



Grammar Through Novels or Rules? A Qualitative Comparison of Novel-Based Inductive Instruction and PPP in an EFL Master's Classroom

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Abstract

This qualitative comparative research examined the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) master's students in learning grammar using two different methods of instruction: novel-based inductive instruction and the traditional Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) method. Conducted at the University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah in Fez, Morocco, the study involved 40 master's students from science faculties—20 Mathematics students in the novel-based group and 20 Biology students in the PPP group. Data were collected through classroom observations, student writing artifacts, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups during the eight weeks. Thematic analysis revealed five major themes: engagement and motivation, grammatical noticing and awareness, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, and transfer to writing. The results showed that students in the novel-based group had higher engagement, stronger grammatical awareness, and more successful transfer of grammatical structures to their writing than did students in the PPP group. Nonetheless, the explicit teaching and systematic practice were appreciated by PPP students. The research indicates that the incorporation of literary texts in the teaching of grammar at the tertiary level may help to increase learner engagement and enable them to gain a deeper grasp of grammar, although explicit instruction remains relevant to some learners.

Keywords: Grammar Instruction, Novel-Based Teaching, Inductive Learning, PPP Method, EFL

Introduction

The teaching of grammar is one of the key issues in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, and there is still debate on the most effective methods for developing grammatical competence (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Conventional approaches like Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) have dominated language classrooms over the decades, with clear presentation of rules and then controlled and free practice (Byrne,

1976). Nevertheless, researchers have grown more skeptical about whether these decontextualized methods facilitate in-depth grammatical knowledge and long-term memory (Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

The past few years have seen an increased interest in the use of literary texts as a means of language instruction. Collie and Slater (1987) suggested that literature offers genuine and culturally enriched content that can facilitate language acquisition, whereas Carter and Long (1991) focused on the possibility of literary texts to build linguistic competence and critical thinking. Literature provides contextualized language use that can be more engaging to learners and offer abundant input to grammatical noticing. Novels in particular provide prolonged exposure to a variety of grammatical structures in meaningful narrative contexts, which enable learners to experience target forms in varied and recurring sentence patterns (Paran, 2008).

Despite the increasing literature on the use of literature in language teaching, gaps in the literature still exist. To begin with, the majority of the research has been conducted on the general development of language as opposed to grammar acquisition using literary texts. Second, there is limited tertiary-level research, particularly among non-English major students. Third, there is a paucity of literature that directly compares literature-based inductive approaches with traditional explicit approaches such as PPP in higher education. Fourth, the qualitative research on the lived experiences of learners with these conflicting approaches is relatively lacking.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating grammar instruction at the tertiary level, specifically among non-English major students who need to have functional grammatical competence in their academic and professional life. This study compares the experiences of two groups of master's students learning grammar through novel-based inductive teaching and traditional PPP. Through this comparison, it aims to shed light on how instructional methods shape grammar awareness and language development. The study is valuable as it informs pedagogical decision-making in EFL higher education settings and has practical implications for curriculum developers and language teachers who aim to improve grammar teaching with authentic resources.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do EFL master students learn grammar by using novel-based inductive instruction as compared to traditional PPP?
2. What do students consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of each teaching method?
3. What is the effect of reading literary texts on students' grammatical awareness and transfer to writing?

Theoretical Framework

This paper relies on several complementary theoretical approaches that, when

combined, provide a powerful framework to study grammar learning using literary texts in comparison to explicit instruction. Each theoretical lens is outlined in the following paragraphs and explained as to why it applies to the present study.

The Noticing Hypothesis by Schmidt offers a theoretical basis for understanding how learners process grammatical input. Schmidt (1990) claimed that language learning without awareness is not possible, and that conscious noticing is the key condition for converting input into intake (p. 129). According to this view, learners need to be consciously aware of the linguistic forms in order to acquire them, which offers theoretical justification to instructional strategies that focus learner attention on grammatical properties in meaningful contexts.

