

The Acquisition of the English Prepositional Phrase by South African
English Second Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

Documented evidence indicates that South African learners, including university students, experience problems in using English as an academic language. In particular, reading and writing levels are below expected levels. Some scholars have attributed learners' inability to acquire Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency to an overreliance on Communicative Language Teaching and are of the view that problems in reading and writing, at least in part, stem from English Second Language (ESL) learners' poor command of English grammar. The problem of underperformance in English is exacerbated by underqualified teachers and inadequate resources, which translate to a lack of information. This study focused on the acquisition of one particular aspect of English grammar, namely prepositions, and on how prepositions could be instructed to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in the South African context. The study was motivated by the researcher's own observations as an English teacher, that EFAL learners struggle to acquire English prepositions, and by the absence of information on how to teach prepositions, even though the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement includes prepositions that ought to be taught at different stages. This lack of information compounds the identified problem, given that teachers struggle to teach specific aspects of English grammar without clear guidance. The present study utilised a quasi-experimental design (a pre-test – post-test design) to compare the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar instruction in teaching English prepositions. The study also considered the effect of learners' first language (Sesotho or isiZulu) on the acquisition of English prepositions. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The results suggest that learners benefited more from explicit grammar instruction than from implicit grammar instruction, and that the first language had no significant effect on learning outcomes. The study contributes to the field of Applied Linguistics in that it increases our understanding of the constructive role that explicit grammar instruction can play in the South African context and in that it provides practical examples of how EFAL teachers can instruct prepositions to their learners.

OPSOMMING

Gedokumenteerde bewyse dui daarop dat Suid Afrikaanse leerders, insluitende universiteitsstudente, probleme ondervind in hul gebruik van Engels as akademiese taal. Vlakke in lees- en skryfvaardighede is spesifiek onder standaard. Leerders se onvermoë om Kognitiewe Akademiese Taalvaardigheid te verwerf word dikwels geassosieer met die beklemtoning van Kommunikatiewe Taalonderrig in die Suid Afrikaanse kurrikulum, en verskeie navorsers reken dat probleme in lees en skryf deur leerders se swak kennis van Engelse grammatika veroorsaak word. Die probleem word vererger deur swak gekwalifiseerde onderwysers, onvoldoende hulpbronne, en 'n tekort aan informasie oor hoe leerders onderrig moet word. Hierdie studie fokus op die verwerwing van 'n spesifieke aspek van Engelse grammatika, naamlik voorsetsels, en op hoe hierdie aspek van die grammatika aan Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal leerders in Suid Afrika aangebied moet word. Die motivering vir die studie was die navorsers se eie observasie as Engelse onderwyser dat leerders probleme ondervind met die aanleer van Engelse voorsetsels en deur die afwesigheid van inligting oor hoe voorsetsels onderrig moet word op verskillende vlakke. Hierdie gebrek aan inligting beteken dat onderwysers dikwels nie weet hoe om leerders te ondersteun nie. Die studie het 'n kwasi-eksperimentele ontwerp ('n pre-toets – post-toets ontwerp) gevolg om die effektiwiteit van eksplisiete versus implisiete grammatika onderrig van Engelse voorsetsels te vergelyk. Die studie het ook die invloed van leerders se eerste taal (Sesotho of isiZulu) op die verwerwing van Engelse voorsetsels ondersoek. Die data is statisties geanaliseer met behulp van die 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences'. Die resultate suggereer dat leerders eerder baat by eksplisiete grammatika instruksie, en dat die eerste taal geen beduidende invloed op die uitkoms van die leerproses het nie. Die studie dra by tot kennisgenerering in die veld van Toegepaste Linguistiek, in die sin dat die resultate ons begrip ten opsigte van die konstruktiewe rol van eksplisiete grammatika instruksie in die Suid Afrikaanse konteks verbreed. Die studie bied ook praktiese voorbeelde aan onderwysers oor hoe voorsetsels suksesvol onderrig kan word in Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal.

KEY TERMS

Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

English as a Second Language

English First Additional Language

Explicit Grammar Teaching Methods

First Language / Home Language

Focus-on-form(s)

Further Education and Training

Implicit Grammar Teaching Methods

Language of Learning and Teaching

Multilingualism

National Curriculum Statement

Prepositional Phrases

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Finally, I thank God Almighty for his provision of resources to finance the study, for providing me with very supportive people to help me in one way or the other and for giving me the strength that I needed to carry out the study.

DECLARATION

I declare that **The Acquisition of the English Prepositional Phrase by South African English Second Language Learners** is my own work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as such by means of complete references.

Signature: *R. Chimbeva*

Date: **April 2022**

Student Number: **45293376**

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my children Covenant Sungano, Agape Rudorwashe and Saved Takaponeswa. For you my children, the bar has been set and the button handed over to you. Go out there and achieve much more than what your dad has achieved. To my wife Rosemary Sibongile, this is a direct result of your fervent prayers to God for him to lift me up.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFAL	English as a Second Language
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
L1	First Language / Home Language
L2	Second Language
L1	First Language / Home Language
L2	Second Language
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
POS	Part of Speech
PP	Prepositional Phrases
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general introduction to the present research project. It sketches the background to and purpose of the study, by highlighting the roles of the various official languages spoken in South Africa in the current education system and the realities caused by the low proficiency levels in English First Additional Language¹ (EFAL) of South African learners.

The chapter outlines the research problem, the research questions and the hypotheses that will be tested. These relate to the researcher's observation that the EFAL learners in his classes find it difficult to master English grammar – more specifically learners often seem to struggle to acquire the correct use of prepositions and prepositional phrases in English. The chapter also briefly introduces the methodological framework that was employed in the research and discusses the contribution of this study to the field of Applied Linguistics.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

South Africa is a multilingual country, but historically (before 1994, i.e. during Apartheid); only English and Afrikaans were used as official languages (Ngidi 2007). This meant that the African languages were not recognised as official languages or as languages of learning and teaching. However, following the first all-inclusive elections in 1994, South Africa adopted 11 official languages, viz: Sepedi (Northern Sotho), Sesotho (Southern Sotho), Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (Ngidi 2007:24). To ensure that these official languages are treated equally, the national language policy bestows equal rights to all 11 official languages, and theoretically allows citizens to be educated in, and to use the language of their choice at least in the foundation phase (Ngidi 2007:24). Practically, however, most South Africans are multilingual, which means a learner whose mother tongue is isiZulu, for example, may be able to speak and write other languages such as isiXhosa, isiNdebele and Siswati (which all belong to the Nguni languages family group). Similarly, speakers whose mother tongue is Setswana, may be able to speak and write other languages

¹ In South Africa, English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) is used to refer to second language learners of English. In this dissertation, this term and its abbreviations are used to refer to ESL learners in South Africa, but the term English second language (ESL) will also be used, specifically to refer to learners of English as L2 outside of South Africa.

such as Northern Sotho and Sesotho, which are known as Sotho-Tswana languages (Ngidi 2007:24). Officially, the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) states that learners should be instructed in their home languages² until the end of Grade 6 (Revised National Curriculum Statement ((NCS)) 2002:5). However, in practice, the use of African official languages as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)³ applies only to the foundation phase (Grade 1-3), after which learners switch to English as LoLT. The English language thus is one of the tools which learners need in order to achieve academic success in school, and professional success later in life. This means that EFAL learners need to develop their language skills when they are still in school.

1.2.1. English as a Language of Learning and Teaching in South Africa

As mentioned above, English is used as LoLT post foundation phase, in the intermediate, senior and Further Education and Training (FET) phases. Most South African learners are only introduced to the English language in the foundation phase, where it is taught as a subject. The majority of students are also not exposed to English outside the classroom as observed by Kilfoil (1990:20): “While English is ostensibly a second language, in many areas it is,...a foreign language, as learners have no exposure to English outside the classroom”. In addition, EFAL is taught only for a limited number of hours to learners in the different phases: in Grade 1 and 2 it is allocated 2 to 3 hours, in Grade 3 it is allocated 3 to 4 hours, in the intermediate phase it is allocated 5 hours, in the senior phase it is allocated 4 hours and in the FET phase it is allocated 4 1/2 hours. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are expected to be developed simultaneously in these hours as they are described in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education 2011:6-7). Despite all this, the acquisition of various English skills, including English grammar skills, remains a problem for learners, especially for those in low-income communities where educational contexts are compromised (Bhattacharya 2010) – this is also true for many South African learners.

