



The Effectiveness of the Explicit and Implicit Grammar Teaching Online to Improve the Grammar Mastery

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Abstract

Online classes have become indispensable in the digital age due to the internet's ability to offer invaluable resources and support for second-language classrooms. This practicality has led to widespread adoption across all academic levels, including higher education, resulting in a significant increase in the utilization of online classes. The purpose of the study was to examine how online explicit and implicit grammar teaching improved the degree of comparison mastery of the learners in *Structure 2*, a grammar course offered by Unika Soegijapranata in Semarang. Explicit grammar teaching involves presenting the rule and then providing examples to illustrate it, as stated by Larsen-Freeman (2014). On the other hand, implicit grammar teaching emphasizes the significance of learning grammatical rules through immersive experiences by providing various phrases and contextual examples (Thornbury, 1999). A quantitative case study was used to carry out the research. The data were collected by the assessment assigned to 19 students in the forms of pre-test and post-test. The students were grouped into 9 participants for the explicit group, and 10 participants for the implicit group. The data were analyzed via Microsoft SPSS version 22. The finding was that both explicit and implicit grammar teaching online had significant effects on the improvement of competencies. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of considering these methods by lecturers, higher education institutions, and students involved in the learning process.

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INTRODUCTION

Internet-based remote learning is typically only considered to be a component of blended learning or hybrid learning. Blended learning is a more recent concept that combines traditional teaching techniques with online and distance learning (Tawil, 2018). In mixed learning, the offline activity often has a longer duration than the online one. According to Guri-Rosenblit (2018), new technologies are typically deployed in higher education institutions as supplemental features rather than to replace in-person interactions or deliver intensive web-enhanced instruction. Rahmawati (2016) also notes that e-learning adoption has not had a similar degree of growth as compared to face-to-face learning.

In recent years, significant changes have occurred in the field of education. Many schools have transitioned from relying heavily on traditional face-to-face interactions to embracing online classes (Aydawati, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Elumalai et al., 2020; Müller et al., 2021). This circumstance has compelled the educational community to accept e-learning as not only a minor component of teaching and learning but as the primary component. Technology touches so many of us on a daily basis, Ergashev (2019) points out, thus it only makes sense for it to be integrated into education.

Scholars conducting research on teaching strategies (Oktaviana & Fitriati, 2017; Rafsanjani et al., 2020; Rohman & Suwandi, 2021) have also turned their attention to evaluating e-learning in-depth. Some research projects have evaluated e-learning in an effort to examine it in greater detail (Chesniak et al., 2021; Obeng & Coleman, 2020; Rafsanjani et al., 2020; Suswanto et al., 2021). They discussed participant learning in online courses as well as the anticipated short-, medium-, and long-term cognitive and behavioural effects. Using change theories to focus evaluation on the learning process, they also provide guidance to those who are designing, executing, and evaluating the course.

Furthermore, the impressive qualities of online classes, as evidenced by their early achievements, have resulted in their widespread

adoption in educational institutions such as universities (Muhammad, 2020; Taylor et al., 2017; Widhanarto et al., 2018; Yilmaz, 2019). The studies highlight the growing utilization of online classes as a valuable tool in teaching and learning activities.

According to Widhanarto et al. (2018), universities extensively employ online classes as a means to equip students with skills that enable them to adapt to modern learning methods in society. This highlights the recognition and adoption of online classes as a medium to facilitate contemporary educational approaches within the university context, including grammar teaching.

When it comes to the use of specific teaching techniques to teach grammar, several academics have noted that one of the most often used techniques by instructors in Asia is explicit grammar instruction (Yannuar, 2018).

Explicit grammar teaching is one of the oldest concepts in language learning. It has remained important for many years despite its maturity. This grammar teaching strategy starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied (Thornbury, 1999). The concept that instructors/teachers should adequately convey the idea and learners should practice until they fully comprehend the rule forms the foundation for explicit grammar teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2014). According to this approach, there is a central idea: instructors or teachers need to effectively communicate a concept, and learners need to practice it repeatedly until they completely understand it. This concept forms the fundamental principle behind explicit grammar teaching. In other words, this method emphasizes clear teaching and thorough practice to ensure students truly grasp the grammar rules being taught.

In order to provide meaningful assistance to language learners, grammar rules should adhere to certain important features (Thornbury, 1999). These features include truth, limitation, clarity, simplicity, familiarity, and relevance.

Firstly, a grammar rule should be based on reality and have some connection to the world it

describes. It may need to sacrifice a bit of accuracy to ensure clarity and simplicity. Striking the delicate balance between authenticity and accessibility ensures that the grammar rule not only captures the essence of the subject matter but also makes it readily comprehensible to a wide spectrum of learners.