Ellis (2002) differentiated between practice-oriented and consciousness-raising methods of teaching grammar. Whereas traditional PPP focuses on behavioral practice that results in automatization, consciousness-raising activities are designed to build explicit knowledge by having learners work with grammatical data. Ellis claimed that consciousness-raising is an effort to provide the learner with knowledge of a particular grammatical feature, to build declarative knowledge of that feature, not procedural knowledge of it (Ellis, 2002, p. 168). This difference applies to the comparison of inductive, literature-based methods and conventional PPP.

The sociocultural theory, which has its roots in Vygotsky (1978), focuses on the social origins of learning and the mediation in cognitive development. In this sense, literary texts are cultural artifacts that mediate the interaction of learners with language, and collaborative analysis and discussion can offer scaffolded learning within each learner's zone of proximal development.

Lastly, research studies support the use of literary texts in language development. In a comprehensive review of studies on language teaching, Paran (2008) surveyed research on the use of literary texts in the instruction of foreign languages, classroom dynamics, language produced, and teacher and student perceptions. Literary texts provide real language use, exposure to different registers and styles, and meaningful interaction that can increase motivation and deeper processing of linguistic features.

Together, these theoretical approaches imply that grammar teaching in meaningful literary contexts can promote noticing, the development of explicit grammatical knowledge, and the social construction of meaning. The current research relies on these frameworks to explain the experience and responses of learners to novel-based inductive instruction in contrast to traditional PPP.

Methodology Research Design

The research design used in this study was a qualitative comparative case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) to investigate and compare the experiences of two groups of EFL

master's students who learned grammar through different instructional methods. The comparative case study methodology enabled the in-depth analysis of each teaching situation and allowed for cross-case analysis to determine the similarities and differences in the experiences of learners (Merriam, 2009).

Participants and Context

The research was carried out at the University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Faculty of Science, in Fez, Morocco. Two intact classes were selected purposely (Creswell, 2014): one class of 20 Mathematics Master's students was chosen to represent the novel-based instruction group, and one class of 20 Biology Master's students was chosen to represent the PPP comparison group. The participants ranged in age from 21 to 30 years and demonstrated intermediate levels of English proficiency. Informed consent was given by all students beforehand.

Instructional Procedures

The two groups were taught grammar, focusing on the same five grammatical structures in eight weeks, and both groups attended two sessions of 120 minutes each week. The target structures were chosen according to their applicability in academic writing and their occurrence in the selected literary text: past simple and past continuous; past perfect; conditional structures (second and third conditionals); passive voice; and relative clauses. The inductive group used the novella *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. This novella was chosen because it is accessible, employs a straightforward prose style, and contains numerous examples of the target grammatical structures. According to Xie (2008), the language used by Hemingway in this novella is simple and natural in appearance and has short sentences that are powerfully loaded (p. 156) and therefore can be understood by non-English major students. The sessions were based on a three-stage process: students read the chosen passages and observed grammatical patterns in the context; they analyzed the form, meaning, and use of the target structures together; and finally, they created their own sentences and short texts, imitating the author's style while employing the target structures.

The PPP comparison group was taught in the conventional Presentation-Practice-Production order (Byrne, 1976). During the presentation, the teacher clearly defined grammatical rules using examples. In the practice phase, the students were given controlled exercises like gap-fills and transformation exercises. During the production phase, students were asked to create sentences and short texts with the target structures, but without the literary context that the novel-based group had.

Data Collection

To guarantee triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018) and a thorough grasp of the experiences of learners, data were gathered from several different sources. Observations in the classroom were made during the eight weeks of instruction. The researchers monitored and recorded the engagement of learners, patterns of participation, difficulties, and significant instances of grammatical noticing or difficulty. Field notes were taken during and immediately after every session.

Student writing artifacts were collected from both groups, comprising all written production tasks completed during the imitation/production stages. These artifacts were used to demonstrate that students were able to use target structures and any qualitative differences in grammatical accuracy and complexity across groups.

