



Grammar Learning Strategies Preference: EILS VS EDLS

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates learning strategies among English Language students to what extent they apply the Explicit-Deductive/-Inductive Grammar Learning Strategies in their language learning. The students as the language learners need to acquire precisely the English grammar skills to help them fulfil their course requirements. To achieve the objective of the study, the adopted questionnaire from Language Learner Strategies developed by Oxford and Lee (2011) has been distributed to 95 samples. The findings show that there is relatively strong statistical evidence supporting all the alternative hypotheses by showing that there is a moderately significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (EILS) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies.

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Introduction

Generally, people may associate grammar with errors and correctness when communicating with others. This is because having knowledge about grammar helps speakers to understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, precise, and interesting as it has been part of language skills since grammar is a fundamental feature of a language (Yusob, 2018). All languages and dialects in this world follow specific grammatical patterns. The same thing goes to the English language of which its grammar acts as the body of rules describing the properties of the language. Its elements must be combined according to certain patterns.

The strength of a tree lies in its roots and thickening stem. Similarly, the strength of any spoken languages lies in their grammar. Hence, if language learners seriously want to improve their spoken English, then they have to work on their grammar. Getting a good hold on grammar is required so that the language learners can speak correct English. However, there are many speakers who speak incorrect grammar unintentionally while speaking in English. The only way to be good English speakers with grammatically correct sentences is to have a tight grip over English nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, determiners, prepositions, and other grammatical elements. In other words, they need to learn and acquire English grammar and its learning strategies.

In the context of tertiary-level institutions in Malaysia, for instance, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu, students cum language learners need to acquire precisely English grammar to help them complete their assignments, oral presentations, projects, academic papers, and so on. The assignment write-ups done with good English writing and grammar skills or presentations presented with a high degree of confidence and also high level of grammatical shrewdness, for instance, may define the real good English language learners and segregate them from a group of poor English learners. On the contrary, if incorrect usage of English grammar is done, then the negative impression is formed on people, especially those who assess them in classes such as lecturers and teachers.

The researcher intends to study on the Grammar Learning Strategies (known as the GLS) purposely to investigate to what extent the students apply the Explicit-Deductive/-Inductive GLS in their language learning. As revealed by many studies, the deductive and inductive GLS are among communicative approaches which have been academically proven to encourage students to communicate fluently and confidently. Thus, the current study aims at investigating the students' manipulation of the GLS in order to improve and upgrade their grammatical competence so as to acquire the target language efficiently.

Literature Review

Though there are assumptions that learning grammar is boring and tiresome, it is, without doubt, very important especially when using English and any other languages in this world as it is naturally the way in which sentences are structured and the language is formatted.

According to Oxford and Lee (2011), the GLS refers to "actions or thoughts that learners consciously employ to make language learning and/or language use easier, more effective, more efficient, and more enjoyable". In the meantime, it has also been defined as "any set of operations, steps, plans routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieved, and usage of information" (Wenden and Rubin, 1987).

By learning grammar, language learners learn how to apply language forms to real-life communications or simulated situations. In connection with listening and speaking, grammar indeed plays a crucial part in receiving and expressing spoken languages. In terms of reading, grammar allows the language learners to understand sentence interrelationships and chronologies in a paragraph, a passage, and a text. In the context of writing, grammar enables the language learners to put their ideas into comprehensible sentences so that they can effectively 'converse' in a written form (Syed Jalal, 2009).

However, Pawlak (2009) has mentioned that there are still some areas that have received only scant attention, and

one of them is unquestionably the GLS, which is still in its 'budding stage.' Oxford and Lee have sarcastically personified the GLS as the 'second Cinderella' because it still remains as the unexplored strategies compared with other language-learning strategies, such as those of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Oxford and Lee, 2011).

Like other LLS, Griffiths (2008) has stated that the GLS also possess six (6) distinctive characteristics, which are summarised as follows:

- a) They are what learners do, which indicates an active approach;
- b) Their application is at least partly conscious;
- c) They are optional means learners choose;
- d) Their use entails goal-oriented, purposeful activity;
- e) They are applied to regulate and control the process of learning; and
- f) Their use is intended to facilitate the process of learning.