Secondly, a grammar rule should clearly specify any limitations on its usage. For example, simply stating that "will" is used for the future is not helpful without explaining how it differs from other future forms like "going to." A well-crafted grammar guideline not only imparts the rule itself but also extends its utility by providing insightful comparative insights, facilitating a profound grasp of its nuances within a broader linguistic context.

Thirdly, a grammar rule should be clear and avoid confusing wording or areas of uncertainty. For instance, if teachers say that "will" is used for impulsive decisions and "going to" for deliberate ones, students may get confused if all their decisions were planned. In such instances, educators bear the responsibility of presenting these distinctions in a way that simplifies understanding, preventing any unnecessary bewilderment, especially for situations that fall outside straightforward categories.

Next, a grammar rule should be simple and avoid unnecessary subcategories and exceptions. Including too many exceptions can make it harder for students to remember and understand the rule. Furthermore, a grammar rule should be familiar to learners by relating it to their language. This helps them grasp the concept and prevents it from seeming abstract.

Lastly, a grammar rule should be relevant to the learner's mother tongue. If it is not, additional explanations may be necessary to show how the grammar is applied in specific contexts. Considering the cultural and linguistic differences between the learner's mother tongue and the target language can help instructors anticipate and address potential challenges in understanding and mastering the grammar rule effectively.

The benefit of explicit grammar teaching instruction is highlighted in three studies. Afidah and Ma'arif (2017) utilized the magic strategy, a fun teaching method, and observed significant progress in students' grammar knowledge after only four classes. More than half of the students were able to identify 16 tenses and construct sentences in various forms. Moreover, Baron (2020) conducted a study involving 25 university students in Jakarta to compare direct and indirect methods of teaching grammar from academic texts. The results revealed that teaching grammar directly was slightly more effective, although the difference was not significant. Similarly, Kaharuddin (2022) investigated the application of explicit grammar instruction in a virtual classroom setting, comparing the grammar-translation method and the direct method for teaching English grammar. Both methods were found to enhance students' competence, indicating their effectiveness in improving English language learning.

Meanwhile, the implicit grammar teaching style is another well-liked method that frequently wins instructors over thanks to its benefits, which have inspired some academics to study the subject. The students' application of the grammatical idea, motivation (Thorpe, 2021), and ability to understand the meaning without assistance were all improved by implicit grammar instruction (Giguashvili & Sanaia, 2021). This instructional method's remarkable capacity to enhance both linguistic understanding and intrinsic drive underscores its position as a cornerstone in contemporary educational practices.

Implicit grammar teaching derives from the notion that infants learn their first language by connecting it to the outside world. This approach emphasizes how important it is to pick up grammatical rules spontaneously via experience. Teachers demonstrate the concept by providing many phrases and circumstances to show English grammatical structures which then can be referred as an effort to make the learning experience becomes more personalised (Souisa & Yanuarius, 2020).

Personalizing the learning experience for students offers several benefits. When teachers prompt students to write or talk about their personal information, it allows them to express their thoughts, experiences, interests, and beliefs in English using specific grammar forms. This approach helps students connect the new grammar information to their personal lives, making it easier for them to remember the form. Personalization is a vital aspect of the communicative approach, as it promotes authentic communication by having learners share factual information about themselves. This approach not only fosters a deeper engagement with the language but also encourages learners to apply grammar rules and vocabulary in meaningful contexts, enhancing their overall language acquisition process.

Additionally, this method has other advantages, such as enhancing students' attentiveness and providing extra language practice. By actively involving students in the learning process, rather than passively receiving grammar rules, teachers can increase students' engagement and motivation. Furthermore, since the rules are not explicitly provided, teachers can encourage collaborative learning among students, allowing them to practice the target language with their peers. This approach provides students with more opportunities to practice and reinforce their language skills.

Recent research has emphasized the importance of implicit grammar teaching and its integration into teaching tools, as highlighted by Vold (2020). This approach has gained significant support from university professors, as indicated by Alkhaldeh (2020), who found that a large percentage of professors prefer implicit grammar instruction. Several benefits of implicit grammar teaching have been identified, including improved application of grammar concepts, enhanced morale among students (Thorpe, 2021), and the ability to grasp essential meaning without external intervention (Giguashvili & Sanaia, 2021). Overall, these findings underscore the value of incorporating contextualized grammar instruction in language teaching.

Moreover, a mixture of the two approaches, contextualized grammar instruction and explicit grammar instruction, has drawn interest from certain academics. Research has looked at this subject thus far. The two forms were identified by Ellis and Roever (2021) as implicit and explicit knowledge, and a taxonomy of tests was developed to gauge each type.