After the instructional period, 12 students in each group (24 in total) were interviewed using semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interview questions were used to understand how students perceived the instructional approach, how they felt about their learning and grammatical development, what challenges they faced, and what they liked about grammar instruction. The interviews were recorded on audio and took about 30-45 minutes with the consent of the participants.

Eight students in each group were involved in focus groups to enable them to discuss common experiences and to surface perspectives that emerge through group interaction. The duration of each focus group was about 60 minutes. Individual interviews are quoted with participant codes (S1-S12 in the novel-based group; P1-P12 in the PPP group). The data of focus groups are denoted by the abbreviations FG-Novel (the novel-based group), FG-PPP (the PPP group).

Data Analysis

All focus group and interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The analysis of data was performed using the six-step thematic analysis methodology by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, initial codes generation, theme search, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report generation. The analysis was done within each group to determine the themes unique to each instructional approach, and across groups to determine comparative themes and patterns. Cross-case analysis was conducted through a systematic comparison of themes that appeared in each group to determine areas of convergence and divergence, and specifically how the instructional context influenced the experiences of learners (Yin, 2018).

Trustworthiness

A number of measures were used to enhance the credibility of the findings (Lincoln

& Guba, 1985). Multiple data sources were used to obtain triangulation. Member checking was done by presenting preliminary findings to a few participants to check accuracy and resonance. The findings are given in thick description to enable the reader to evaluate transferability. An audit trail documenting all analytical decisions was maintained throughout the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants (Creswell, 2014), pseudonymous codes were used: students in the novel-based group were referred to as S1, S2, S3, etc., and students in the PPP group were referred to as P1, P2, P3, etc.

Findings

Data analysis revealed that five major themes were identified that characterized the experiences of students learning grammar with the help of two instructional strategies: engagement and motivation, grammatical noticing and awareness, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, and transfer to writing. Each of the themes is presented below with evidence, using different sources of data, including interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, and student artifacts.

Theme 1: Engagement and Motivation

The difference between the level of engagement in the two groups was significant. The students in the novel-based group expressed more interest and motivation as compared to those in the PPP group. This distinction seemed to be based on the innate attractiveness of narrative material and the purpose that the story provided to the acquisition of grammar. Group participants who read novels spoke of their experience in very positive terms, and many of them were surprised to enjoy grammar instruction. One of the students said, "I never imagined grammar to be interesting, but after reading the story, I felt like learning how Hemingway writes, and I began to notice things I never noticed before" (S3). This comment reveals how the literary context transformed grammar from an abstract study into a way of understanding the art of an author. Another participant commented, "Each time I wondered what would happen next in the story, the grammar was not outside the story, but a part of it" (S7, FG-Novel). This response shows that the narrative form was a natural motivation to listen to language as students were engaged in the plot progression and wanted to comprehend it to its full extent. The blend of grammar and content that is meaningful appeared to blur the line between the study of language and the actual reading

experiences.

On the other hand, the PPP group members were more neutral or negative about their instruction, often describing the lessons in functional, rather than affective terms. One student said, "The lessons were clear and structured; however, at times I was bored with the same kind of exercises" (P4). This comment indicates one of the common criticisms of the old-fashioned method of teaching grammar: it may be pedagogically right, but not as interesting as the learner must be motivated in the long-term. Another one replied, "I had heard the rules, but I was not keen on knowing them, it was an obligatory thing (P9, FG-PPP). The fact that grammar learning is described as an obligatory thing implies that this student perceived it as a task that should be done instead of something that should be pursued, which begs the question of whether the PPP approach, although effective in terms of providing rules, can be used to motivate students in the first place.

These self-reports were supported by classroom observations. The researchers observed higher rates of voluntary attendance, peer discussion, and observable enthusiasm during the novel-based group sessions, whereas PPP sessions, despite being well-organized and productive, exhibited less spontaneous interaction. The novel-based group students tended to start discussions on the text, pose questions regarding the decisions made by Hemingway, and show interest in the next chapters. Participation in the PPP group was more reactive, as students responded to teacher prompts but seldom started a discussion. In general, the results indicate that the incorporation of grammar teaching into a narrative setting created intrinsic motivation and maintained interest among the participants in the novel-based group, whereas the PPP method, though seen as clear and systematic, created less affective involvement.