In terms of subdividing the GLS into categories, Doughty has made a distinction between three (3) categories of the GSL, which can be associated with three (3) main instructional approaches to teaching grammatical structures, as follows (Doughty and Long, 2003):

(1) **GLS Reflective of Implicit L2 Learning** (strategies used by language learners who are oriented to meaning but occasionally shift to attention to form) includes a focus on form, for instance, noticing grammatical structures which cause problems with meaning, paying attention to how more proficient people utter things and imitating, noticing correction of wrong utterances, and so on and so forth.

(2) **GLS Facilitating Explicit-Inductive L2 Learning** (strategies used by language learners who are oriented to explicit-inductive learning) such as participating in grammar rules' discovery discussions in class, forming and testing hypotheses about how target structures work, checking with more proficient counterparts whether a given rule interpretation is correct or wrong, and so on and so forth.

(3) **GLS Applicable to Explicit-Deductive Learning** (strategies used by language learners who are oriented to explicit-deductive learning) such as previewing lessons to identify key grammatical structures to be covered, paying attention to rules provided by teachers or course books, memorising rules about frequently used linguistic forms/structures, using newly learnt rules/structures in contexts as soon as possible, and so on and so forth.

The deductive and inductive GLS are among communicative approaches which have been academically proven to encourage students to communicate fluently and confidently. Al-Kharrat (2000) has also agreed that whatsoever learning strategies are used, deductive and inductive learning approaches are verified to encourage students to communicate fluently. Besides, he has also mentioned that the effectiveness of deductive and inductive approaches which maximising students' opportunities to practice thinking skills have been investigated in a number of empirical studies. Meanwhile, Peck (1988) has reported that a number of research studies have revealed that successful learners often adopt certain learning strategies, be they deductive or inductive ones. Harmer (1989) has ascertained that these two techniques (deductive and inductive ones) encourage learners to reimburse for the gap in their L2 knowledge by using a variety of the GLS.

In the last two discussions in this chapter, the researcher has selectively described about GLS 2 and 3; meaning that GLS 1 has been discriminated from the discussion as it has nothing to do with the research topic.

Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies

Before discussing any further, the researcher would like to specify and differentiate the meaning of *Inductive* and *Deductive*, and *Explicit* and *Implicit*. DeKeyser (1994) has defined *Inductive* as rules which are inferred from examples presented first while *Deductive* refers to the rules which are given before any examples are seen. In the interim, he has also described *Explicit* as rules which are superficially formulated either by teachers or students (either before or after examples/practice) and *Implicit* as no rules are formulated for any examples given. This is to avoid any confusion between the two-pair terminologies, which are particularly problematic.

Meanwhile, Oxford and Lee (2011) have stated that this sort of L2 learning principally involves "*starting with a specific fact or instance and moving toward a general principle or rule*". Al-Siyabi (n.d) has claimed that older learners opt Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies rather than Explicit-Inductive ones because they are able to analyse the structures and rules of the language and focus consciously on grammar. However, Larsen-Freeman (2001) has argued that it is unlikely that any approaches to teaching grammar would work equally well in class for all learners.

Winter and Reber (as cited in Oxford and Lee, 2011) have stated that conscious and hypothesis formation and testing done by language learners are essential in attempt to find out whether the input contains regularities and how those regularities work. Some of the examples of Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies are as follows:

- a) *I notice (or remember) structures that cause me problems with meaning or communication.*
- b) *I notice (or remember) structures that are repeated often in the text.*
- c) *I notice (or remember) structures that are emphasized orally, through pitch, loudness, or repetition.*
- d) *When I do not know the gender of a noun, I quickly consider clues like sound, meaning, and form.*
- e) *I pay attention to how more proficient people say things and then imitate.*
- f) *I write down structures on note cards so that I can think about how they work.*
- g) *I keep a notebook of examples of any structure for which I am trying to discern (differentiate) the rule.*
- h) *I create my own hypotheses about how target structures operate and then check my hypotheses.*
- i) *I check with others who are more proficient to make sure my rule interpretation is correct.*

[Source: Oxford and Lee (2011)]

Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies

Another popular GLS utilised by language learners is Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies, which refers to the mode of explicit grammar learning involves "learning a rule that is supplied by the book, the teacher, or by some other means and then applying the rules to specific instance"(Oxford and Lee, 2011).

