THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT, IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS AND LEARNING STYLES ON STUDENTS' SENTENCE STRUCTURE ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to investigate whether Explicit Instruction and Implicit Instructions techniques significantly affect the students' sentence structure achievement, to find out whether the students' learning styles affect students' sentence structure achievement and to find out whether there is an interaction between explicit and Implicit instructions and learning styles to students' sentence structure achievement. An experimental research with factorial design 2x2 was used in this research. There were 120 students from 2008 Academic year of English Department State University of Medan taken as sample of this research. The post test was given to both groups. The data were analyzed by applying Two-Way ANOVA. The result of testing the first hypothesis showed that that explicit and Implicit instructions significantly affect students' sentence structure achievement. The result of the testing the second hypothesis showed that students' learning style do not significantly affect students' sentence structure achievement. The result of the testing the third hypothesis showed that there is interaction between instructions techniques and learning styles on students' sentence structure achievement. After the Scheffe test was applied, it showed that students who have Field Independent learning style got higher result if they were taught by Explicit instruction and students who have Field Dependent learning style got higher result if they were taught by Implicit instruction.

Key Words: explicit instruction; implicit instruction; learning styles

INTRODUCTION

In learning English as a foreign language, most of the students still face difficulties in practicing English, especially those who have lack of competence in sentence structure. When they are studying English, students sometimes have problems and difficulties in constructing sentences and frequently making errors. As James (1998: 15) says that the most common errors in English are made by foreign learner. Since sentence structure is closely related to the four skills, it affects other subjects as well. Daily and weekly assignments, tests, research proposals and theses show that the structure achievement is still low. The low achievement of structures indirectly affects to their low Grade Point Average (GPA) that is 2.86 and their low English Proficiency (TOEFL) that is 465.

Many theories on how to teach structure effectively and functionally are found. One of them is the instruction technique category namely Explicit and Implicit instructions.

Explicit instructions (also known as "direct instruction") are a sequence of supports: first *setting a purpose of learning,* then *telling* students what to do, then *showing* them how to do it, and finally guiding their hands-on application of the new

learning. Whereas implicit instructions are a sequence of supports that involve a process which takes place naturally, simply, and without conscious operation.

The two grammar instructions had been studied before. Yukki (2007) reviews studies for implicit grammar instruction by Hammond (1988), Winitz (1996), and Lally (1997). They conducted experimental studies to investigate whether college students who learned Spanish Grammar implicitly for one semester would demonstrate as much grammatical knowledge as those who were taught grammar explicitly.

Many studies about the most appropriate learning techniques that can be applied for all situations have failed to answer. It happened because every learning technique depends on the learning style, personality and ability of the students themselves. An awareness of individual differences in learning has made educators more sensitive to their roles in teaching and learning and has permitted them to match their teaching and learning styles to develop students' potentials in learning.

Based on the explanation above, the writer would like to conduct a study on the use of the two instructions and learning styles in the teaching of sentence structure and to find out which of the two instructions and learning styles have the most significant effect on the students' achievement in sentence structure.

Sentence Structure Achievement

An achievement is a process of developing skills or knowledge. The most common type of achievement is a standardized progress in developing the measureable skills and knowledge learned in a given grade level, usually through planned instructions, such as training or classroom instructions. Achievement is the measureable process, a more general and stable cognitive trait.

In most research concerned with the effectiveness of instructional methods or techniques the dependent variable is achievement. Therefore achievement tests are widely used in educational research, as well as in school systems. They measure the mastery and proficiency of individuals in different areas of knowledge.

An achievement test is related directly to classroom lessons, units, or even a total curriculum (Brown: 2004). Achievement tests are (or should be) limited to particular material addressed in a curriculum within a particular time frame and are offered after a course has focused on the objectives in questions Achievement tests can also serve the diagnostic role of indicating what a student needs to continue to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is o determine whether course objectives have been met – and appropriate knowledge and skills acquired – by the end of a period of instruction.