It is fascinating to examine how the teaching-learning activity in an online English class was evaluated in relation to the prior research mentioned. This study makes an effort to close the gaps that exist between them. It is hoped that the study would take into account of how explicit and implicit grammar teaching online could improve the learners' grammar mastery while also being considered by the lecturers, higher education institutions, and students. By knowing both explicit and implicit strategies, students can develop a well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of grammar, enhancing their overall language proficiency. Additionally, the choice between explicit and implicit teaching can be tailored to individual learners' preferences, learning styles, and proficiency levels, making the learning process more effective and engaging.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative descriptive research approach to gather measurable data for statistical analysis of a sample population. The participants in the study consisted of 19 students enrolled at UNIKA Soegijapranata in Semarang, Indonesia. These students were divided into two distinct groups, namely the explicit group and the implicit group. The independent variables examined were Explicit and Implicit Grammar Teaching Online, while the dependent variable focused on English competence, which was measured through pre-test and post-test assessments. Prior to the treatment, the participants underwent a pre-test evaluation, and subsequently, a post-test assessment was conducted to gauge any potential improvement.

The collection of data was conducted virtually, with the respondents receiving assessments via Google Form. The collected data were analyzed utilizing SPSS version 22, and the research hypotheses were assessed using parametric analysis techniques.

A parametric test refers to a statistical examination that relies on certain assumptions about the data being analyzed. The validity of such a test is contingent upon the data meeting these specific assumptions. One commonly employed parametric test is the paired sample t-test, which was utilized in this study to analyze the collected data.

The paired samples t-test serves as a statistical tool to determine whether a notable difference exists between two sets of measurements obtained from the same group of individuals or objects. In the present research, the pre-test was administered prior to the implementation of the treatment, while the post-test was conducted subsequent to the treatment. The application of the paired samples t-test in this study aimed to investigate whether a significant distinction could be observed between the pre-test and the post-test measurements.

The research included several hypotheses to investigate the effectiveness of explicit and

implicit grammar teaching online on improving learners' grammar skills. Regarding explicit grammar teaching, the first set of hypotheses aimed to determine whether there was a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of learners. The null hypothesis (Ho) stated that there would be no significant difference, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) stated that there would be a significant difference. Similarly, for implicit grammar teaching, the second set of hypotheses was formulated with the same structure and aimed to assess the impact of this teaching method on learners' grammar mastery. The null hypothesis (Ho) suggested no significant difference, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) indicated a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As stated in the methodology, pre-test and post-test assessments were used to collect the research data. 19 participants answered the tests that were distributed via Google Form. The result of the paired sample t-test of the explicit grammar teaching online participants was shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Paired Samples Test of the Explicit Grammar Teaching Online

		Paired Differences					tt	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest- Posttest	-10.56	11.30	3.768	-19.244	-1.867	-2.801	8	.023

The provided SPSS output presents the findings of a paired samples t-test conducted to compare the mean scores of a variable before and after an intervention, specifically the explicit grammar teaching online. The data used in the

analysis were obtained from the same group of participants both before and after the implementation of the intervention. The purpose was to assess if there was a significant difference between the participants' scores on a test before and after the intervention.

The descriptive statistics in the table indicate that the mean difference between the pre-

test and post-test scores was -10.556 or +10.556. This suggests that, on average, participants achieved 10.556 points higher on the post-test compared to their pre-test scores. The standard deviation of the differences was 11.304, indicating that there was considerable variability in the paired differences. This suggests that the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were spread out and not tightly clustered around the mean. The standard error of the mean was 3.768, providing an estimate of the likely variation between the sample mean and the true population mean.

The 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference column presents the range of values within which there is 95% confidence that the true population mean difference lies. In this case, the confidence interval ranged from -19.244 to -1.867, indicating that there is a 95% confidence that the true population mean difference falls within this range.

The t-value of -2.801 was compared to the critical t-value of -2.306 for a 95% confidence level. Since the t-value is smaller than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants who underwent explicit grammar teaching online.

The degrees of freedom associated with the t-test were 8, calculated as the number of pairs minus one. The obtained p-value of .023 is less than the conventional alpha level of .05, which indicates that the null hypothesis can be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that a significant difference exists between the pre-test and post-test scores.

In summary, these findings suggest that the explicit grammar teaching online intervention had a significant effect on the measured variable. Participants, on average, demonstrated higher scores on the post-test compared to their average pre-test scores.

This finding was consistent with the findings of Afidah and Ma'arif (2017). Their findings revealed that after only four courses employing this method, more than half of the students could name 16 tenses and construct sentences in various forms, indicating that the pupils had improved. It also agreed with research by Baron (2020) and Kaharuddin (2022), which found that teaching grammar directly produced somewhat superior results.