Al-Kharrat (2000) has described Explicit-Deductive Learning as an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules or language structures and given specific information about a language. Then, the language learners apply these rules when they use the language. Ur (1996) has stated that deductive grammar techniques usually involve teachers presenting rules and examples to learners who subsequently apply these rules in practice.

However, Richards et al. (1985) have reported that this may be totally contrary with inductive learning as language learners are basically not taught rules directly. Some of the

examples of Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies are as follows:

- a) After discovering a rule, I try to apply it as soon as possible in a meaningful context.
- b) I listen carefully for any feedback the lecturer gives me about structures I use.
- c) I notice my grammar mistakes and use that information to help me to do better.
- d) I pay attention to the rule(s) that the lecturer or the book provides.
- e) I try to apply the rule carefully and accurately in specific sentences.
- f) I make up new sentences by using the rule(s).
- g) I check my new sentences (or ask for help) to see if I understand the rule.
- h) I memorise rules about frequently used linguistic forms/structures (for example, verb endings, singular/plural, noun-pronoun agreement, and subject-verb agreement).
- i) I memorise how structures change their forms (for instance, from a noun to an adjective, from and adjective to an adverb).
- j) I colour-code different grammar categories in my notebook.
- k) I work with a study partner to apply grammar rules.
- l) I make grammar charts.
- m) I use newly learnt rules/structures in context as soon as possible.

[Source: Oxford and Lee (2011)]

Methodology

In this section, the researcher describes a target population, sampling procedure, and sample and instruments for the research (questionnaire) and presents the data-collection procedures and data analysis.

Table 1. Sampling Design Procedure

Sampling Design Procedure	
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total numbers of the students of Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu (Dungun Campus)
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-One diploma students of the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu (Dungun Campus) (150 students)
Sampling Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The none-probability sampling – purposive sampling quota This technique is used to distribute the questionnaire
Sample Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 respondents based upon the total target population

Instrument

The questionnaire is an effective data-collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure and correlate dependent variable(s) with independent variable(s). The questionnaire has been adopted from Language Learner Strategies designed by Oxford and Lee (2011) to provide information related to the Inductive and Deductive Grammar Learning Strategies. In this study, the questionnaire has been divided into several sections, as follows:

•Section A: Demographic information

The questions have been designed to obtain basic information about age, gender, faculty, programme, and semester part of the respondents. The questions have been designed in a fill-in-the-blank form. In this study, only the age question has been used as a demographic factor in the analysis to identify, for instance, whether or not there is a

correlation between gender (independent variable) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies.

• Section B: Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1)

For this section, the questions (Questions 1 to 5) have been adopted to measure the Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1) used by the Part-One Diploma students who are oriented to meaning but occasionally shift their attention to form. The data have been gathered by using the Likert Scale that consists of the 6-point scale including N/A (Not Applicable).

• Section C: Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2)

For this section, the questions (Questions 6 to 10) have been, likewise, adopted to measure the Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2) used by the Part-One Diploma students who are oriented to explicit-inductive learning, starting with a specific fact or instance and moving towards a general principle rule. The data have also been gathered by using the Likert Scale consisting the 6-points scale including N/A (Not Applicable).

• Section D: Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies

For this section, the questions (Questions 11 to 22) have been adopted to measure the Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies used by the Part-One Diploma students who are oriented to explicit-deductive learning such that of rules supplied by books, lecturers, or some other means. The data have also been gathered by using the Likert Scale that consists of the 6-points scale including N/A (Not Applicable).

Hypotheses

H0 There is no significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies.

