

Teaching Grammar in non-Western Educational Settings: an Enquiry on Evidenced-Based Teaching Approaches

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Abstract

Educators teaching English, or via English worldwide are often subject to highly contrasting ideas on ‘the best teaching practices’ to use, particularly for grammar pedagogy. Four different nationality groups of learners and three diverse groups of educators of English from non-Western educational institutions were included in the study. A questionnaire was administered to enquire on preferences for grammar pedagogical instruction which was presented in various combinations or alternatives of: explicit or implicit instruction, deductive or inductive pedagogy, and with or without local cultural contextualization. In all learner groups there was a strong preference for explicit vs. implicit, deductive vs. inductive and local contextualized vs. foreign/non-contextualized pedagogy. Therefore among groups there was no significant difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of inductive choices ($p = 0.09$), no significant difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of delayed deductive choices ($p = 0.18$), no significant difference in the proportion of explicit choices and proportion of implicit choices ($p = 0.16$), no significant difference in the proportion of local context choices and proportion of other/no context choices ($p = 0.74$), and no significant difference in the proportion of explicit deductive choices and proportions of explicit inductive choices across all groups ($p = 0.051 \geq 0.01$, Bonferroni correction). Paradoxically, among the educator groups, there was a significant difference in all the above proportions ($p = 0.00$, $p = 0.00$, $p = 0.00$, $p = 0.01$, $p = 0.00$, respectively). Descriptive statistics suggest the difference rests mainly with educators that have undergone substantial Western-type ‘communicative language training’. Exposure to exogenous forms of grammar pedagogy may influence educators more than learners, accentuating differences between educators’ grammar-teaching practices and learners’ expectations in non-Western educational scenarios; this study found a significant difference between learners’ and educators’ pedagogical choices for teaching grammar ($p = 0.00$).

Key words: deductive and inductive pedagogy, explicit and implicit pedagogy, grammar teaching and learning, teaching with local culture and contextualization

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