Meanwhile, to evaluate the average variance between the pre-test and post-test scores of the implicit group, the paired samples t-test was employed. The result was shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Paired Samples Test of the Implicit Grammar Teaching Online

	Paired Differences					tt	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pretest- Posttest	-8.500	11.56	3.655	-16.769	-.231	-2.325	9	.045

The calculated mean difference was determined to be -8.500, indicating that, on average, the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. The second column showed the

standard deviation of these differences, calculated as 11.559. The third column presented the standard error of the mean difference, which was computed as 3.655.

The subsequent two columns provided the 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference. The lower and upper bounds of the confidence

interval were reported as -16.769 and -0.231, respectively. This indicated that with 95% confidence, the true population mean

difference between the pre-test and post-test scores fell within this range.

To test the null hypothesis, a t-value of -2.325 was used, which was smaller than the t-table of -2.262 at a 95% confidence level. This t-value led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of learners who were taught implicit grammar online. The "df" column denoted the degrees of freedom associated with this t-statistic.

Lastly, the p-value associated with the t-value was presented in the last column, recorded as .045. Since the p-value was less than the standard significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that a significant difference existed between the pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that the intervention or treatment being evaluated had a statistically significant impact on the learners' scores.

The findings, along with those of Alkhalaf (2020), Giguashvili and Sanaia (2021), Thorpe (2021), and Vold (2020), validated the effectiveness of implicit grammar instruction. A substantial difference in pre-test and post-test scores suggested that the implicit grammar instruction had a favourable influence on the students' results. This was consistent with prior research, which found that one of the benefits of implicit grammar instruction was improved students' application of grammar ideas.

However, the results obtained from this study did not align with the findings of a previous study conducted by Mitchell et al. (2016) which presented evidence suggesting that implicit grammar teaching had no significant impact on students' text composition abilities. Furthermore, the current findings also did not directly correlate with the studies conducted by Nurhayati (2019) and Hidayat (2017), which examined the advantages and limitations of implicit grammar teaching.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that although these previous studies are not directly

related to the specific research findings, they shed light on the potential benefits of inductive grammar teaching. These benefits include a better understanding of lessons, improved collaboration skills, and enhanced communication. However, Hidayat's study also highlighted a weakness of implicit grammar teaching in terms of providing clear explanations of grammar rules.

Thus, the findings demonstrated that the intervention of both explicit and implicit grammar teaching online led to a notable impact on the measured variable. On average, participants performed better on the post-test compared to the pre-test.

By giving students a firm basis in grammatical rules, the explicit grammar teaching strategy increased learners' performance. Contrarily, the implicit grammar teaching procedure improved learners' performance by encouraging a deeper comprehension and application of grammar in genuine language circumstances.

Incorporating explicit grammar teaching has proven for providing students with a solid foundation of grammatical knowledge. It helps students understand grammar rules, learn the correct usage of language structures, and develop their metalinguistic awareness. This strategy can be particularly useful for learners who benefit from explicit explanations and systematic learning.

Simultaneously, implicit grammar teaching should also be incorporated. Students need opportunities to practice and reinforce their grammar skills in authentic, meaningful contexts. By engaging in communicative activities, reading extensively, and listening to native speakers, students can internalize grammar naturally and develop fluency and accuracy in language use. Implicit grammar teaching helps students develop an intuitive sense of grammar and enhances their overall language proficiency.

Considering both methods in the learning process acknowledges the value of explicit grammar teaching for grammatical rule learning and implicit exposure to the context for implicit rule acquisition. It recognizes that different learners may benefit from different approaches

and that a combination of explicit and implicit strategies can provide a well-rounded language learning experience.

In summary, the study highlights the importance of considering both explicit and implicit grammar teaching strategies. Lecturers, higher education institutions, and students should recognize the benefits of explicit grammar instruction for rule learning and explicit awareness, as well as the benefits of implicit grammar teaching for developing fluency. By incorporating both methods, educators can enhance the effectiveness of language learning and cater to the diverse needs of learners.

CONCLUSION

When examining the findings, it becomes evident that the effectiveness of both strategies employed for the participants yielded noteworthy outcomes. Notably, the results obtained from the paired samples t-test indicated significant improvements in students' academic performance as a result of both the explicit and implicit grammar teaching online. The findings provided strong evidence of a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. As a result, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and it can be inferred that both interventions had a meaningful effect on the students' academic performance, especially their grammar mastery. Consequently, the study demonstrates the potential of tailored instructional techniques, proposing that integrating diverse approaches could enrich education and elevate students' achievements.

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