The incidental acquisition of English prepositions by EFL learners through extensive reading with output activities

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Contents

1. Literature review
2. Research questions
3. Methods
4. Results
5. Discussion
6. Implications
7. Limitations and future research
Incidental acquisition

“Learning without an intention to learn, or the learning of one thing (e.g., vocabulary) when the learner’s primary focus is to do something else (e.g., communication)” (Schmidt, 1994)

“Incidental acquisition is the learning of one L2 feature without intention while attention is focused on some other aspect of the L2 such as semantic meaning” (Shintani & Ellis, 2011)
The Benefits of Extensive Reading

Cognitive Gains
- Vocabulary
- Reading comp
- Writing

Linguistic form??

Affective Gains
- Motivation
- Attitudes
- Reading Habits
Incidental acquisition with output activities

Output activities can facilitate incidental acquisition of vocabulary.

### Some empirical evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example activities</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Plus group outperformed Reading Only group.</td>
<td>Activities: Reading+comprehension questions+various text-based vocabulary activities</td>
<td>(Paribakht and Wesche, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Plus various activities group outperformed Narrow Reading group.</td>
<td>Activities: Reading with target words+discussion, interpretation, and answering questions</td>
<td>(Min, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading plus activities group outperformed Self-selected reading only group.</td>
<td>Activities: Demonstrating word knowledge in oral and written expression</td>
<td>(Zimmerman, 1997)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gaps in the literature

1. Very few research on the effectiveness of extensive reading on grammar acquisition
   1) Relatively short time (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006)
   2) The use of indirect and insensitive measurement (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Sheu 2003; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989)
   3) Only overall grammatical competence

2. No output activities for grammar acquisition
Purpose of this study

• To investigate the effectiveness of extensive reading with output activities on the incidental acquisition of a specific feature: English prepositions
Purpose of this study

Why prepositions?

29% errors made by ESL learners (Bitchener et al, 2005)
18% in ESL writing (Dalgish, 1985)
Korean learners (Cho, 2004)

1. No rules in the use of prepositions: e.g., > thirst for, believe in
2. Different prepositions in different languages
3. Hundreds of phrasal verbs with prepositions: e.g., > give up on
Research Question

1. Does extensive reading with output activities contribute to increased linguistic knowledge in English preposition use among middle school EFL Korean learners?

2. If so, what factors contribute to the incidental acquisition of English prepositions?
Participants

42 EFL learners
(Extensive reading n=12
Control group n=30)

L1 = Korean

15 years old

Intermediate - Advanced
Instruments

Background Questionnaire
- Age, Gender, Years of language study

Pre and Post Preposition Test
- Identify wrong prepositions
- Identify wrong prepositions and correct them
- Supply the correct prepositions

Interview
- Explain the meaning of the preposition
- Use the preposition in a new sentence
# Data analysis and coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Preposition pretest  
Preposition posttest | Two-way repeated measures ANOVA (time*group) |
| Interview     | Audiotaped and transcribed                   |

‘Learning is a gradual process of strengthening the small amounts of knowledge gained from previous meetings’

(Nation, 2001; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preposition Test</td>
<td>Wrong answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notice+Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Design

**Extensive Reading Group**
- Background questionnaire/ Pre-test
- 15 week of Extensive Reading after class
- Post-test/ Interview

**Control Group**
- Background questionnaire/ Pre-test
- Regular class
- Post-test
### Extensive Reading Model

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time period</strong></td>
<td>1 semester/ 15 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class time allotment</strong></td>
<td>1 and ½ hours per session/ Twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size</strong></td>
<td>12 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outline of the Extensive Reading Model

Week 1
- Background survey/Preposition pretest
- Introduction to Group and Individual Extensive Reading
- Selection of Books

Week 2-8
(Group extensive reading)
- Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)
- Reading Log
- Reading Diary
- Moderated Discussion
Outline of the Extensive Reading Model

**Week 9**
(Individual Extensive Reading)
- SSR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)
- What would you do?