Theme 2: Grammatical Noticing and Awareness

The novel-based group showed increased grammatical awareness that was not limited to the instructional context. A large number of them spontaneously reported having observed grammatical structures in other reading materials and in their own writing. This metacognitive growth is an important achievement, because it indicates that the teaching method developed transferable skills, as opposed to context-specific knowledge.

The members of the novel-based group indicated that they had also changed their attitude towards texts because they no longer read passively but analyzed the grammatical features. A participant remarked that now when he reads any text in English he is aware of the grammar, that he used to read to get the meaning, but now he is aware of how writers use past perfect to show that something happened before or how they use passive voice (S2). This shift in the nature of reading, where the reader is consciously aware of the linguistic features in the text enabling input to be converted to intake, is what Schmidt (1990) called noticing. Another participant shared, "I began to listen to sentences in a different way than I used to listen to them before. I even started to consider the way

grammar works in French" (S11, FG-Novel). This cross-linguistic transfer is particularly intriguing as it indicates that noticing abilities developed in the novel-based approach were not confined to English but transferred to another language that the student speaks, suggesting a strong metacognitive development.

The PPP group, however, developed distinct knowledge of grammatical rules but less spontaneous noticing in naturalistic situations. One of the students replied, "I can tell you the rule of past perfect--we use had and past participle before another past action. However, I am not much aware of it during reading" (P6). This reaction demonstrates an imbalance between declarative (knowing the rule) and procedural awareness (realizing the form in context). The student possesses correct metalinguistic knowledge but has not learnt the automatic noticing which would allow this knowledge to be activated during reading. Another elaborated, "I know the rules, however, when it comes to writing, it is still hard to apply the rules, I have to pause and think which tense to write" (P11, FG-PPP). This remark also highlights the challenge of transferring explicit rule knowledge to spontaneous language use, which has been extensively reported in the grammar teaching literature.

These patterns were validated through classroom observations: students in the novel-based group were more likely to notice grammatical features on their own during the process of reading, and PPP students were more likely to wait until they were instructed to notice grammatical features. As an example, in one of the sessions, a student in the novel-based group made an impromptu comment that Hemingway often used "and" to join clauses, and this led to a discussion in the classroom on the topic of coordination and sentence rhythm. These spontaneous observations were restricted in the PPP group where students were more likely to only work on grammar when they were explicitly asked to do so. This theme suggests that inductive work with actual texts can result in the development of a more active, independent attitude to grammatical form than rule teaching.

Theme 3: Perceived Benefits

Both groups of students indicated the benefits of their respective teaching modes, yet the types of these benefits differed greatly. These variations are indicative of the different pedagogical philosophies that each approach is based on and highlight the diverse learning needs and preferences of any student population.

Students in the novel-based group were interested in the unity of grammar and meaningful content, and the development of vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, they saw their learning as a whole and interconnected. One of the students said, "I didn't not only learn grammar but also a lot of new words and phrases, the story provided me with a context to comprehend everything better" (S5). This view of integrated learning is consistent with theoretical claims about contextualized instruction, which hold that language features are better learned when they are presented in contextual discourse than when they are presented in isolation. Another student said, "I found it easier to learn grammar using the novel since

I could relate the grammar to certain scenes and sentences in the story” (S8, FG-Novel). This comment highlights the memory strength of narrative context: by associating grammatical patterns with memorable story events, students created vivid mental pictures by which they were able to remember. The novel was not only a source of examples but also a cognitive anchor of grammatical knowledge.

