

# Topic proposal

Linguistics, English



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Research proposal on the effects of implicit and explicit language instruction on students' ability to learn English grammar

Introduction

In the recent past, there has been a high interest to understand the effects of implicit and explicit language instruction on the students' ability to learn English grammar. Explicit learning is a conscious awareness, intentional, metacognitive and rational learning whereby English grammar learners seek out the structure of the information that is presented by the instructors (Dekeyser, 2008, p 22). On the other hand, implicit English grammar learning entails unconscious attention and learners learn through a passive process where the acquired knowledge is just through exposure (Diana, 2005, p 60). Implicit learning is unintentional, unreflective and subconscious exposure to English grammar thus makes it difficult for the learner to deduce the English grammar rules (AlconSoler, 2005, p 418). Implicit language instruction refers to the acquisition of knowledge in a complex stimulus environment without conscious operations while explicit language instruction involves conscious operation whereby the individual tests hypothesis in search for structure (Curran, 2007, p 33). According to Batstone& Ellis (2009), explicit learning focuses directly on the information while implicit learning uses English language for communicative purposes (p 200). In explicit English grammar, the learner will notice new vocabulary through word building games and vocabulary lists while implicit English grammar learning enables the learner

to acquire unconsciously acquire words due to repeated exposure to the words (Blaauw-Hara, 2006, p 170). In explicit English language learning, the learner has to make concerted and conscious efforts to learn new words thus there is a tendency to concentrate on individual words thus learners may not undertake attempts to decode the meaning of the words (Williams, 2005, p 300). Explicit learning leads to excessive use of dictionary thus affecting reading. On the other hand, implicit English language learning entails inferring meaning from context just like Native speakers and thus depends mainly on the learning capabilities of an individual (Morgan-Short, Steinhauer, Sanz & Ullman, 2012, p 938). The learner may fail to infer correct meaning and some learners may lack the vocabulary knowledge to decipher some words (Hulstijn, 2005, p 135). Learners who begin learning English grammar as child are more likely to display implicit language as opposed to learners who begin at adult stage who are more likely to display high levels of explicit instructions (Ellis, 2005, p 162).

This research examines the current literature in the following areas of implicit and explicit grammar instruction:

- i. To what extent can implicit and explicit instructions help English grammar students improve their literacy and language abilities?
- ii. Does the age of the learner determine the effectiveness of either implicit or explicit English grammar learning?
- iii. What are the learning strategies that are useful in teaching English to non-Native speakers?

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