H1 There is a significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies.

H0 There is no significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies

H1 There is a significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies.

Findings

Demographic Profile Analysis

Frequency test is basically used to analyse the overall information of the respondents in this study based on basic information (or profile information). The study involves 84 respondents, mostly Part-One Diploma students of the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu (Dungun Campus).

Table 2 above shows the frequency of the respondents' profile involved in this study. The number of the male and female respondents is statistically even (50 – 50), likewise, their age is in the same group (18 to 27 years old).

The analysis also shows that there are not too many differences between the male and female respondents in terms of the faculty. Most of the respondents are from Part 1 (97.6%) while only 2.4% (2 students) are from Part 2. They are all from the Faculty of Business and Management. The respondents can be distributed according to their groups as follows:

- BM111: 42 respondents (50.0%),
- BM112: 25 respondents (29.8%),
- BM114: 17 respondents (20.2%).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution Based on the Respondents' Demographic.

Criteria	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-27	84	100.0
	28-37	0	0.0
Gender	Male	42	50.0
	Female	42	50.0
Faculty	Business and Management	84	100.0
	Others	0	0.0
Programme	BM111	42	50.0
	BM112	25	29.8
	BM114	17	20.2
Part (Diploma)	1	82	97.6
	2	2	2.4

Table 3. T-Test Analysis on Respondents' Learning Styles

Grammar Learning Style	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
EILS 1	Male	42	3.4452	.42034	1.323	.013
	Female	42	4.9369	7.29690		
EILS 2	Male	42	3.4095	.39250	1.959	.000
	Female	42	5.9667	8.45129		
EDLS	Male	42	3.8014	1.97131	-.482	.480
	Female	42	4.0743	3.09563		

• Significant at 0.05

Analysis

The SPSS (Statistical Package for social Science) software for windows has been used to analyse the data. The SPSS is one of the most widely available and powerful tool to summarise data to determine whether or not there are significant differences between groups, examine relationships between variables, and graph results. The data have been transcribed by using this software. Analysis on data frequency, reliability analysis, cross tabulation can be done much more accurate and faster.

T-Test Analysis

T-test analysis has been carried out to identify group difference towards learning strategies. By using this analysis, the mean difference provides some information to the respondents' profile and the significant level difference can be found out.

Table 3 above demonstrates the t-test result of gender difference for the GLS.

1. For EILS 1, it is found that there is a significant difference (0.013) between the male and female students. The difference is evident as the female students (4.9369) have a tendency to using EILS 1 compared to the male ones (3.4452).

2. For EILS 2, it is found that the difference level is significant (0.000) between the male and female students, which means that the female students are inclined to using EILS 2 compared to the male ones.

However there is no significant difference for EDLS among both the male and female students.

Correlation of Coefficient– Pearson's Correlation

Correlation of coefficient has been tested by using the Pearson's Correlation Matrix since the use of the interval measurement of scale is highly recommended. The rules of thumb have been proposed to characterise the strength of association between variables based upon the absolute size of the correlation of coefficient (Hair et al., 2010). This correlation coefficient analysis has been used to explain the significant relationship between the independent variables

[Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1 and 2)] and dependent variable (Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies). The result of the findings is displayed in Table 4.

The results of these two independent variables are significant at 0.01 significant level ($p > 0.01$) based on the two-tailed test. The stronger relationship between both independent variables is Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2) compared to Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1). Though, both are statistically considered as moderate in their strength of correlation based upon the rules of thumb of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Size. The result of correlation between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1) and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies is 0.697 and significant at 0.01 level ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.01$).

Meanwhile, the result of correlation between another independent variable [Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2)] and the dependent variable (Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies) is 0.683 and significant at 0.01 level ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, it means that this can also be considered as moderate in its strength of correlation.

In conclusion, the researcher has discovered that there is a strong statistical evidence supporting all the alternative hypotheses ($H_1: H_1, H_2: H_1$). That is due to the rejection of each null hypothesis ($H_1: H_0, H_2: H_0$) leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypotheses.