The teaching and learning of English grammar are problematic partly because learners are not well prepared for the demands of EFAL grammar learning at secondary level (Ngidi 2007:17). Theoretically, secondary school learners “should be able to use cognitive strategies to reinforce

² The term Home Language is used in the South African educational system to refer to the first language (L1) of a learner.

³ The term Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is used to refer to the Medium of Instruction in the South African educational system

their innate language acquisition ability (Ellis 1985, cited in Kilfoil 1990:21). Given this, secondary school learners are more likely to understand grammar concepts than primary school learners. This means that different factors should be considered for use in classrooms, factors such as different grammar teaching methods, the need for skilled teachers to implement these methods and the influence of learners' first languages on certain aspects of EFAL grammar. One of the goals of the South African education system is to produce learners who can operate in different environments and at different levels in the language of business (English), but it has been suggested that a lack of teacher competence hampers this goal. Krugel and Fourie (2014:219) established in their research that "in South Africa many English teachers lack the necessary English language skills to teach English effectively". This position is echoed by Viljoen and Molefe (2001) who maintain that both teachers and students feel overwhelmed by the demands of the language in which they are not proficient. Such demands include self-expression or sentence construction. In other words, teachers are often not as competent as they are expected to be. Overwhelmed teachers are unlikely to perform as expected, and over time develop negative attitudes to teaching (Bell 2005). Van Der Walt and Ruiters (2011) also touch on this aspect of language teaching and explain that being multilingual does not necessarily mean that a teacher is qualified to teach a language.

While it is applauded that there are 11 official languages and that each of them is used as a LoLT in the foundation phase, the reality of low English proficiency levels in foundation phase learners is very conspicuous. The use of learners' home languages as LoLTs in the foundation phase does not guarantee that the learners proceed to the next phases without any learning problems, as learners are typically not prepared for the switch to English in Grade 4. The sudden change from mother tongue to English as the LoLT by Grades 4 and above presents problems since the learners are not yet prepared to develop the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Research has indicated that in more advanced education phases (senior and FET phases, and even at university level), South African learners of EFAL still have problems in reading and writing in English (Ayliff 2006, 2010, Krugel and Fourie 2014:219, Ollerhead and Oosthuizen 2005), even when their speaking skills are intact. Many scholars agree that South African learners develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), but not their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills.⁴ Spaul (2013)

⁴ CALP skills refer to a familiarity with the conventions of academic language and the ability to process and produce written academic language in complex ways. BICS refers to oral language competence and are the language skills that people need on a day-to-day basis to interact with others in social situations.

observes that “most South African pupils cannot read, write and compute at grade appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate”. Similarly, Burnett (1989:56) observes that learners fail to read in their mother tongue as well as in English, while Krugel and Fourie (2014:219) state that Grade 12 learners in township schools have “an English literacy skill profile equal to that of Grade 8”. In general, then, the majority of learners cannot read, or express themselves at the required levels in lower grades and they continue to struggle with the aspects of speaking, reading and writing at secondary school level and in the FET phase. According to Spaul (2015) this dire situation is the result of low-quality education, which results in thousands of learners getting stuck in poverty, as they are not properly prepared for tertiary education or for a profession.

Given the context sketched above, South African EFAL teachers typically teach in classes where many learners’ language competence exhibit gaps. These gaps have to be bridged in a short period of time. The majority of EFAL learners get little or no remedial help from their teachers, which in itself does not help them to improve their language skills (Spaul 2013:4). It is also not always clear what causes South African EFAL learners to face the identified problems, and problems with reading might be caused by different factors than problems with grammar (for example). The fact that EFAL teachers are not always adequately prepared to teach the English language, often means that EFAL teachers do not use a range of teaching methodologies, or that the content they teach is not conducive to learning (Ayliff 2006, 2010; Ollerhead and Oosthuizen 2005). EFAL learners’ problems in acquiring specific skills, such as English grammar, have been associated with their teachers’ lack of knowledge of the language and of language teaching methodologies.

In the absence of much literature on which grammar teaching methods to use in the South African context and given the somewhat vague guidelines in terms of grammar teaching in existing curriculum documents, teachers choose for themselves which methods they would like to use. In the area of grammar teaching, many methods can be used, but most methods can be classified as either ‘explicit’ or ‘implicit’ grammar teaching methods. Since there is not much information about which group of methods is more effective, some teachers use the former group while other teachers use the latter group of methods. A fusion of the explicit and implicit methods is used also by teachers. The present study will contribute to the field of Applied Linguistics in South Africa (more specifically to the field of L2 instruction) by examining which type of grammar teaching yields better results in the context of this country.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Many EFAL secondary school learners in South Africa have problems with expressing themselves accurately in written Academic English, which negatively affects their academic performance and their careers in future (Ayliff 2010:1). Being unable to communicate effectively in English in the educational context is a problem, in that learners struggle to understand instructions, they struggle to understand the content of texts which they read and they struggle with writing and thus with expressing themselves correctly. As a consequence, many learners cannot express themselves well enough in examinations to pass. Practical activities, such as orals that require self-expression skills, can also become challenging.

As an EFAL teacher, the researcher has observed that EFAL secondary school learners who speak an African language as home language struggle to acquire sufficient levels of English grammar in the South African context. For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose to study one aspect of English grammar learning, namely prepositions and prepositional phrases (PP). This focus is based on the researcher's own observations, over many years, that EFAL learners have difficulties in acquiring PPs in English – both in their oral and written productions. Once such experience was when an EFAL learner came to the staffroom to get some water to drink. He said to the researcher, “Sir, it's hot now but at (sic) winter please keep some sugar on (sic) the staffroom for tea”. Multiple examples like this motivated this research study; as the researcher felt there was a need to investigate how the PP should be taught to EFAL high school learners in the South African context.

To summarise, the South African educational situation is such that the majority of EFAL learners are unable to perform at their expected levels. Furthermore, EFAL teachers often fail the same examinations which they give to their learners, suggesting an ill-prepared teacher corps (Krugel and Fourie 2014:219). Given this background, EFAL learners at all levels (foundation, intermediate, senior and FET phases) are faced with many problems regarding how to acquire adequate English skills. As explained above, low EFAL levels in learners cause learners to underperform in scholastic tasks – learners often do not fully understand the questions they have to answer and they cannot express themselves accurately in English. When EFAL teachers do not have the necessary English language skills, or the necessary pedagogical tools to teach the language, EFAL learners are unlikely to become competent EFAL speakers.

The researcher chose to study the acquisition of prepositions since there is very little research on how this Part of Speech (POS) is acquired by South African EFAL learners. CAPS does not

specify how prepositions or PPs ought to be taught – it just provides a list of the prepositions that can be taught at different grade levels. Most text books that are currently being used do not have proper specifications on the methodology to use to teach prepositions. The books which are currently used include English Today, English in Context and English Via Africa. This state of affairs prompted the researcher to carry out a study to investigate which teaching methods support learners who speak African languages as L1 to acquire English prepositional phrases.

The present study will consider explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods, with the intention of establishing which approach is best suited to the South African context. The research problem is complicated by various linguistic and social variables, such as the different African home languages spoken by learners, previous experience in English and socio-affective factors that may influence learning. It is beyond the scope of this study to control all these variables, but as far as possible, the research problem will be studied in a controlled manner. Keeping in mind the identified research problem, the researcher proposes to address the research aims and questions presented in the following two sections in this study.

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The current study's main aim is to examine the effectiveness of an explicit grammar teaching intervention programme, to improve Grade 10 EFAL speakers knowledge of PPs. This intervention programme will be compared to implicit grammar instruction, to determine which grammar teaching approach is more suitable to instruct PPs to EFAL learners in the South African context. The specific aims of the present study are to:

- i. compare the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar teaching methods in the instruction of English prepositions and PPs
- ii. understand the possible effect of learners' home language on the acquisition of English prepositions PPs
- iii. identify explicit grammar teaching methods that could be used by EFAL teachers the in South African context to instruct prepositions and PPs
- iv. enhance the knowledge of EFAL teachers, researchers, curriculum planners, policy makers and stakeholders on issues surrounding explicit and implicit grammar instruction in the South African context

The main objective of the study is to design and implement a teaching intervention programme, based on explicit grammar teaching methods, for Grade 10 EFAL learners. In doing so, the effectiveness of explicit grammar versus implicit grammar instruction will be compared. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. design an intervention programme based on explicit teaching methods to teach prepositions and PPs to Grade 10 EFAL learners
- ii. implement the intervention programme in a group of EFAL Grade 10 learners who speak isiZulu or Sotho as home language
- iii. draft recommendations for the educational sector about how to instruct English prepositions to EFAL learners in the South African context.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To investigate the effectiveness of an explicit versus implicit grammar teaching approach, and to address the other aims of this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Are explicit grammar or implicit teaching methods more effective in instructing English prepositions and PPs to Sesotho and isiZulu EFAL learners?
2. What is the effect of learners' home language (Sesotho and isiZulu) on the acquisition of PPs in English?