**Week 10**
- SR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)
- Predicting content from the title

**Week 11**
- SR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)
- Pair book sharing
### Outline of the Extensive Reading Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>• SSR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A different ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>• SR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oral book report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>• SR (Reading Log, Reading Diary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pair book sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>• Favorite quotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Portfolio exhibition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Results Q1:** Does extensive reading with output activities contribute to increased linguistic knowledge in English preposition use among middle school EFL Korean learners?

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of pretest and posttest scores for extensive reading and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extensive Reading</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>53.67 / 92</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=12)</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>67.59 / 92</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>46.93 / 92</td>
<td>6.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=30)</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>47.76 / 92</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results Q1: Does extensive reading with output activities contribute to increased linguistic knowledge in English preposition use among middle school EFL Korean learners?

Figure 1 Mean scores for the experimental and control group on the pretest and posttest

- **Experimental Group**
  - +28%
  - P<.001

- **Control group**
  - +2%
  - P<.001
## Results Q1: Does extensive reading with output activities contribute to increased linguistic knowledge in English preposition use among middle school EFL Korean learners?

Table 2 Two-way repeated ANOVA for group and preposition test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>199,861.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2829.62</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>3021.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42.771</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2,825.28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>932.411</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>856.57</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test × Group</strong></td>
<td>733.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>673.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>43.54</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results Q2: What are the factors that contribute to students’ acquisition?

1. Increased reading comprehension / vocabulary

“ I didn’t know if this preposition was correct or incorrect because I didn’t understand the meaning of the sentence. But I know what it means, so I can tell if this is correct or not.”

“I didn’t know this word, so I didn’t know what to right next to this word”

2. Acquisition of frequently encountered prepositions

“I got it right here because ‘in’ is always used in front of location phrases”

“I know it is ‘in’ because I saw it a lot.”
Results Q2: What are the factors that contribute to students’ acquisition?

3. Increased intuition

“I don’t know why I wrote ‘for’ in the ‘for the rest of my life’ for sure. Maybe I saw this phrase in the text. But I wrote down ‘for’ because it just sounds right.”

“I don’t know why I put ‘in’ for the sentence ‘he froze in terror’. It just sounds good.”

4. Opportunities to use the newly taken input into output activities

Abundant opportunities to encounter vocabulary items with prepositions (i.e., collocations) frequently in contexts
Discussion : Research Question 1

1. Consistent with extensive reading studies

2. First study showing incidental acquisition with a specific focus (English prepositions) using a direct and sensitive measurement for acquisition

3. Superiority of reading with output activities

  (Min, 2008; Rott, 1999)
Factors contributing to increased preposition knowledge
1) Increased reading comprehension
2) Increased vocabulary knowledge
3) Frequent encounters with prepositions in various contexts through extensive reading
4) Increased intuition for preposition use
5) Activities that forced output
Conclusion

Extensive Reading + Output Activities = Acquisition of prepositions
Benefits of extensive reading with output activities for grammar acquisition

- Benefits:
  
  1) Pedagogically Efficient (Huckin and Coady, 1999: 182)
     
     Two activities: Reading + Grammar
  
  2) Pleasant and Motivating (Thornbury, 2002)
  
  3) Opportunity to meet prepositions in their context of use
  
  4) Result in substantial preposition acquisition
Limitations

1) Small number of participants
2) Characteristics of the participants
3) Limited instruments
4) Limited evidence for subsequent acquisition
5) Control group
Incidental acquisition

Few researchers focused on incidental vocabulary and grammar acquisition through extensive reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary acquisition</th>
<th>Grammar acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese EFL students</td>
<td>Overall grammatical competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean EFL students</td>
<td>Syntactic structure in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kweon &amp; Kim, 2008)</td>
<td>(Tudor &amp; Hafiz, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish EFL learners</td>
<td>Grammatical mastery of lexical items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Results Q1:** Does extensive reading with output activities contribute to increased linguistic knowledge in English preposition use among middle school EFL Korean learners?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean Difference (ER-CG)</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>-3.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>13.92</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>9.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Comparisons of scores between pretest and posttest for each group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference (Pretest -Posttest)</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ER (N=12)</td>
<td>-13.917*</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-27.84**</td>
<td>-14.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG (n=12)</td>
<td>-.833*</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-1.66</td>
<td>-1.875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>