Achievement tests are often summative because they are administered at the end of a unit or term of study. They also play an important formative role. An effective achievement test will offer washback about the quality of a learner's performance in subsets of the unit or course. This washback contributes to the formative nature of such tests. Achievement tests range from five- or ten-minute quizzes to three-hour final examinations, with an almost infinite variety of item types and formats.

In the field of linguistics, a sentence —an expression in natural language— is often defined to indicate a grammatical and lexical unit consisting of one or more words that represent distinct concepts. A sentence can include words grouped meaningfully to express a statement, question, exclamation, request or command.

The traditional school-grammar in Yule (2006: 21) defines a sentence as a group of words that expresses a complete thought. While the structural analysis, defines a sentence as a group of words that consists of a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase (Yule: 2006). Instead of analyze sentence as a unit of analysis, in functional grammar, whole texts are the unit of analysis (Gerot and Wignel: 1994).

As with all language expressions, sentences contain both semantic and logical elements (words, parts of speech), and also include action symbols that indicate sentence starts, stops, pauses, etc. In addition, sentences also contain properties distinct to natural language, such as

characteristic intonation and timing patterns. Sentences are generally characterized in most languages by the presence of a <u>finite verb</u>, e.g. "<u>The quick brown fox *jumps* over the lazy dog</u>".

Structure is a fundamental and sometimes <u>intangible</u> notion covering the <u>recognition</u>, <u>observation</u>, <u>nature</u>, and <u>stability</u> of <u>patterns</u> and <u>relationships</u> of <u>entities</u>. From a child's verbal description of a <u>snowflake</u>, to the detailed <u>scientific analysis</u> of the properties of <u>magnetic fields</u>, the concept of structure is an essential foundation of nearly every mode of inquiry and discovery in <u>science</u>, <u>philosophy</u>, and <u>art</u>.

A structure defines what a <u>system</u> is made of. It is a configuration of items. It is a collection of inter-related components or services. The structure may be a hierarchy (a cascade of one-to-many relationships) or a network featuring many-to-many relationships. Knowing how to build and use certain structures makes it possible to communicate common types of meaning successfully. Without these structures, it is difficult to make a comprehensible sentence

In relation to the definitions above, the writer would like to conclude that sentence structure is the way of organizing words into sentences. It is the system of how words are arranged together to make it meaningful to express a <u>statement</u>, <u>question</u>, <u>exclamation</u>, <u>request</u> or <u>command</u>.

Therefore, sentence structure achievement is the product of the process of developing measureable skills or knowledge in sentence structure in a given grade level, through planned instructions. It is the mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skill that are fundamental for proficient sentence structure at a given grade.

Explicit and Implicit Learning

Traditionally, learning has been defined as a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience (Kihlstorm et all: 2007: 9). However, the cognitive revolution in psychology has led to a reconstrual of learning as a relatively permanent change in knowledge that occurs as a result of experience – declarative and procedural knowledge that the organism will subsequently use for its own purposes in predicting and controlling environmental events. Thus, in classical conditioning the organism forms expectations concerning the likely consequences of its own behaviors.

In point of fact, the concept of *implicit learning* was introduced into the psychological literature well before that of implicit memory. Kihlstorm (2007) reviews a pioneering series of experiments by Reber (1967) asked subjects to memorize lists of letter strings, each of which had been generated by a Markov - process artificial grammar - a set of rules that specified what letters could appear in the string, and in what order. Over trials, the subjects found it easier to memorize grammatical strings, compared to random strings, indicating that their learning was exploiting the grammatical structure. Moreover, when presented with new strings, subjects were able to distinguish between grammatical and non grammatical strings at levels significantly better than chance, indicating that they had acquired some knowledge of the grammar. Yet when queried, the subjects were unable to specify the grammatical rule itself. They had learned the grammar, and this knowledge had guided their behavior, but they were not aware that they had learned anything, and they were not aware of what they had learned.