The researcher formulated several research hypotheses about the expected outcome of the study, which are presented in section 1.8 below. In order to make more sense of these hypotheses, the researcher first introduced the reader briefly to theoretical orientations on grammar teaching – this will assist the reader in following the researcher's line of thinking in postulating the research hypotheses.

1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The three positions which grammar researchers take regarding explicit and implicit grammar teaching form the theoretical framework for this present study. Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005:61) and Ur (2009) identify them as the 'non-interface', the 'strong interface' and the 'weak interface' positions.

First, the non-interface position (Krashen 1985, 1993; Schwartz 1993; Ur 2009) states that the only information second language (L2) learners need to acquire the target language is that

which occurs naturally, and which is ‘positive evidence’ also known as ‘comprehensible input’. Krashen’s (1985) input hypothesis supports this position by maintaining that learning happens when learners are exposed to enough understandable input. The input is interacted with in a natural way (Long 1985). In other words, under this theoretical assumption there is no need for explicit teaching of grammar and of error correction as long as rich linguistic input (positive evidence) is given. The non-interface position led to the popularity of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in the late 1970s, in which the role of grammar instruction in L2 learning is downplayed (Nassaji and Fotos 2004). In CLT approaches, explicit teaching of grammar is often seen as “unhelpful and detrimental” (Nassaji and Fotos 2004:126). Moreover, the position was also supported by researchers such as Krashen (1982 cited in Nassaji and Fotos 2004:126) who believed that “language should be acquired through natural exposure, not learned through formal instruction.” In short, many reasons were advanced as to why grammar should not be taught explicitly.

Secondly, the strong interface position contrasts the former position by maintaining that knowledge that is learnt can be turned into acquired knowledge via adequate practice (DeKeyser 2010; DeKeyser and Criado-Sanchez 2012). Such acquired knowledge eventually becomes naturally available for use. Furthermore, where focus-on-form⁵ instruction is given explicitly, the gains are more than just implicit learning (DeKeyser 1998 in Ollerhead and Oosthuizen 2006, Hulstijn 1989). In other words, the position acknowledges the existence of the interface between learned knowledge and acquired knowledge and argues that the two types of knowledge can only merge into one with repeated practice.

Thirdly, the weak interface position states that learners have to be aware of the L2 material they are expected to acquire (Norris and Ortega 2001). Schmidt (1990, 1993 and 2001) and Nassaji and Fotos (2004:126) refer to it as ‘noticing’, which helps learners to “understand every aspect of second language acquisition”. The material should be placed in an environment or context where it is made visible enough. Noticing the material leads to its acquisition (Fotos 1993). In addition to this, White (1989) and Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013) support this position but add that ‘positive evidence’ needs to be compounded by ‘negative evidence’ – this means that L2 learners benefit from contrasting their first language (L1) with the target L2, to note areas of structural differences. In doing so, learners will better understand when it would be inappropriate to transfer L1 knowledge to the L2, and vice versa, when their L1 knowledge can

⁵ The term focus-on-form is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

assist them in mastering a structure. In the case of the present study, for example, learners who speak Sesotho as L1 have prepositions that are structurally more similar to English than learners who speak isiZulu as L1, and this might affect the acquisition process. The positions explained above apply to grammar learning. In terms of grammar instruction, the Teachability Hypothesis says that learners have to be mentally ready to acquire the material being taught (Ur 2009). The teaching of any material to any learner who is not yet ready to acquire it might be futile.

The discussed theoretical positions have stimulated much research in the field of L2 grammar learning, and today there are different positions taken by different researchers in this regard. Some maintain that grammar does not have to be taught explicitly to L2 learners, in line with the non-interface position (Celce-Mercia 1985, Halliday, 1978, Ellis 1993, Terrell 1991 and Kilfoil 1990). Such L2 scholars are in favour of implicit grammar teaching and learning. Other researchers, including Buys and Van Der Walt (1996), Ellis (2006, 2007) and Fotos and Ellis (1991) favour the strong interface position, by strongly advocating for explicit grammar teaching, or at least for a combination of explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods. Researchers in favour of explicit teaching argue that it is important for L2 learners to clearly see the form or forms they are learning. Further, to support this position, researchers presented “findings indicating that language learners cannot process target language input for both meaning and form at the same time” (Nassaji and Fotos 2004:128). Despite the continuing popularity of CLT approaches in many parts of the world, many researchers have established in more recent years that there is a need for formal grammar instruction in most L2 learning contexts, to ensure L2 accuracy. In the South African context specifically, researchers like Ayliff (2006, 2010), Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005) and Nell (2020) have argued that a CLT approach (and by extension an implicit grammar teaching approach) does not provide learners with sufficient opportunities to practise L2 (English) grammar, and they suggest that some explicit grammar teaching is necessary to ensure that learners acquire sufficient knowledge of structural forms.

This research will consider both the strong interface position and the weak interface position, since the researcher will teach English prepositions using both the explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods in a controlled study. Learners exposed to implicit grammar teaching will form a control group and will receive only normal lessons, following a CLT-oriented approach. Learners exposed to explicit grammar teaching in this study will form an experimental group and will be made aware of the forms they need to acquire, to ensure that

they notice it. They will also be given explicit feedback to help them correct their mistakes and errors. In line with the Teachability Hypothesis, the researcher will assume that the learners in this study (who are already at high school level) will be ready to acquire the material they are taught (Kilfoil 1990:21).

1.7. METHODOLOGY

This section briefly describes the research methodology that will be used in the research. The research will utilise a quantitative approach and will use a quasi-experimental design to collect quantitative data. The participants will be Grade 10 South African EFAL learners from a secondary school in the city of Tshwane. The participants will comprise of 60 isiZulu students and 60 Sesotho students. Each group will have 30 male and 30 female students of different ages ranging from 15 years old to 19 years old. The participants will be divided into two groups that will receive different types of grammar instruction. Group 1 (control group) will receive implicit instruction, which is in line the status quo at this school, while Group 2 (experimental group) will receive explicit instruction. The data gathering instruments will consist of a questionnaire, a pre-test, a post-test and a delayed post-test. The questionnaire will gather personal details about the participants. The pre-test will test the participants' knowledge of prepositions before the teaching intervention. The post-test will test the participants' understanding and mastery of prepositional phrases after the period of instruction. Finally, the delayed post-test will test the subjects' retention of grammar knowledge two months after the instruction was given.

1.8. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical framework discussed (and the literature that will be discussed in more details in Chapter 2), the following research hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1

South African EFAL learners who have been instructed via explicit grammar instruction methods will develop better knowledge of prepositions and prepositional phrases, in comparison to learners who were instructed via implicit grammar teaching methods.

Hypothesis 2

Sesotho learners might fare better with English PPs, given the fact that there should be positive transfer from their L1 to English.

The first hypothesis was postulated given existing evidence in South Africa that L2 learners of English need some explicit grammar teaching in order to acquire grammatical structures in the target language (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). The second hypothesis was postulated on the basis that the structural properties of prepositions in Sesotho are more similar to English than those of isiZulu, and that this structural similarity may allow L1 speakers of Sesotho to transfer linguistic knowledge from their L1 more effectively (again, this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2).

1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Notwithstanding the overall benefits this study seeks to bring to both the educator and the EFAL learner, the study still has its limitations. First, the sample of 120 Grade 10 EFAL learners at only one school is not representative of the population of Grade 10 EFAL learners in South Africa. Time constraints and other limitations in terms of resources meant that it was not possible for the researcher to carry out the same research at a much larger scale, and the results from this study can thus not be generalised.

Secondly, the study's focus is limited to the instruction of prepositions and prepositional phrases in English, and any effects associated with explicit (or implicit) instruction cannot automatically be extended to other aspects of English grammar.

Thirdly, the use of metalinguistic terms such as 'prepositions of means, instrument and location' may have placed the implicit grammar teaching (control) group at a disadvantage, especially in the post-tests. The researcher had assumed that the control group may have met these terms in any of the classes from Grade 7 to Grade 9 as the CAPS has prepositions that are taught at these grade levels. That notwithstanding, the CAPS does not explicitly use these terms to classify prepositions, and as such, the researcher concedes that using these terms in the testing instruments was a possible limitation of the study.