Conclusion

In general, the objectives of this research are to study on the relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies opted by the Part-One Diploma students of the Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Cawangan Terengganu.

The research has discovered that there is relatively strong statistical evidence supporting all the alternative hypotheses, which show that there is a moderately significant relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies by using Coefficient of Correlation – Pearson's Correlation.

Table 4. Correlation between the Independent Variables and Dependent Variable.

		Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (1)	Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies (2)
Mean	Pearson's Correlation	.697**	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies	N	84	84

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Since the fact that there is no such research found that could support this research as evidence quoted upon the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables, the researcher has determined to pave this path for other researchers to carry out qualitative and quantitative researches on this subject matter.

Last but not least, the researcher hopes that this study would be a precious piece of informative paper particularly to the researcher himself and also to UiTM students in general to increase their proficiency in English by diversifying their GLS inductively and deductively in different contexts. The recommendations in this study are essential to ensure that the GLS selected by students will aid them out to learn English grammar more effectively. Besides, it will help the researcher to realise the objectives of this study, and the recommendations that will come out from this study will help students to achieve higher marks in English tests and examinations as well as acquire the English language by mastering its grammar precisely.

Selecting appropriate GLS based on context(s)

It is good for language learners to diversify their grammar learning strategies, for instance, through syntax repetition, imitation, writing down structures on note cards or note books, creating hypotheses about sentence structures, checking syntaxes with other people who are more proficient, reading intentionally grammar books, memorising frequently used linguistic forms and structures, and making up new sentences using the grammar rules newly learned. In other words, there are tones of grammar-learning strategies that students can use to learn grammar for communicative needs.

Remembering that no single GLS fits all language learners

It is foolhardy to think that a single grammar-learning strategy could possibly fit an entire class filled with language learners who have a range of strategic preferences. We should bear in our mind that there is no single holy-grail strategy that would magically turn someone to be proficient in English overnight. Hence, the language learners should integrate all the appropriate grammar learning strategies that suit to their learning styles. However, the mere teaching of grammatical rules and the opportunity of controlled practice of them, even in communicative conditions, do not guarantee the actual use of that competence in 'real' communicative contexts. Thus, the language learners should consider other factors that improve grammar acquisition.

Incorporating the GLS as a part of the target language's crucial contents

The researcher considerably suggests to English lecturers and teachers to incorporate grammar-learning strategies in their teaching contents to assist their students to master English syntaxes inductively and deductively based on codes/subjects taught. This is due to the fact that some language learners tend to use Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies while some others are into Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies. It is better if the language learners are able to conjoin both inductive and deductive learning strategies in order to get a better result. The lecturers and the teachers could deductively teach English grammar in isolation (just like our parents and grandparents traditionally learnt grammar those days) instead of purely focusing on gaining language proficiency through parrot-like repetition, such as suggested in communicative language teaching which simply focuses on meaning that leads to the impression that grammar is not important.

Avoiding decontextualisation in teaching grammar

As the grammar itself is naturally technical, teachers should not introduce grammar through excessively decontextualised, isolated, and mechanical drills. The teachers should be aware that although the explanation of grammar rules is sometimes necessary, it may only help learners to use English to a limited extent because the language learners naturally use different learning styles and strategies according to their personal, unique learning aptitude and cognitive ability. There is a study focusing on the importance of contextualising explicit knowledge about grammar which proves that learning in context is more effective than learning with decontextualisation.

Constructing bilingual questionnaire for future research

In order to ensure that potential respondents fully comprehend what the questionnaire is all about, researchers will have to construct items bilingually, for instance, Malay-English. This should be done to shun misunderstanding upon questionnaire items so as to avoid research results from being contaminated and affected by thoughtlessly, unthinkingly selected answers.

Paving the path for this study to be discovered by researchers

Since the fact that the study on the relationship between Explicit-Inductive Learning Strategies and Explicit-Deductive Learning Strategies has yet been thoroughly discovered and addressed, the researcher urges experienced researchers to merge with other academicians to study in depth on this field.

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