By analogy with memory, explicit learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior that is accompanied by conscious awareness of what has been learned. Implicit learning, then, refers to a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior in the absence of conscious awareness of what has been learned. Sometimes evidence for implicit learning is taken as evidence for implicit memory, but implicit memory is more narrowly restricted to the learning *episode* itself, while implicit learning covers the knowledge acquired in that episode.

Explicit Instructions Technique

Briefly described, for explicit instruction, learning the form is the primary focus of all the communicative tasks (as opposed to communicative tasks just to understand the meaning without focusing on the grammatical structure). In explicit instruction, a proactively selected form is intensely taught either by the presentation of the rules and then the giving of examples (deductive reasoning).

According to Boyles (2004), the sequences of instructions in Explicit Instructions are:

1. **Setting the stage for learning**

   Instructions in the first sequence are about giving the explanation of what the purpose(s) of the lesson is/are. The explanation can be connected to the students' interests, their background knowledge, or the previous day's lesson.

2. **Explaining: telling the students what to do**

   Before explaining the material, the teacher gives a positive approach, such as: "You won't believe how easy this is going to be…", " I can show you an easy way to …", etc.

   After the students feel empowered to face the challenge of new learning, then the explanation begins. A good explanation involves:

   a. Divide the task into a few component steps
   b. Tell the students how many steps will be involved
   c. Present the steps both orally and visually to meet the needs of children with different modality and to provide extra reinforcement.
   d. State the steps as clearly as possible

3. **Modeling: Showing students how to reach their goal**

   When the extent of the instructions is *only* an explanation, without modeling or guided practice, teachers have no idea whether or not students understand the lesson content until it's too late. Modeling offers children the opportunity to watch the process unfold before their eyes. Modeling means that the teacher engages in whatever is involved in the learning task exactly as students will be expected to perform it.

4. **Practicing**

   At this point, the students are asked to practice on the materials given. For the first practice, they are carefully guided and after enough trials with the material, the teacher as a model, eventually decreasing her role and expect the students to be able to answer the question with just a review and the answer criteria.

Implicit Instructions technique

The studies for implicit grammar instruction are represented by Hammond (1988), Winitz (1996), and Lally (1997) in Yukki (2007:2). Hammond (1988) and Winitz (1996) conducted experimental studies to investigate whether college students who learned Spanish grammar implicitly for one semester would demonstrate as much grammatical knowledge as those who were taught grammar explicitly. In addition, in her experimental research, Lally (1997) also investigated the implicit and explicit dichotomy while incorporating findings from reading comprehension studies into the implicit condition.

According to the **comprehensible input hypothesis** (originally called the *input hypothesis*), people acquire language *only* when they receive comprehensible input (CI). This hypothesis developed by Stephen Krashen is one of the most prominent modern

theories in the fields of first language acquisition and second language acquisition (SLA).

If *i* represents previously acquired linguistic competence and extra-linguistic knowledge, the hypothesis claims that we move from *i* to *i+1* by understanding input that contains *i+1*. Extra-linguistic knowledge includes our knowledge of the world and of the situation, that is, the <u>context</u>. The *+1* represents new knowledge or language structures that we should be ready to acquire.

The comprehensible input hypothesis can be restated in terms of the natural order hypothesis. For example, if we acquire the rules of language in a linear order (1, 2, 3...), then *i* represents the last rule or language form learned, and *i+1* is the next structure that should be learned. It must be stressed however, that just any input is not sufficient; the input received must be comprehensible.

For the implicit instructional treatment, the primary focus of the communicative task is on understanding the meaning of the text (not on rule or structure formation). In implicit instruction, many sentence-examples (from authentic text) containing the structure are presented as input tasks. The input is done not so much by the teacher but by the task. The meaning of the text or task is primary over the grammatical form. The learners may infer "rules" from the examples with or without awareness that they are doing so. The examples and activities hopefully, cause the students to process form while interacting with the input.

Therefore, the sequences of instructions in Implicit Instructions are as the followings:
1. Giving many sentence-examples (from authentic text) containing the structure)
2. Exposing the structure that is going to be taught by asking students question about past activities and events.
3. Asking the students to write an essay about their past activities and events.