Finally, although the study will consider the effect of participants' first language in acquiring English prepositions, the research setting in fact consisted of multilingual learners (who speak Sepedi, isiZulu, isiXhosa, TshiVenda, XiTsonga, isiNdebele and Afrikaans in addition to their L1 and English). Trying to establish the effect of these other languages on the subjects' acquisition of the English prepositional phrase was beyond the scope of this study.

1.10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In view of the fact that prepositions do not receive much attention in the English FAL curriculum and given that there is not much literature on prepositions in terms of the syllabus content and textbooks, this research is important in that it will add to the existing body of knowledge on this topic specifically, and on similar topics generally. This study will provide information on the effectiveness of the two grammar teaching approaches (i.e. explicit versus implicit instructional methods). The study will potentially assist curriculum planners and developers of teaching and learning resources to decide how they should approach their respective roles and duties. This study will also provide EFAL teachers with practical knowledge in the areas of lesson planning and scheming when teaching PPs, with examples of suitable instructional materials, and with a better understanding of which content to teach and which grammar teaching methods to use.

1.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a general background to the study by examining the South African language landscape before and after 1994. It indicated that before the first all-inclusive elections in 1994, Afrikaans and English were official languages and were used as LoLTs, but after 1994 South Africa adopted 11 official languages, all of which are used as LoLTs in the foundation phase, after which learners switch to English as LoLT in Grade 4. The chapter also stated the research problem. It indicated how the researcher got to identify the problem and established the research aims, research objectives, the research questions and the hypotheses. The chapter finally provided a brief overview of theoretical positions regarding grammar teaching, in order to position the researchers' hypotheses. The chapter ended by highlighting the significance of the study, as well as the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 will review relevant literature. It will examine previous studies carried out to demonstrate the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods. Chapter 3 will discuss the research methodology and present the results from the pilot study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the main study and analyse them. Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss the importance and meaning of the results in the South African context. It will comment on the research questions, hypotheses and the usefulness of the study as informed by its results.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces key concepts and theories in the field of L2 instruction, focusing in particular on L2 grammar instruction. General aspects of grammar teaching and learning will be addressed, but the emphasis will be on the functions of prepositions as they appear cross-linguistically, and how/whether this grammatical form should be taught to L2 learners. In addition, the chapter identifies different categories of prepositions and suggests methods which can be used by learners to remember them, to explain them and use them in their daily productions. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework of the research and provides an overview of previous research that were carried out in the field of grammar teaching, focusing on the debate between explicit versus implicit instruction methods and on which of these are more effective in helping learners acquire aspects of grammar.

This chapter will also discuss the nature of the PP as a syntactic construct in Sesotho (also known as Southern Sotho) and in isiZulu. Ramone's (1997) study establishes that there are prepositions in Sesotho just like in other languages. Sesotho prepositions have both syntactic and semantic characteristics, and is a separate category just like the noun, adjective, verb and adverb. According to Ramone (1997) Sesotho prepositions can fulfil several functions, such as existing as a predicate, as an object, as an object of another preposition, as having a complement and functioning as a case marker. Some of these characteristics are exemplified later in this chapter. Mbeje (2005) indicates that, in isiZulu, prepositions are not used in the same way that they are used in English. However, in isiZulu there are adverbial forms whose functions are similar to those of the English prepositions. Although Mbeje holds this view, there are other studies on isiZulu prepositions which may differ from Mbeje (2005). The researcher, however, identified with Mbeje for the purposes of this study. The present study hypothesises that the different nature of prepositions in isiZulu could potentially cause challenges for isiZulu EFAL learners when acquiring English prepositions.

2.2. THE RATIONALE FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

This section first defines grammar teaching and examines the reasons for teaching grammar to L2 learners in general, and then focuses on the reasons for teaching prepositions specifically. Celce-Murcia (1985:466) observes that grammar is a tool or a resource that is used in the

“comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse” instead of something that is learnt just for the sake of it. Ellis (2006:84) defines grammar teaching as “presenting and explaining grammar”. Hedge (2000) views grammar teaching as largely composed of presenting concepts clearly to learners and giving them adequate time to practise. Ellis (ibid) considers grammar teaching as involving any teaching technique whose purpose is to draw students’ attention to a certain form of grammar, so as to help them understand it at different levels and consequently internalise it.

Ellis (2006) asks a number of questions concerning the issue of grammar teaching, including whether grammar should be taught or whether teachers should just create learning conditions that support the learning of grammar. Ellis (2006) also highlights other important points in the field, such as what grammar should be taught, when grammar should be taught and whether explicit grammatical instruction is valuable. Celce-Murcia (1985) maintains that grammar should not be taught as decontextualized sentences, because in this state grammar teaching is not useful to English Second language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This suggests that proper grammar teaching should be characteristically made up of the use of various contexts in which sentences are strung together to create meaning. To add to this, Celce-Murcia (ibid: 467) insists that proper grammar teaching should constitute the “teaching (of) grammar as meaning” in such a way that the meaning and function of grammatical categories (such as prepositions) are demonstrated. Grammar should be taught in relation to its social function and the discourse in which it will be used. Halliday (1978) was one of the first scholars who emphasised the idea that grammar should be taught as semantic functions. Teaching grammar as a function means there has to be some context in which words are used, so that it becomes clear to learners what function the grammatical item serves in the construction of meaning. Contexts could include everyday settings such as ‘at a bus stop’, ‘in a shop’, ‘in a taxi’, ‘attending an interview’, ‘asking and giving directions’ etc. In other words, contexts should involve transactional activities. In addition, a structural syllabus for grammar teaching should help to facilitate SLA. It should direct attention at raising awareness in the learners (Ellis 1993). Learners should engage in tasks so that they communicate about grammar and become aware of the rules of grammar, structures, functions and meanings. However, although there is consensus that “grammatical consciousness raising should be the basis of the secondary school syllabus...Current syllabuses do not adequately consider the language acquisition process” (Kilfoil 1990:19). The point is that if the syllabus is structured in such a

way that pertinent grammar issues are incorporated, then grammar teaching is more likely to achieve its purpose.

Terrell (1991:61) points out that grammar teaching can affect language acquisition positively, in that it (i) provides learners with “an advance organisation . . .to help the learner make sense of input as meaning”; (ii) “helps learners to focus on form in communication activities where there are many examples of a single meaning-form relationship”; and (iii.) “assists learners in monitoring their own output.” By implication, grammar learning helps to equip the learner with what he/she needs to express himself/herself accurately and to organise ideas clearly.

There are two polar positions and many different positions in between with regards to the structures that should (or should not) be taught (Ellis 2006). At the one end is ‘the minimalist position’ that argues that only very little grammar, made up of simple grammar rules such as the 3rd person -s and the past tense -ed should be taught (Krashen 1982). Krashen based his argument on his claim that most students are incapable of learning complex rules, and that only simple ones should be taught. This claim, however, is now disputed because there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. In their study of university students of English in Germany, Green and Hecht (1992) found that students were able to explain 85% of rules that would explain target language errors. Likewise, Macrory and Stone (2000) studied British students who proved to have acquired complex rules, such as the French perfect tense. Therefore, there is evidence that learners can actually learn complex grammar rules. The other pole constitutes the ‘comprehensive position’, which focuses on teaching all the grammar of the target language (Ellis 2006:84-85). In this regard, many course books and grammar practice material have been produced (Ellis 2006). However, because many students are capable of acquiring substantial L2 grammar without instruction and because there is too little time to teach every grammar rule, there is a need to be selective in terms of which items of grammar should be taught.

There has also been an interest in whether “the order of acquisition of instructed and naturalistic learners” is the same, whether instructed and naturalistic learners are equally successful in acquiring target language structures, and “whether attempts to teach specific grammatical structures resulted in their acquisition” (Ellis 2006:85). The literature suggests that the order of acquiring grammar is the same in instructed and naturalist learners. Furthermore, although instructed learners progress more rapidly and often outperform naturalist learners in the area of grammatical competence, instruction does not guarantee that taught material will be

acquired. Ellis (2006:85) concludes that “instruction contributes to both acquired knowledge as well as learned knowledge”. This means that instruction contributes to implicit and explicit knowledge.

In South Africa, the idea of teaching grammar in a functional manner is somewhat opaque, but some guidelines are provided in the curriculum. The CAPS 2011 document stipulates that the teaching of language structures should focus on the use of language/grammar in creating meaning. According to the CAPS 2011 document (Department of Basic Education 2011), language teaching should also develop learners’ grammar skills. The CAPS Document gives principles or guidelines that should be considered when teaching language structures. The following are the principles/guidelines as stipulated in the CAPS Document (Department of Basic Education 2011: 11).