Students in the PPP group, however, enjoyed the clarity and systematicity of explicit instructions, and the predictability and structure that this approach provided. One of the participants stated, "I liked that the rules were explained clearly, I knew what I had to learn and could check whether I was right or wrong" (P2). This response shows that the participant wanted transparency in teaching — to know what she had to learn and have clear standards of self-assessment. To performance and evaluation-oriented students, this clarity would help to reduce anxiety and provide a sense of control over the learning process. Another added, "The exercises helped me to practice step-by-step, I was prepared for the exams because I was aware of the rules" (P7, FG-PPP). The mention of exam preparation is important, as it shows that there are students who are more concerned with instructional strategies that are congruent with assessment formats. The emphasis of the PPP approach on discrete grammatical knowledge can be more directly relevant to the testing conditions that these learners anticipate.

Overall, although both groups saw different benefits in their respective methods, the novel-based group saw holistic, integrated learning, which linked grammar to meaning and memory, and the PPP group saw clarity, structure, and test readiness. These results highlight the fact that various teaching strategies can be used to meet various student needs and objectives, and that no one teaching strategy will probably meet the needs of all students equally.

Theme 4: Perceived Challenges

Both groups faced difficulties, but they were different in nature and were based on the nature of the requirements of each instructional approach. These challenges are critical in the design of instruction that predicts and responds to possible barriers to learning.

Students in the novel-based group said that they initially struggled to adapt to inductive learning, particularly the cognitive load of making sense of literary text, as they were science majors with little prior experience of literature-based teaching. One student said, “Initially, I was confused as the teacher did not explain the rule directly, I was waiting for the rule to be explained, but we had to find it out ourselves” (S4). This misunderstanding is indicative of the adaptation that needs to be made when students used to explicit teaching are exposed to inductive teaching. The anticipation of being informed of the rule, as opposed to finding it, is so ingrained in most educational settings, and the transition to a discovery-based mode necessitates cognitive and attitudinal adjustment. One of them mentioned, “The story was not always easy to follow, and I needed to pay attention to the

words first, and then I could think about grammar” (S10, FG-Novel). This remark points to a possible disadvantage of working with real literary texts: the cognitive load of unknown words and complicated prose can be in conflict with the focus on grammatical characteristics. Students with a low understanding of the text at the simple level may not have the cognitive resources to notice grammatical patterns.

Students in the PPP group mentioned various difficulties, the main ones being connected with retention and transfer of grammatical knowledge outside of the controlled practice setting. One student said, “I know the rule in the classroom but when I am left alone to write, I make errors, the rule does not stick in my head” (P3). This retention problem suggests that explicit presentation of rules, though useful in the first time understanding, may not result in the long-term memory traces that form the basis of lasting recall. Grammatical rules may be inert knowledge that may be forgotten shortly after the lesson is over without any significant context or interaction with the individual. Another explained, “The classroom activities were not difficult, as I was aware of what grammar point we were working on, but in actual writing, I need to decide what tense to use, and that is more challenging (P8, FG-PPP). This fact represents a fundamental flaw of controlled practice: when learners are asked to practice one structure, they do not learn the decision-making skills that they require in real-life communication, where multiple grammar options are competing to be selected. The incongruity of the controlled production with the free production is not new in teaching of traditional grammar.

These conflicting challenges are also reflective of the trade-offs of each approach: the novel-based approach needs more cognitive effort and tolerance of ambiguity, and PPP may not adequately bridge the gap between controlled practice and natural language use. These difficulties should be determined to create the instruction that will satisfy the needs of the learners. Teachers, who employ novel-based teaching methods, should anticipate confusion in the early stages and should provide scaffolding to help students transition to inductive learning. Users of PPP must take into account the way to make the transition between controlled practice and meaningful communication.

Theme 5: Transfer to Writing

The student writing artifacts and self-reports were analyzed to show that there were differences in the transfer of grammatical knowledge to written production. This theme concerns a highly significant implication of grammar instruction; the student capacity to transfer his/her grammatical knowledge into actual communicative tasks.

The novel-based group student artifacts were more contextually appropriate and had a broader range of target structures. The students were more inclined to write complex sentences with the patterns that they had read in the novel. Although some of the mistakes were made, there was also a sign of experimentation and risk-taking. For example, some students tried to follow the typical Hemingway style of using coordinated clauses and

simple declarative sentences, and some tried to use past perfect tense to develop narrative layers. The readiness to make an effort to construct complicated forms, even in the face of a possible mistake, indicates a fruitful attitude to language use, which values communication and expression more than correctness.