Learning Style

Generally schools have not applied the grouping of students based on their characteristics or their type. In the class, the students are consisting of different characteristics. This sometimes made the teacher overwhelmed in choosing effective and efficient method or strategies. Whereas Simarmata (2009) reviews Dick and Carey and suggests that a teacher need to consider students' characteristics that he/she will be taught. It is important because by knowing students' characteristics, a teacher can adjust his teaching to achieve the purpose. One way to know the characteristics is by grouping people based on their type, developing the scale to measure the people's quality based on their characteristics.

Students' characteristics in this research are the learning style itself. According to Wikipedia, Learning styles are, simply put, various approaches or ways of learning. They involve educating methods, particular to an individual that are presumed to allow that individual to learn best. It is commonly believe that most people favor some particular method of interacting with, taking in, and processing stimuli or information.

Siregar (2000:5) restates the study of Hargrove and Pocket (1984) and states that one of the aspects of teaching mostly ignored is determining students' unique individual learning styles. Next, Davis (1989) in Siregar (2000:5) believes that only if the teachers' and lecturer's teaching style are adjusted with the students' learning styles, the productive and conducive learning environment will be created. In conclusion, there will be more that can be obtained both of the students and the lecturers. However, if the

students' learning styles are not appropriate to the teacher's and lecturer', there will be problems and frustrations in both sides.

Nasution (2008: 93) defines learning style as how students react and use the stimulus that he/she accepted in the learning process. The researchers find out that the various learning styles in students can be categorized into some categories. They conclude that:

1) Every student learns on his own way, that is called learning style. The teacher also has his own teaching style.
2) The type of learning style can be found out by certain instruments.
3) The suitability of teaching style with learning style increases learning effectively.

There is no method that fits for all students. There are students that are comfortable learning alone, other prefer listen to explanation and information from teachers/lecturers through lecture method. To increase the effectiveness teaching-learning process, the profound research about students' learning style should be done in three fields, they are:

1) Students' cognitive style
2) Students' respond to stimulus
3) Learning model

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that there are similarities in defining learning style. Learning style is the consistent way done by a student to get the stimulus or information, way to remember, think, and solve the problem. People show different style of learning. Learning style is really affected by the personality of someone, educational background, and developmental background.

Every researcher develops the classification of learning style based on certain theory that becomes the basic of the classification. Each classification has its own differences and similarities. One of the learning style types is "Field Dependence" and "Field Independence". This type is developed by **Herman A. Witkin**. He was an American psychologist who specialized in the spheres of cognitive psychology and learning psychology. He was a pioneer of the theory of Cognitive Styles and Learning Styles (developed in cooperation with Solomon Asch, Donald Goodenough etc.). He was the author of the concept of field-dependency vs. field-independency. A longitudinal study on learning style by H. Witkin on 1600 students since 1954 – 1970 discovers a test to differentiate students' learning style types. The learning style types are Field Dependence (FD) and Field Independence (FI). FD/FI refers to how people perceive and memorize information.

Field Dependence (FD)

Field dependence is the tendency to be "dependent" on the total field so that the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived, though that total field is perceived most clearly as a unified whole. The "field"' may be perceptual or it may be abstract, such as a set of ideas, thoughts, or feelings from which the task is to perceive specific subsets.

Field dependent learners are more socially oriented than filed independent learners. They pay more attention to social cues, they like to be with others and they seek learning and vocational experiences that put them in contact with people. Field dependent children perform less well on formal operations tasks than do field independent children. The field dependent learner is also one who processes information globally. This learner is less analytical, not attentive to detail, and sees the

perceptual field as a whole. This whole resists analysis or decomposition. Dependent learners rely more on the teacher and peer support.

Field Independence (FI)

Field independent persons spend more on self and seem readily to learn material that has a social context. Field independent students appear to be more adept to the unstructured classroom than their field dependent counterparts. Field independence appears to result in a greater development of cognitive restructuring skills.