- a) “Grammar should be taught for constructing texts in their context of use – it is concerned, in other words, with real language.
- b) The application of grammar should not be restricted to the analysis of isolated sentences – it should explain the way in which sentences are structured to construct whole texts such as stories, essays, and letters, reports which learners learn to read and write in school.
- c) Use of authentic materials such as dialogues, interviews, must be encouraged.
- d) Language structure should be linked with functional uses of language in different social settings e.g. expressing one’s thoughts or feelings; introducing people; talking about or reporting things, events or people in the environment, in the past or in the future, making requests, making suggestions, offering food or drinks and accepting or declining politely, giving and responding to instructions, comparing or contrasting things.
- e) Classroom activities that relate language forms with functions should be used, e.g. teach the past tense with a narrative essay and report writing; and teach the subjunctive mood with a reflective essay
- f) Focus on meaningful tasks. Acquiring the grammatical rules of the language does not necessarily enable the learner to use the language in a coherent and meaningful way. What interest us then concerns the structure and function beyond the sentence level, i.e. the way in which people use either spoken language (discourse) or written language (text) in coherent and meaningful way”.

The CAPS document accentuates that activities surrounding language teaching and learning should aim to develop the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). In addition, the methods that should be used to teach grammar must enable learners to master functional language, discourse or language that produces transactional texts. The focus is not on producing independent sentences, but on producing continuous pieces of writing that convey messages to the readers or texts that perform functions (like in the functional syllabus mentioned above). Added to that, the use of tangible learning materials for the learners to manipulate is encouraged so that the learners produce as many different transactional texts as possible. The classroom setting should be as interactive as possible, as learners often learn from their peers. So, the CAPS 2011 document instructs teachers to teach grammar ‘for real life’, rather than to perform well in tests and examinations only. By implication, L2 teachers should prepare their grammar lessons to teach learners to produce functional or transactional texts such as letters, dialogues, etc. This means that the learners should be exposed to learning environments that promote learner interaction and the use of learning resources such as books, work cards, recorders, CDs etc. to enable learners to practise the structures and concepts planned as much as possible. However, the CAPS 2011 document does not clearly stipulate the methodology to use to achieve the above outcomes. This creates problems in that teachers use trial and error methods to teach the syllabus.

2.3. EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT GRAMMAR TEACHING METHODS.

There are many grammar teaching methods from which L2 teachers can select. This section explains two ‘streams’ of grammar teaching methods, namely explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods. Ayliff (2006:6) defines the terms ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ in the context of language learning by saying “The terms implicit and explicit are generally used by most of the researchers to mean unconscious and conscious knowledge.” In this definition ‘explicit’ denotes awareness or consciousness while ‘implicit’ denotes subconsciousness or unawareness as one acquires or learns new things. Explicit grammar learning refers to a process in which learners acquire the structure of a language consciously (Ellis, Loewen and Erlam 2006). Teachers draw learners’ attention specifically to grammatical forms, often learning in an artificial environment and guide learners on what to focus on (e.g. learners are given highlighted work to read or are given instructions on what to look for in a passage or paragraph). Explicit knowledge comprises competence that learners learnt as a result of explicit instruction (Ellis 2006). Although there are many different ways to teach grammar explicitly, in traditional grammar teaching explicit instruction is associated with drills and rote learning.

Fotos (1998) and Wong and VanPatten (2003) warn against using these traditional practices, as there is sufficient evidence that they are not effective when used in isolation. Even so, Celce-Murcia (1985) insists that whatever methods, ESL teachers use; they should know the rules of English grammar.

Implicit learning, on the other hand, takes place naturally without learners being conscious of the processes through which they acquire language (Ellis, Loewen and Erlam 2006:340). In implicit learning, the learner is exposed to a natural situation in which he/she acquires the target language, and there is no formal attempt to draw learners' attention to different aspects of the target language grammar. One of the most commonly used implicit grammar teaching method is the recast, in which teachers correct the ungrammatical forms produced by learners by recasting the form correctly (but without drawing explicit attention to it) (Ammar 2008, Ammar and Spada 2006). Recasts will be discussed further in section 2.4.

Schmidt (1994) and Erlam (2006) state that although explicit and implicit knowledge and explicit and implicit learning are related, they should be treated separately. In spite of this relationship, there is no empirical evidence that implicit knowledge is entirely dependent on implicit learning because implicit learning can be a product of learners' conscious practice in linguistic forms or structures which they explicitly knew before.

Although some scholars have argued that L2 classrooms are artificial learning environments, they can provide conducive environments for the acquisition of grammar, in that the learners can be exposed to focused activities in which they interact while they acquire grammar (Ellis 1989). However, the teaching of grammar should be guided by theoretical positions to ensure that it is systematic. Linguists believe that there are generally three positions from which grammar can be taught. The first position is that grammar should be explicitly taught. This position is supported by researchers such as Celce-Murcia (1991:463), who maintains that adolescents and adults benefit greatly from some "explicit focus-on-form" instruction and Smith (1993:176), who holds that explicit grammar teaching helps learners to attend to the aspects of grammar that are being taught. The above-mentioned position is centred around the notion that learners taught in this way produce grammatical constructions, as they pay attention to those areas that they are meant to master (i.e. learners perform well when they know what the expected outcomes of a lesson are).

The second position to grammar teaching – the interactive way of grammar teaching – gained popularity in the 1980s. VanPatten (1993:432) observes that "During the last two decades,

language instructors have been encouraged to move toward more communicatively oriented approaches in the classroom”. These approaches seek to help learners acquire implicit knowledge. The most popular among such methods is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. It entails the learners interacting in classroom situations that depict various daily life experiences. In other words, the learners interact in situations where they use language in real life situations, and where there is little focus on grammatical form. Fotos and Ellis (1991:609) observe that the aim of CLT is to offer learners opportunities to “participate in interaction to exchange meaning rather than to learn the L2”. Essentially, CLT promotes implicit grammar learning, and the belief is that using CLT in the classroom leads to implicit knowledge about language structures.

Buyts and Van Der Walt (1996:83), refer to these two contradicting positions as the “code-communication dilemma”. To solve the dilemma some researchers have suggested that educators should adopt a third position with regards to grammar teaching – which essentially entails the combination of the two positions referred to above. Supporting this combined position are Celce-Murcia (1985:297), Fotos and Ellis (1991:609) and Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), who maintain that explicit grammar teaching integrated with CLT provide learners with opportunities to “participate in interaction...to exchange meaning rather than to learn the L2”, as well as opportunities to acquire specific forms. The authors insist that the aim is to reach a balanced teaching approach, somewhere in between the two opposing positions of “zero explicit grammar teaching and making grammar the core of our instruction”. Buyts and Van der Walt’s (1996:89) and Allen’s (1992:16) research studies showed that explicit grammar teaching and CLT may “provide support for each other in the classroom”.

Combining these teaching positions also accommodates the position of scholars such as Pica (1994), who argued that it is prudent to teach some grammar items, but better not to try and teach others. Pica (ibid) observes that although the CLT approach has become more popular than traditional grammar teaching methods in the past few decades, it is not as suitable for ESL / EFL learners whose contact with English is restricted to the classroom. Such learners need some explicit teaching of grammar, which is more in line with traditional direct approaches to L2 instruction (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell 1997). This idea is echoed by Ellis (2006:84) who maintains that grammar instruction exposes learners to opportunities to discover grammatical rules for themselves because it also draws the learners’ attention to specific grammatical form or structures that should be acquired. Furthermore, Pica (1994:494) discusses the notion of ‘negotiation’, which entails focusing on a specific type of interaction.

This assists learners to understand the meaning of language. During negotiation, learners interact with each other using modified and restructured input and thus, they “anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (Pica: 1994:494). Learners ‘work’ with language to achieve the needed understanding. During the process of negotiation, learners engage in different activities such as “repeating a message verbatim, adjusting its syntax, changing its words, or modifying its form and meaning...” (Pica: 1994:494). Thus, learners pay attention to vocabulary and to grammar to try to understand meanings of words and to note how different words are used in new or even familiar contexts.