This risk-taking and stylistic development orientation was verified by self-reports of novel-based group students. One student commented, "I attempted to write like Hemingway, short sentences, but with the grammar we were taught. I felt more confident to attempt new structures because I had seen how a real writer employs them" (S6). This remark shows how real literary models can be used as a template for production, giving learners tangible examples of how grammatical structures work in competent writing. The term "a real writer" is important, because it implies that the students viewed the novel as a valid example to be imitated, giving their own writing efforts authority and authenticity. Another one said, "Previously I would use simple sentences to prevent errors, now I attempt to write more interesting sentences since I have examples to follow" (S9, FG-Novel). This change of error avoidance to expressive risk-taking is significant in learner identity, as it is a shift in defensive stance, which is aimed at minimizing mistakes, to an assertive stance, which is aimed at effective communication.

Conversely, PPP group artifacts exhibited proper use of target structures under controlled setups but less diversity and complexity in free production. There was a higher probability of use of less complicated sentence patterns and a smaller range of styles by students. Although grammatical mistakes were not as common as in the novel-based group, the writing was not as sophisticated and varied as in the production of the novel-based group. Sentences were typically short and formulaic, meaning that the students were dealing with rules and not grammar as the means of meaning-making.

Self-reports indicated awareness of these limitations among the students of PPP group. One of the participants mentioned, "I am able to write proper sentences using past perfect, however, my writing is simple, I do not know how to make it more interesting" (P5). This comment indicates a lack of correlation between correct grammar and communicative competence. The student will be able to write the right sentences, but lacks stylistic tools to write interesting prose. One of them said, "I am afraid of errors, this is why I use simple sentences, I have studied grammar rules, I am not sure about using complex constructions" (P10, FG-PPP). The fear of mistakes, as discussed herein, restricts the student to experimentation, which results in safe but limited production. This error-avoidant orientation is quite reasonable, but it can ultimately impede language development since it does not permit the taking of risks, as is necessary to create language. In summary, the artifact and self-report evidence suggest that instruction based on novels can help not only to achieve grammatical accuracy but also to develop style and be willing to take linguistic risks, whereas PPP instruction, though able to support accuracy in controlled situations, might not be able to support the same level of transfer to real writing

tasks. The exposure of the novel-based group to the actual literary models appeared to provide the grammatical knowledge as well as the stylistic models needed in the more advanced written production.

Discussion

This section will interpret the findings in terms of the research questions and theoretical framework, compare the results with the existing literature, and reflect on the implications of the findings for grammar pedagogy in higher education EFL settings.

The findings of this study illuminated the existence of dramatic differences in the experiences of master's students in learning grammar through novel-based inductive approaches in contrast to the traditional PPP. Such differences have a consequence on grammar teaching in tertiary education.

Increased involvement in the novel-based group is in line with the theoretical assertions of employing literature in language instruction (Collie & Slater, 1987; Carter & Long, 1991). It appeared that the setting of the story was an innate incentive to focus on grammatical structures, and this is why Schmidt (1990) maintains that it is necessary to notice in the first place in order to acquire. When grammar is embedded in meaningful and interesting material, students may be more inclined to give their attention to deep processing. This observation is in line with the claim by Paran (2008) that literary texts have the potential to boost motivation and facilitate meaningful interaction with language. Of particular interest is the spontaneous grammatical awareness that can be developed in the students of novel-based groups. Such a metacognitive shift suggests that not only can context-based instruction (that is, an inductive one) help an individual to acquire knowledge of specific structures, but also more general language awareness that can be applied across situations. Such observation resonates with the distinction between procedural and declarative knowledge that Ellis (2002) suggests, and it means that discovery-based learning may result in qualitatively distinct knowledge when compared to explicit instruction alone. Similar findings were also observed by Obeidat and Alomari (2020), where inductive grammar instruction led to much better results in EFL undergraduates than deductive instruction, which they attribute to the active learning and deeper processing of the inductive instructions.

