	64
16	06	36	08	64
17	04	16	06	36
18	04	16	06	36
19	08	64		
20	04	16		
21	06	36		
22	02	04		
23	04	16		
24	04	16		
25	04	16		
	$\sum X_1 = 116$	$\sum X_1^2 = 608$	$\sum X_2 = 94$	$\sum X_2^2 = 540$

ملخـــــــص

أجريت هذه الدراسة للبحث عن وجود أو غياب أثر واضح للعرض التفصيلي و المباشر للقواعد النحوية على المعارف النحوية و كذا دقة النحو في الكتابة لدى طلاب السنة الأولى تجـارة بجامعة أم البواقـــي.

خلصت دراسات سابقة إلى أن تدريس قواعد النحو يسفر عن مكاسب في المعارف النحويـة و استظهارها في تطبيقات نحوية بامتياز.

بيد أنه لا توجد أدلة تذكر لإثبات اتصال المكاسب المعرفية بالتطبيقات التكاملية، و يجدر بالذكر أن هذا النوع من التطبيقات يعمل على تنمية قدرة الطالب على الاتصال والتواصل باستعمـال اللغة الأجنبية و تندرج التعابير الإنشائية ضمن التطبيقات التكامليـة .

تحقيقا للغاية المرجوة من هذه الدراسة ، أنجز بحث شبه تجريبي الشكل حيث أنه تم تعييـن فوجين من الطلبة كانا موجودين مسبقا، تم تعينهما تلقائيا كفوج تجريبي و فوج حكـم .

تلقى الفوج التجريبي شرحا تفصيليا و ممارسة لبعض القواعد النحوية التي تحكم حروف التعريف للغة الانجليزيـــة .

بعكس الفوج الأول، لم يتلق الطلبة في الفوج الحكم أي شرح للقواعد النحوية، عوضا عن ذلك، علموا فهم النصوص التجارية التي بها أدوات التعريـف .

قيم المشاركون سلفا من خلال اختبار يضم تطبيقين : الأول في ملء الفراغات و الثانـــي تعبير انشائي، و ذلك لفحص معارفهم الحالية بالنحو و مستواهم في الاستعمال السليم لأدوات التعريف، علما أنه أنجز استبيان للطلبة في نفس الوقـت .

بعد سلسلة من الدروس، أنجز اختبار ثاني كان مماثلا للاختبار الذي سبق التجربـة .

أشارت نتائج اختبارات العينة و العينة الحرة الى أن عرض القواعد النحوية هو العامـل الأكثر تأثيرا في معرفة الطلبة بالنحو و دقتهم النحوية في الكتابـة .

اضافة الى ذلك أظهر الطلاب رغبتهم في تلقي القواعد النحويـة .

لقد توصلنا من خلال هذه الدراسة التجريبية الى انه من الممكن تماما ان يكون لعرض قواعد النحو الاثر القوي على المعارف النحوية و كذا الكتابة السليمة نحويـا في اللغة الاجنبية .

Résumé

La présente étude est accomplie pour examiner l'impact de la présence ou de l'absence d'instruction explicite de grammaire sur la connaissance grammaticale et l'exactitude par écrit des étudiants de première année de Commerce à l'Université de Larbi Ben M'Hidi à Oum El Bouaghi. La recherche précédente suggère que l'instruction explicite de grammaire ait comme conséquence des gains en connaissance explicite et son application spécialement dans les tâches grammaticales de point séparé, mais il ya peut d'évidence qu'elle s'ensuit en gains en exactitude grammaticale dans les tâches intégrantes comprenant les compositions écrites. Pour réaliser le but de cette étude, un design quasi-expérimental a été accompli. Deux groupes pré-existants d'apprenants ont été au hasard alloués comme le groupe expérimental et le groupe control. Le groupe expérimental a reçu l'instruction explicite de grammaire qui a impliqué l'explication et la pratique de quelques règles gouvernant les articles en Anglais. Les sujets du groupe de control n'ont reçu aucune présentation explicite des règles grammaticales. Au lieu de cela, ils ont été enseignés dans la compréhension des textes de Commerce contenant les articles définis, indéfinis et zéro. Les participants ont été pré-évalués par une épreuve de remplis le blanc et une épreuve de composition écrite pour vérifier leur connaissance grammaticale actuelle et leur niveau d'exactitude dans l'utilisation des articles. Une enquête attitudinale a été administrée en même temps. Après l'instruction, une post-épreuve a été administrée; c'était identique à la pré-épreuve. Les résultats tant d'une t-épreuve d'apparier-échantillons que d'une t-épreuve d'échantillons indépendants ont indiqué que l'instruction de grammaire explicite était le facteur le plus significatif influençant la connaissance grammaticale explicite des étudiants et leur exactitude grammaticale en forme écrite. En plus les résultats d'enquête ont révélé que les apprenants préfèrent recevoir l'instruction explicite de grammaire. Finalement, il a été conclu qu'il est entièrement possible que l'instruction de grammaire explicite puisse avoir un effet plus puissant sur la connaissance grammaticale explicite aussi bien que l'exactitude en forme écrite dans la langue cible.