In addition to what has been mentioned already, it is useful to reflect on the two principal categories of conditions that have to be met to facilitate L2 learning. These categories, according to Pica (1994) are “learner-oriented conditions and language-oriented conditions”. Pica (1994: 500) lists the factors to consider under each of the two categories. With regards to learning oriented conditions, the first factor is the negotiation process, which was discussed in the previous paragraph. The second factor has to do with “learner production of modified output”, which is “also necessary for L2 mastery”. This means that what learners produce must be adjusted or corrected or rephrased or reacted on, to ensure that it is clearly understood by interlocutors. So, learners should be able to use words correctly both morphologically and syntactically. Learners’ productions should be free of vagueness or ambiguity. This implies that the productions should have no elements of communication breakdown and that learners should be able to “organise and restructure their output systematically” (Pica *ibid*: 500). The third factor with regards to learner orientations emphasises that attention should be given “to L2 forms as the learners try to process meaningful input and attempt to master structural features that are difficult to learn...”. To reiterate the points mentioned already, focusing on form(s) is a way of explicit teaching of grammar because learners have to examine the specific items of grammar and therefore get opportunities to master those specific grammatical items.

The language-oriented factors include: “positive L2 input ...that is grammatically systematic ... (and) is able to serve the learning process” Pica (1994: 502). In this case the input given facilitates learning rather than works against learning. Input should be comprehensible; and should be clearly worded and unambiguous. Secondly, Pica (1994: 502) examines “...enhanced input which makes subtle L2 features more salient for learners ...”. In this case the input helps learners to identify the forms that appear in the L2 and those which do not. Such input helps the learners to draw distinctions between their L1s and the L2 and thus avoid mistakes and

errors stemming from wrong conclusions based on the learner's transfer of L1 knowledge the L2.

2.4 RESEARCH ON EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTION AND FEEDBACK

This section discusses some of the research studies that have been carried out to establish the efficacy of explicit and implicit grammar instruction and feedback in L2 learning. Many researchers have conducted studies in an attempt to find out if EFL learners benefit from explicitly taught rules, and to establish if knowing grammar rules increases learners' accuracy. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) provide a useful overview of different studies that investigated the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the acquisition of specific grammar items. Corrective feedback refers to the response made to learners' erroneous utterances. The response can indicate explicitly that there is an error in an utterance or can provide metalinguistic information about the nature of the error (Ellis, Loewen and Erlam 2006). Corrective feedback is implicit when someone (e.g. a teacher) repeats an utterance that contained an error, but instead of uttering the error, the utterance is repeated (i.e. re-cast) in its grammatical form.

Earlier intervention studies that compared explicit and implicit corrective feedback include those of Carroll, Roberge and Swain (1992), Carroll and Swain (1993), Nagata (1993) and DeKeyser (1993). Many of these studies demonstrated that explicit feedback is of value. Carroll et al. (1992), for example, found that a group of L2 learners that received explicit corrective feedback directed at two complex French noun suffixes (*-age* and *-ment*) outperformed a group that received no feedback (although it was not possible to generalise the finding to the learning of nouns not presented during the intervention). Carroll and Swain (1993) studied the effect of different types of feedback on dative verbs in L2 Spanish learners. The subjects were divided into 5 groups: Group A received direct metalinguistic feedback, Group B received explicit rejection, Group C received recasts, Group D received indirect metalinguistic feedback and Group E was the control group (no feedback). Following the feedback sessions, the groups were given recall production tasks. The results showed that all the treatment groups outperformed the control group and that the group that received direct metalinguistic feedback outperformed all the other groups. Notably, all the types of feedback were better than no feedback at all. A similar finding was reported by Nagata (1993), who studied the acquisition of Japanese passive structures, verbal predicates and particles in L2 Japanese learners. The participants were given either direct feedback, to indicate what was missing and what was not

expected in their responses, or direct feedback plus metalinguistic explanations of the various structures. Following the intervention, the group that received direct feedback and metalinguistic explanations significantly outperformed the group that only received direct feedback (notably only on particles, not on verbal predicates). Nagata also reported that learners preferred metalinguistic explanations. DeKeyser (1993) investigated 25 Dutch high school seniors learning L2 French on a variety of morphosyntactic features. The respondents received either extensive explicit corrective feedback during normal class activities or limited explicit corrective feedback. Following the intervention, the learners were tested using oral tasks, picture description tasks, story-telling and fill in the blank tasks. The results showed that there was no significant difference in performance between the two groups (both groups showed similar enhanced performance). This study suggested that learners benefited equally from explicit error correction, irrespective of the extensiveness of the error corrections that they received.

Research conducted around the turn of the century on the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar feedback include studies such as Kim and Mathes (2001), Havranek and Cesnik (2003), Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001), Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) and Ayliff (2006), to mention but a few. In contrast to the studies discussed earlier, many of these studies focused on the effectiveness of implicit grammar feedback techniques, such as using recasts. Nicholas et al. (2001) provided an overview of research on recasts. They report that, in general, studies on recasts show that implicit feedback of this kind can have a beneficial effect on acquisition, especially when the recasts are more explicit in nature (as in Doughty and Varela 1998). One study that found that implicit feedback was as effective as explicit feedback was conducted by Kim and Mathes (2001). They did a quasi-experimental study with 20 Korean adult EFAL learners (advanced beginners and intermediate), focusing on the acquisition of dative verbs. The participants received either explicit metalinguistic feedback or recasts, in two sessions which were one week apart. In the controlled production tasks that followed, there was no significant difference in performance between the two groups, suggesting that the two types of feedback had similar effects in facilitating the acquisition of the target structures. However, as with many intervention studies, the weakness of this study was that the authors did not test the effect of the two types of feedback in a delayed post-test. There also does not seem to be complete agreement about the effectiveness of implicit feedback, in comparison to explicit feedback. Havranek and Cesnik (2003), for example, found that elicited explicit self-correction and explicit rejection followed by a recast were more

effective than recasts alone. Their data consisted of 1700 corrective feedback episodes in English lessons at university level, and focused on a variety of English phonological, lexical and grammatical features. Havranek and Cesnik's results suggested that the two explicit corrective feedback types were more effective in helping the learners achieve the target structures. Thus, evidence shows that although both types of feedback can be effective, recasts that are more explicit in nature tend to be more effective than recasts that are entirely implicit (Doughty and Varela 1998, Ellis and Sheen 2006).

Pica (1994: 502) holds that feedback and negative input provide students with metalinguistic information regarding the "clarity, accuracy, and / or comprehensibility of their interlanguage ...". When learners get feedback, they examine what they have done correctly and what they have done incorrectly, and then correct their errors. Although corrective feedback is seen as negative input, it does not confuse learners, nor does it discourage them. Rather, it complements the positive feedback and thus enhances learners' comprehension. In fact, many studies showed that learners prefer to get explicit feedback on their language errors, and that learners are eager to understand the rules that govern the target language structure. Ayliff (2006), for example, replicated the study conducted by Green and Hecht (1992). In the original study, Green and Hecht (1992) studied 300 German high schools learners (250 were L1 German speakers and 50 L1 English speakers), while Ayliff (2006) studied 264 undergraduate South African students, who all did courses in English, and the majority of whom were L2 speakers of English (a small group of L1 speakers also participated). In both studies, respondents were given a grammar task made up of 12 sentences. Each of the sentences had an underlined error as shown in the following examples: *As you know lives my aunt on a farm* and *Most of the time, I've played tennis*. The respondents had to mention the violated rule and correct the error. The results from Ayliff's study corroborated those of Green and Hecht. Both studies showed that in cases where the respondents were able to explain the rule, they were always able to correct the sentences. These studies showed that explicit knowledge of rules enabled students to correct grammar errors. Ayliff (2006) believes that focusing on forms could also help adult and high school students to produce "more accurate written discourse".

