



THE BENEFITS OF IMPLICIT TEACHING IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: *Proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become increasingly essential for effective communication across diverse cultures in today's world. However, traditional teaching methods often emphasise explicit instruction, which can lead to challenges such as student anxiety and difficulties in retaining information. In light of these challenges, this article explores the benefits of implicit teaching, an approach that focuses on learning through exposure and meaningful interaction. By actively engaging students in the learning process, implicit teaching fosters natural language acquisition and significantly enhances retention. Furthermore, this method creates a supportive environment that reduces anxiety, allowing learners to practice their skills without the fear of making mistakes. Ultimately, the findings suggest that adopting implicit teaching strategies can lead to substantial improvements in language learning outcomes, helping students become more confident communicators in English.*

Keywords: *implicit teaching, EFL, language acquisition, student engagement, anxiety reduction.*

Introduction

In today's globalised and interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become increasingly important. English serves as a common linguistic bridge among individuals from diverse countries and cultures, facilitating not only everyday conversations but also access to essential information, educational opportunities, and professional advancements, motivating learners to master English in order to enhance their personal and career prospects. However, the journey of acquiring a new language can present various challenges, often requiring learners to navigate complex grammatical rules and extensive vocabulary.

Traditional EFL teaching methods frequently emphasise explicit instruction, wherein educators provide clear rules and detailed explanations regarding grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure (Rupley et al., 2009). While this approach can offer certain benefits, it may also lead to frustration and anxiety among students. According to Yaghoubi & Seyyedi (2017), many learners struggle to retain information when they rely solely on memorisation of grammatical rules and vocabulary lists, discovering that this method does not adequately prepare them for real-life language use. In light of these challenges, educators have begun exploring



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alternative teaching strategies that promote more effective language acquisition and greater student engagement.

One promising method is implicit teaching, which emphasises learning through exposure, interaction, and meaningful communication rather than through direct explanation. This approach encourages students to actively engage in the learning process, allowing them to absorb language naturally and intuitively. Studies indicate that implicit learning can be more effective than explicit learning for many students, as it aligns with how children acquire their first language—through interaction with their environment rather than through structured lessons (Skehan, 1998). Thus, this article aims to explore the various benefits of implicit teaching in EFL classrooms, highlighting how this method can facilitate natural language acquisition, enhance student engagement, improve retention of language skills, and reduce anxiety. Ultimately, understanding these advantages can help educators create a more supportive and effective learning environment for their students.

Main Body

Implicit teaching offers a distinct approach to language learning that contrasts sharply with traditional explicit instruction. In implicit teaching, the focus shifts from direct rule-based learning to providing students with opportunities to engage with the language in meaningful contexts. This method encourages learners to discover language patterns and vocabulary through interaction rather than through rote memorisation. For example, instead of spending an entire class period explaining the nuances of the past perfect tense, a teacher might organise a role-playing activity where students must use the tense in context, such as discussing past experiences. This immersive experience allows learners to grasp the language's structure organically, fostering a deeper understanding of how it functions in real-life situations. So far, various research studies have supported the effectiveness of implicit teaching in enhancing language acquisition. Boginskaya (2024) asserts that “implicit instruction is a non-conscious process of learning through which students are not aware of what is being taught and learnt at the same time(p. 151). It means that when learners are exposed to language in context, they are better able to understand its use and application. For instance, when students engage in authentic conversations or collaborative tasks, they naturally pick up vocabulary and grammatical structures, which aids in retention. This form of learning mimics the natural process through which children acquire their first language, absorbing language through social interactions and daily experiences rather than through formal



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instruction (Krashen, 1985). Moreover, implicit teaching significantly improves student engagement. When learners participate in interactive activities, they are more likely to find the learning process enjoyable and stimulating. This heightened engagement is crucial, as motivation plays a pivotal role in language learning success. By incorporating games, discussions, and group projects into lessons, teachers can create a dynamic classroom environment that captivates students' interest. Darwin & Norton's (2021) research has indicated that increased engagement often correlates with better learning outcomes, as students are more likely to invest effort and attention when they are actively involved in their education. Another key benefit of implicit teaching is its impact on retention. Language learnt in context tends to be more memorable than vocabulary acquired through drills or memorisation. It means that when students engage in storytelling or role-playing activities that incorporate new vocabulary, they create meaningful contexts that help cement these words in their memory. For instance, discussing a recent trip using descriptive language allows them to form mental connections that enhance recall and application in future conversations. Additionally, implicit teaching can help reduce anxiety in the classroom. Many students experience stress when learning a new language, particularly in traditional settings where the emphasis is on correctness and accuracy. This anxiety can hinder their willingness to participate and communicate. Implicit teaching fosters a more supportive learning environment by encouraging experimentation and allowing students to learn from their mistakes. When students feel safe to make errors without fear of judgement, they are more inclined to practice their language skills and engage in conversations. This shift not only enhances their confidence but also promotes a positive attitude toward language learning.

Conclusion

In summary, although explicit teaching has its advantages, implicit teaching methods in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms offer significant benefits for students. This approach promotes natural language acquisition by allowing learners to engage with the language in meaningful contexts, fostering intuitive understanding. Additionally, implicit teaching increases student engagement by making learning enjoyable and interactive, which leads to better outcomes. It enhances retention, as language learned in context is easier to remember. Furthermore, this method reduces anxiety, creating a supportive environment where students feel safe to practice without fear of making mistakes. Overall, adopting



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implicit teaching strategies can lead to a more effective and enjoyable language learning experience, helping students become confident communicators in English.

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