The Effect of L2 Grammar Teaching Incorporating Implicit L1 Knowledge on Explicit and Implicit L2 Knowledge

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Han, Chang-Hun, Im, Byeong-Bin, & Yoon, Sang-Don. 2013. The Effect of L2 Grammar Teaching Incorporating Implicit L1 Knowledge on Explicit and Implicit L2 Knowledge. *The Journal of Studies in Language* 29.3, 593-613. The present study addresses the effectiveness of grammar classes activating implicit L1 (first language) knowledge to improve explicit and implicit L2 (second language) knowledge. Current SLA (second language acquisition) researchers agree that there are two types of knowledge in foreign language ability: explicit and implicit knowledge. Their main concern is the possibility of conversion and method of transforming explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge, which is the ultimate goal to secure for L2 learners. For the purpose of the study, 66 participants of Korean middle school students were allotted into a control group and an experimental group to see (a) how the experimental classes affect their explicit and implicit L2 knowledge. And each group was also divided into a control group and an experimental group in order to investigate (b) how much practice treatment has an influence on their implicit L2 knowledge. The data analyses revealed that L2 learners' implicit L1 knowledge was beneficial to obtaining explicit L2 knowledge. In addition, 'practice' showed the possibility of being instrumental in forming implicit L2 knowledge notwithstanding the failure of producing a statistical significance.

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1. Introduction

Under the influence of Communicative Language Teaching, hereafter abbreviated as CLT, in recent L2 teaching field, many L2 educators and scholars have devoted their endeavor to create unrehearsed and real-time communication activities due to the nuances of being 'communicative'. However, CLT is an approach and the activities are part of methodology, which means they have been talking about CLT from a different point of view. This has led to less emphasis on securing accuracy for L2 learners in schools (Kim, 2004; Park, 2008; Stephen, 2003).

Han, Im, and Yoon (2012) and Jang (2007) argue that the washback effect of the CSAT - College Scholastic Aptitude Test - has caused Korean students to focus on developing a speedy reading ability and this has resulted in their low capabilities in grammar competence and their random guessing reading tendencies. Recently the need of accuracy improvement has emerged from this problem in order to gain advanced and accurate communication skills. Some researchers have proved that teaching grammar is beneficial to learners' linguistic competence, especially here in Korea (Kim, 2004; Park, 2008; Jang, 2007).

Indisputably the current principle of grammar teaching is contrasting to that of Grammar-Translation Method, which means there must be an emphasis on the interaction between form and meaning. However, most L2 teaching approaches and methodologies have been designed for ESL contexts and by foreign scholars (Lee, 2007; Park, 2008) and this necessitates a Korean-specific English grammar teaching method since we share the same L1 unlike most ESL (English as second language) or EFL (English as foreign language) contexts. In Park (2006) and Patsy and Spada (2006)'s estimate, there are some advantages in L2 classes where the learners are in the possession of the same L1. However, relatively little attention was paid to the effectiveness of utilizing L1 background for L2 classes through quantitative research.

Hence, the purpose of the present study is to explore how L2 grammar classes affect learners' English grammar competence when they activate learners' L1 implicit knowledge. In the light of the purpose