Norris and Ortega (2000) conducted a study to "understand the effectiveness of L2 instruction using a research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis". The study considered studies from 1980 to 1998 which included quasi-experimental investigations. In this meta-analysis, Norris and Ortega (2000:428-429) formulated research questions to guide them to investigate i) the overall usefulness of teaching specific concepts in a second language, ii) the effectiveness of

different types of teaching methods and iii) the impact of the type of construct taught on the effectiveness of the intervention, iv) whether the length of the intervention impacts the effectiveness of the intervention, and finally v) whether the effect of instruction is long- or short-lived. With regards to their first research question, Norris and Ortega found that, generally speaking, instructional treatments are quite effective. Effect sizes aggregated across 49 studies showed that focused L2 instructional treatments consistently led to higher scores on the measured L2 variables (as assessed in post-tests) – and that the aggregated effect size ($d=0.96$) was not only indicative of consistent differences but also of substantial differences. Regarding their second research, Norris and Ortega found that a comparison of the Focus on Form (FonF) and Focus on Forms (FonFS) led to a different finding than when explicit and explicit instruction was compared. Both FoF and FonFS had large average effect sizes, and observed differences between these grammar teaching methods were not trustworthy; i.e. research suggested no difference in the effectiveness of FoF and FoFS. In contrast, interventions including a broad and explicit focus on a grammar (e.g. presentation of rules, focused practice, error correction and rule review) were found to be more effective than implicit intervention that had no such focus. Regarding their third research question, Norris and Ortega found that “although particular outcome measure types may result in very different observations about the effectiveness of a treatment, outcome measure types probably did not account for overall differences observed among different instruction treatment types” (p. 487). In looking at the role of the length of a treatment, the meta-analysis showed no clear relationship between the length of a treatment and type of intervention, and although there was some indication that interventions that were shorter than two hours led to a larger effect, the authors concluded that for a meta-analysis to make sense of this variable, the authors of primary research need to treat *length of intervention* as an experimental variable in its own right. With regard to their final question, the researchers observed that “the effectiveness of focused instructional treatments did seem to decrease from immediate post-test to delayed post-test observations...” (p. 488). Thus, the retention capacity of learners in all intervention groups seemed to decrease as the time goes by. Even so, the effects of L2 instruction was found to be “durable” (p. 500), since average effect sizes of delayed post-tests remained large.

Norris and Ortega (2000) concluded that although existing primary research has come a long way in answering overarching questions about the effectiveness of different types of L2 instruction, some limitations (at the turn of the century) necessitated further research. Firstly, in terms of study designs, there have been too many studies that did not include a true control

group, study designs have been overcomplicated and there has not been sufficient replication of variables in research studies on the topic of L2 instruction – what this means, essentially, is that there is not enough (robust) data to reach firm conclusions about any given variable (such as *type of instruction or method to use for any particular outcome variable*). Secondly, in terms of data analysis, authors have often presented only the results of statistical significance tests as evidence of the effectiveness of a treatments, without providing clear descriptive statistics, and without considering the sample size, the potential influence of sampling error and the importance of considering effect sizes when reaching conclusions. Finally, a limitation of research around the turn of the century was that researchers often did not clearly report all the variables at play, which makes it very difficult to enable replication of specific variables in future research. In their conclusion, Norris and Ortega (2000) stated that more research needs to be conducted in order to establish whether the order of effectiveness of instructional types observed in their meta-analysis (explicit FonF > explicit FoFS > implicit FonF > implicit FoFS) is indeed correct.

Erlam (2003:242) compared the effectiveness of two types of instruction, namely isolated grammar instruction (deductive instruction) and focusing on form with no explicit grammar instruction (inductive instruction) on measures of both comprehension and production. The study went further to “investigate the interactions between type of instruction and the morphological and syntactical features involved in the acquisition of direct object pronouns in French as a second language”. The study argued that there was a significant advantage for the deductive instruction group, supporting earlier findings of Carroll and Swain (1993), Nagata (1993) and DeKeyser (1993). However, Erlam (ibid:243) acknowledges that there is “conflicting evidence as to the effectiveness of these two instructional approaches”. For instance, Herron and Tomasello (1992) found that inductive instruction has an overall advantage, while Rosa and O’Neill (1999) and Shaffer (1989) found no significant differences between the two approaches (even though Shaffer reported a trend favouring the inductive approach). Previous research thus not only shows that there is evidence in favour of each of the approaches, but also shows that in some cases there is no difference in terms of the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit instruction, or that differences are insignificant.

Tapping into the meta-analysis of Norris and Ortega (2000), Spada and Tomita (2010) also conducted a meta-analysis “to investigate the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on the acquisition of simple and complex grammatical features in English...in which...the instructional treatments were classified as explicit or implicit, following Norris and Ortega

(2000)". Spada and Tomita (2010) found a "larger effect size for explicit over implicit instruction for simple and complex features". Their study further found that "explicit instruction positively contributes to learners' controlled knowledge and spontaneous use of complex and simple forms", but that the effects under discussion can be mixed. They cite Williams and Evans (1998) who "examined the effects of implicit and explicit instruction on the acquisition of two features of English that were contrasted as easy and difficult...". The study revealed that explicit instruction worked better with adjectives (easy), while explicit and implicit instruction were equally effective for the passive voice (difficult). So, clearly, these research results show that in some cases the two teaching methods can be either equally effective or one may be better than the other. Commenting on Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis, Spada and Tomita (2010:289) observed that "the overall findings of this meta-analysis indicate that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction for both simple and complex features...". This observation adds to the evidence that suggests that in many of the studies examined in this section, explicit instruction seems to be more effective than implicit instruction in helping learners to acquire a second language, but that this effect does depend on the structure being taught.

As was seen above, the majority of studies conducted after 2000 seem to suggest that explicit grammar instruction is more effective than implicit grammar instruction in older L2 learners. Research on the topic over the past ten years thus moved to related issues, such as the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction in younger L2 learners, the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction compared to previously underexplored implicit techniques, such as input enhancement, the effect of explicit grammar instruction on fluency (instead of accuracy) and longevity of knowledge gains after explicit grammar instruction.

In a study that focused on explicit grammar instruction in young learners, Spit, Andringa, Rispens and Aboh (2021) reported on the effect of explicit instruction on the acquisition of a morphosyntactic agreement marker in 103 Dutch-speaking children (mean age = 5;7). Their results did not support the idea that explicit teaching would lead to higher accuracy rates, but they did find that explicit training led to earlier predictive eye movements. In another study with fairly young learners, Chan (2018) compared the use of explicit instruction versus implicit instruction to teach the English simple past tense to 9-year old EFAL learners in Hong Kong. 66 learners were assigned to three different forms of intervention: (1) processing instruction (i.e. metalinguistic explanation of the simple past tense and structured input, to assist learners in making form-meaning connections), (2) traditional or explicit instruction (i.e. metalinguistic

explanation of English simple past and a predetermined set of form-focused activities) and (3) implicit instruction (i.e. no explicit explanation of grammatical rules – learners are only exposed to the English simple past through passages that contain the structure). The results indicated that the processing instruction group showed the most significant gains in the post-test (interpretation) task. Traditional explicit instruction was also more effective than implicit instruction in supporting L2 acquisition of the English simple past in this particular sample. These studies provide tentative evidence that explicit instruction might make a difference when young children learn a grammatical element – a finding that contradicts previous beliefs that young children do not benefit from explicit grammar instruction.

Some recent studies compared explicit instruction and input enhancement (a lesser-studied implicit instruction technique), in an attempt to determine which of these are more effective in developing EFL learners' knowledge of grammatical structures. Moradi and Farvardin (2016) compared the effectiveness of input-based techniques (implicit instruction), meaning-based output techniques, and traditional explicit instruction in the instruction of 120 junior high school Iranian EFL learners. The participants were divided into four groups, namely, textual enhancement (e.g. underlining target structures in the text – implicit instruction), input flood (i.e. increasing the number of times the students encounter the target structure in the text – implicit instruction), meaning-based output (i.e. learners have to produce meaningful outputs that contain the target structure) and traditional or explicit instruction. Data consisted of a multiple choice grammar test and a written production test. Moradi and Farvardin's results suggested that the learners in the input enhancement and input flood groups fared better in the English structures assessed than those in the meaning-based output and traditional instruction groups. Thus, their study provided evidence that some implicit grammar instruction techniques are more effective than traditional explicit instruction. In contrast to Moradi and Farvardin (2016), Hirakawa, Shibuya and Endo (2019) found no evidence that input flooding had a positive effect on the English grammar knowledge of Japanese EFL adult learners. The element of concern in this study was adjective ordering, and input flooding was compared to explicit instruction and natural exposure (study abroad). Learners in the input flood group received positive evidence, containing multiple adjectives over a period of 15 weeks, while learners in the explicit instruction group received explicit teaching of the same adjectives over a three-week period. Learners in the natural exposure group participated in three or five-week intensive study-abroad programs in North America. The findings suggested that only the explicit instruction group showed improved knowledge of adjective ordering in the post-test. Learners

in the input flood and natural exposure groups did not show significant gains in their knowledge of adjective order restrictions in the post-test.

