

Answer 2 questions  
about language  
teaching and learning



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The Question on Whether We Should Teach Grammar Explicitly to Though explicit learning has been given various definitions, the concept refers to the deliberate, conscious and objective focused acquisition of a language with full knowledge that learning is taking place. In explicit learning, various mnemonics, heuristics and strategies are used to to induce a representational system (Dekeyser, 2003, 314). This is as opposed to the implicit learning of a language in which the learner acquires a language without awareness of what is being learned (Dekeyser, 2003, 314). A ready example of explicit learning is in the classroom setting while implicit learning is exemplified by the process of a child acquiring their first language.

Explicit learning may be deductive, where the learner is taught rules directly by an instructor, or inductive where the learner draws own rules based on examples available in the language. The second method is more useful than the first because it enables the learner to explore the language beyond the lesson time. However, the deductive approach must be used to introduce the learner to the language itself in especially in L2 [second language] learning (Dekeyser, 2003, 315).

In order to acquire a second language effectively, it is important that the learner is taught through an explicit system. However, the process should be as inductive as possible for a better and more effective acquisition of the language. This is because, there is very little that can be learned through the implicit process alone according to research under the Artificial Grammar Learning (AGL) paradigm (Dekeyser, 2003, 315).

The Learning Stages of Fiba and Hassan in Pienemann's Processability Theory

Pienemann's Processability Theory refers to the stages of mastering the <https://assignbuster.com/answer-2-questions-about-language-teaching-and-learning/>

nature of computational routines used in a new language that an individual is learning. In order to use the new language well as a means of communication, the learner needs to process in his mind these routines that include grammatical rules and acceptable syntactical sequences (Pienemann, 2001, 12).

In L2 (second language) learning, this processability is impaired by the routines that the learner has already gotten used to in the L1 (first language). In English, for instance, the word order is important in determining the functions of different parts of the sentence. For example in the following two sentences:

John hit the ball.

The ball hit John.

In the first sentence John is the agent while in the second, the ball is the agent.

This does not apply in other languages such as Latin where in both cases John is seen as the agent (Pienemann, 2001, 12).

Such conventions make it very difficult translate for learners of L2 since they tend to rely on the rules of their L1. Such learners may give the second sentence above as the one signifying that John was the agent (Pienemann, 2001, 15).

In the case of three English as a Second Language [ESL] students 20B, Hassan and Fiba, it is easy to tell that they have reached different levels of learning English.

20B is at a more advanced stage of language acquisition than the other two.

Subtle errors can be detected in his work such as tense errors. For instance

he says:

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“ hes watching that a bit and really likes it .

and he wondered if the dog will bring his umbrella or.”

The word “ wondered” does not fit in with the simple present tense of the rest of the story. The second line also ends with the word “ or” which does not apply in conventional English grammar.

20B can be classified as having reached stage 5 and 6 of learning since his problems arise from verb agreement and phrasal construction. The other student Hassan is at the much lower stage 3. For instance he says:

“ there is one man and a boy and the dog.”

It is obvious that he still cannot differentiate between the rules governing the use of articles which accompany nouns. His sentences are still completely disjointed and there is no flow in his writing.

The other student, Fiba, is at stage 2. He is struggling with lexical morphemes. He can hardly get his canonical word order right. His sentences are so brief and lacking in creativity, it only shows that all he has acquired so far are basic words with little knowledge of their use.

#### References

DeKeyser, R., 2003, Implicit and Explicit Learning, London: Blackwells, 314-314.

Pienemann, Manfred, 2001, An Introduction to Processability Theory, University of Paderborn, 12-15.