However, the study also demonstrates the continuity of the significance of explicit teaching. The clarity and organization of rule-based teaching was welcome to PPP students, and the demands of inductive learning initially challenging to some students who read novels. This implies that the effectiveness of various approaches might be affected by the preferences of learners and their previous educational experiences, which is in line with studies on individual differences in language learning. The same was observed by Nassaji and Fotos (2011) who noted that though form-based instruction is effective, methods that are based on the learning styles and contextual needs favor learners.

The differences in transfer to writing have practical implications to EFL instruction at higher education. Students who used the real literary models were more ready to work with the complicated structures and showed signs of stylistic development. This lends credence to the arguments that exposure to authentic texts offers models of production that decontextualized practice cannot offer (Paran, 2008). Larsen-Freeman (2015) pointed out that grammar learning is facilitated when the learners are exposed to forms in contexts that are meaningful and when they have the chance to use the forms productively, which the novel-based approach seems to have achieved better than PPP.

The difficulties that both groups report are also worth considering. The early misunderstanding of inductive learning by novel-based group students is indicative of what Ellis (2002) termed the cognitive requirements of consciousness-raising activities. Nevertheless, the eventual emergence of autonomous noticing indicates that such early difficulties might be an inevitable component of the process of building more profound grammatical awareness. On the other hand, the retention and transfer problems of PPP students are reminiscent of the old arguments against decontextualized grammar teaching (Ellis, 2006), which implies that explicit instruction might not be enough to acquire the skill of applying grammar to real-life communication.

These findings have several pedagogical implications. To begin with, the inclusion of literary texts in grammar teaching can help to increase the interest of learners and encourage their grammatical awareness, especially at the tertiary level when students might be interested in intellectually stimulating materials. Second, the instructors need to predict and support the initial difficulties that learners can experience during the process of switching between explicit and inductive approaches. Third, a moderate strategy that integrates the interactive, contextualized delivery of literary texts with strategic explicit teaching can be the most effective in meeting the needs of diverse learners. Fourth, offering real models of written production can help transfer in a manner that cannot be accomplished by controlled practice.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations that must be considered. The application of intact classes in other fields (Mathematics and Biology) can also confound the results because disciplinary cultures and previous experiences of learning English may affect the results. The eight-week period, though adequate to see significant trends, might not reflect the long-term impacts of either method. Also, the dual role of the researchers as instructors and investigators could have affected the instruction and interpretation of data, although they tried to be reflexive. Future studies could overcome these limitations by randomizing participants, prolonging intervention time, and using independent instructors and observers.

Conclusion

This qualitative comparative research examined the experiences of EFL master students in learning grammar by using novel-based inductive teaching versus traditional PPP at the University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Morocco. Results indicated that instruction based on novels led to increased engagement, grammatical awareness, and transfer to writing, whereas PPP provided clarity and structure that some learners appreciated.

These results indicate that the inclusion of literary texts in grammar teaching at the tertiary level can help to increase the level of engagement among learners and facilitate a better grasp of grammar. Nevertheless, the fact that explicit instruction remains relevant to some learners and situations cannot be disregarded. An integrated methodology that integrates the interactive, contextualized delivery of literary texts with strategic explicit teaching can provide the most holistic assistance to grammatical growth in higher education EFL settings.

The research is relevant to the existing literature on literature-based language instruction as it offers qualitative data on the experiences of learners, which has been underrepresented in the literature. The results are relevant to EFL teachers and curriculum developers who aim to improve grammar teaching with the help of authentic texts and be sensitive to the needs of different learners.

Mixed-methods designs could be applied in future studies to compare both performance and experiential results, investigate the long-term consequences of literature-based grammar teaching, and the impact of individual differences on responses to the different teaching practices. The comparative study on the different levels of proficiency and institutional contexts would also illuminate more about the conditions under which the instruction of grammar using novels is most effective.

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