Unlike the field dependent learners, the field independent learners can easily break the field down into its component parts. He/she is typically not influenced by the existing structure and can make choices independent of the perceptual field. Field independence requires a restructuring of the perceptual or psychological field and therefore is a more differentiated process.

In order to understand the characteristics of the two learning style, Garger and Guild (1987) in Joe (2002:1) have summarized the characteristics of field independent and field dependent learners.

METHOD

The design used in this research was experimental design by using Factorial Design 2x2. This research was conducted in English Department UNIMED. The population of this research was the students in the 2008 academic year. There are 8 (eight) classes of them. Each class consisted of more than 30 students so the total number of the students was more than 250.

The sample of this research was taken by cluster random sampling. There were 120 students who became the sample. The writer randomly selected 60 students from the field dependent learning style group and assigned 30 students to be given Explicit instructions and 30 students to be given Implicit instructions. This process was repeated for the field independent learning style group. In this research, there were two kinds of data; they are: students' learning style collected by using questionnaire and sentence structure achievement collected by using multiple choice. The procedure of data collection was begun from preparing the test item and conducting try-out. Next, the pre-test was conducted and treatment was given to the two groups. After giving the treatment, the post-test was conducted. It is the final test in the research.

In testing the hypothesis, '**Two Way ANOVA**' (*Analysis of Variance*) technique with F test at the level of significance $\propto = 0.05$ is used. Before the technique is used, **the normality of the test** by using Liliforce technique and **homogeneity of two variance** by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 is computed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research findings consist of three parts. First, Explicit and Implicit instructions significantly affect the students' sentence structure achievement. This study found that instruction techniques do make a significant effect. A significance increase was demonstrated by both treatment groups after instructions were given. Both methods attempted to teach the form even though by different techniques and the findings shows that both were successful. Second, Students' Learning styles do not significantly affect students' sentence structure achievement. It means that either students who have field dependent or field independent learning style do not significantly affect students'

sentence structure achievement. Third, there is an interaction between Instruction Techniques and Learning styles on students' sentence structure achievement.

The results of the study do support the statement of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researcher says in Andrews (2007) that intervention in the form of some grammar instruction is beneficial. The role of implicit learning in skill acquisition and the distinction between implicit and explicit learning have been widely recognized in recent years (Reber 1989, Stanley et al 1989, Willingham et al 1989, Proctor and Dutta 1995, Anderson 1993 in Slusarz and Sun).

The second findings of the study show that learning styles do not significantly affect students' sentence structure achievement. This findings is similar to Yunos, Ahmad, Madar (2007) findings that indicates that student's cognitive styles, FI-FD do not significantly correlated with student's learning achievement. Learners are using different kinds of language learning strategies, or specific actions and behaviors to help them learn. Learners have their own preferences in choosing language learning strategies. Their strategies differ greatly, at least in part because their general learning styles are so varied. Fry et.al (2004) reviews Wolf and Kolb (1984) study who suggested that learners develop different learning styles that emphasize preference for some modes of learning over others, leading to particular characteristics. The findings implied that there were no relationships between learning styles and among learners in this study. The learners chose learning strategies, which facilitate learning task that help them to be a better language learner. Moreover, the preference of using some modes of learning over others has already inside the learners so it cannot be treated as other independent variable.

The giving of the suitable technique will make the students better in their sentence structure achievement. Learning styles and preferences vary for each of the students and in different situations. By understanding this, and developing the skills that help the students to learn in a variety of ways, will make the most of their learning potential and because they're better able to learn and gather information, they'll make better decisions and choose better courses of action. This finding support Oxford (1989) statement that says Language learning styles and strategies appear to be among the most important variables influencing performance in a second language.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of the study indicates that Explicit and Implicit instructions significantly affect the students' sentence structure achievement. Therefore these techniques can be used to increase students' sentence structure achievement. In addition, students' Learning styles do not significantly affect students' sentence structure achievement. This is to say that each student has his/her own characteristics that lead them into their own learning style. This finding suggests that recognizing students' learning styles when the instruction applied is needed.

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