Bakhshandeh and Jafari (2018) compared the effectiveness of input enhancement and explicit instruction in developing explicit knowledge of the simple present and simple past passive voice. 48 lower-intermediate EFL Iranian students participated in this quasi experimental study, which included two experimental groups and one control group. The explicit instruction group was explicitly taught on selected passive forms, while the enhanced input group received the same passages, but with the target passive forms enhanced through underlining and bolding. The control group read the same texts but received no enhancement or explicit instruction. Learners' explicit knowledge of the passive voice was measured with a grammaticality judgement test and a metalinguistic knowledge test. The results from an ANOVA analysis indicated that explicit instruction was significantly more effective in developing explicit knowledge of the passive voice. It would seem then, that the effectiveness of implicit teaching techniques such as input flooding and input enhancement might be dependent on the learners and the structure that is being targeted.

Not many studies have investigated the long-term effect of explicit grammar instruction. One fairly recent study that considered this issue was conducted by Umeda, Snape, Yusa and Wiltshier (2017). They looked into the long-term effect of explicit instruction on learners' knowledge of English articles. Three groups, namely a treatment group (explicit instruction), a control group (implicit instruction) and a native English speaker group participated in the study. The L2 instruction groups received instruction focusing on the target structures over a nine-week period. The results from the delayed post-tests showed that the explicit group did improve, but that after one year, little explicit knowledge about the target structure was retained. This result begs the question whether the positive effects so often observed for explicit instruction are long-lasting. Newer longitudinal work (Gombert, Keijzer and Verspoor 2018; Piggott et al. 2018; Rouse-Malpat al. 2018.) has begun to focus on complexity, accuracy *and fluency* (especially in writing) in learners' output (i.e. from learners who received either more implicit or more explicit instruction). In these studies, explicit teaching included explicit explanation of grammar rules and drills, working through a traditional course books or using the L1 to explain grammar rules. Implicit teaching, in these studies, typically used the communicative language teaching method. The results of these longitudinal studies suggest enhanced fluency benefits for learners in the implicit instruction groups (compared to the explicit instruction groups) in both speech and writing. In addition, accuracy levels were equal

to, or better than that of the explicit groups. These studies are important, as they provide evidence for the idea that, in the long run, implicit instruction might be more beneficial for L2 learners than explicit instruction. Although the present study is not truly longitudinal, the researcher hopes to contribute to this debate, by including a post-test in the research design.

In the next section, the focus will move to the target structure that is of interest in this study, namely prepositions. Prepositions will be explained in general, where after the nature of prepositions will be explained in English, Sesotho and isiZulu. The rationale for this discussion is that it informs one of the research hypotheses of the study (that isiZulu learners may struggle more to acquire English prepositions than Sesotho learners, given the dissimilar nature of isiZulu and English in terms of prepositions). Finally, the section will move to a discussion of how prepositions were commonly taught in the past, and how instructors approach the instruction of this aspect of grammar today.

2.5. LEARNING AND TEACHING OF PREPOSITIONS

According to Koffi (2010:297) prepositions are defined as items that serve the purpose of ‘linking nouns, pronouns, and phrases to other words in a sentence’. Prepositions indicate a place or time. Prepositions of place indicate the location of things such as *under* or *behind*. Lam (2009) explains that prepositions are lexical items that relate to locations, time and space. Lam observes that acquiring prepositions is very important in developing a good understanding of a language, because they are used frequently. Lam believes prepositions should be systematically learnt. Although most definitions mainly refer to prepositions’ role in establishing time, location and space, they are also used to indicate other aspects such as agent, means, manner and direction.

2.5.1. Understanding English prepositions

Lorincz and Gordon (2012:3) maintain that “Prepositions are probably one of the trickiest areas of English grammar”, yet they are not often studied systematically. Prepositions are better learnt in context and with accompanying nouns and verbs – they should thus be part of phrases rather than on their own in order for their function to be understood. Since prepositions tend to be widely used in language, students should be able to identify them in different contexts. Lorincz and Gordon (2012) further explain the complexity of learning and teaching prepositions by indicating that because there are so many English prepositions, it is very difficult for ESL learners to master them all. The English language has 60-70 prepositions,

which are far much more than most other languages. As a result, the use of English prepositions may not be systemised, which makes it more difficult to acquire them. Drawdy (2016) supports this idea by observing that some people consider it wrong to end a sentence with a preposition, but a strict rule like this is not appropriate in all cases. For example, prepositions can be placed at the end of sentences which have phrasal verbs (a phrasal verb is made up of many words one of which is always a preposition). This, constructions such as *He tried to cheer her up* and *My name was left out*, are grammatical.

Prepositions can be hard to understand as the same preposition can be used to convey many different meanings. In other words, the same form can have many functions. The following examples to demonstrate this complexity of the English prepositions *in*, *on* and *at* were adapted from Inezan and Najim (2013:10). Consider the preposition *in* as demonstrated below.

In is used for unspecific times during a day, month, season, and year, for example:

- (1) People eat breakfast *in* the morning.
- (2) Calendar year semesters start *in* February.

In is also used to indicate a location or place, for example:

- (3) We always sleep *in* a hotel when we visit places where we don't have relatives.
- (4) All assignments and examination scripts for UNISA students are marked *in* Pretoria.

Another function of *in* is to indicate a shape, colour or size, for example:

- (5) You find this type of paint *in* blue only.
- (6) The late students walked *in* a single file towards the garden.
- (7) That suit comes *in* four different sizes.

In is used to indicate the meaning 'while doing something' like shown below:

- (8) *In* preparing for the exams, she visited the library every day.
- (9) You need to be vigilant *in* babysitting two-year-olds.

Lastly, *in* is used to indicate a belief, opinion, interest or feeling as shown below:

- (10) Christians believe *in* life after death.
- (11) I believe *in* corporal punishment for offenders.
- (12) People eat breakfast *in* the morning.
- (13) She is interested *in* reading romantic novels

Other prepositions, such as *on* and *at* fulfil a similarly large number of functions. Consider the functions of *on*.

Firstly, *on* is used to express a surface of something:

- (14) The cup is *on* the table.
- (15) His books are *on* the floor.

On is also used to specify days and dates:

- (16) Most people go to church *on* Sundays.
- (17) My son was born *on* 24 June 1997.

On is further used to indicate a machine or device as in the examples below:

- (18) She will fail her examinations; she is always *on* the phone texting instead of studying.
- (19) Which movies are *on* TV tonight?

On is also used to indicate a part of the body:

- (20) There are ugly spots *on* her face.
- (21) Some married people like to show off rings *on* their fingers.

The last function of *on* is to indicate the state of something as in these examples:

- (22) We like taking advantage of sales so most of the commodities *on* sale fly off the shelves.
- (23) The principal called the fire brigade when the library was *on* fire.

The final preposition in this section that demonstrates the complexity of this class is the preposition *at*. *At* is used to point out a specific time, for example:

(24) The match starts *at* 15h00.

(25) The Gautrain leaves OR Tambo Station *at* 10h00.

At is used also to indicate a place, for example:

(26) His parents grounded him so he spends all his free time *at* home.

(27) Some people like to relax *at* the park.

Another function of *at* is to indicate an email address as in:

(28) Please email me those documents *at* covenantsunganochimbeva@gmail.com

At can also indicate an activity such as in:

(29) He is good *at* hunting.

(30) Mr Moyo laughed *at* his daughter's acting and that discouraged her.

In order to fully acquire the use of prepositions, all these different functions have to be understood, which makes it a difficult Part of Speech to master. Lam (2009) observes that because they contain few syllables, prepositions are usually difficult to recognise especially in oral speech. Many prepositions are monosyllabic and short, such as *at*, *on*, *for*, and *to*. Consequently, learners find it difficult to recognise them. If the prepositions are difficult to recognise it follows that the learners may not even know that they have made an error(s) regarding the use of a preposition and may not be able to correct the errors and or mistakes they make.

Prepositions can also be used as other Parts of Speech, including predicates, objects, objects of other prepositions and subjects (Ramone 1997). The use of prepositions as predicates is limited mostly to imperatives. Consider the following examples adapted from Ramone (ibid: 33):

(31) *Down* Spot

(32) *Out, out* damned Spot!

(33) *Up, up* and away!

(34) He *downed* the ball

It is important here to note how the sentences are constructed. In examples 31, 32 and 33 the sentences have no verbs, but the prepositions illustrate what is to be done or where the dog, Spot should go. In example 34, the preposition acts as the verb and the ball receives the action of being downed.

Another function is the preposition as an object. This use of the PP is not frequent, and it not readily available in all languages, which may create problems for ESL learners. Consider examples 35 and 36:

(35) They discussed *after the holidays*.

(36) They considered *after the holidays* to be too late *for a family gathering*.

As mentioned above, prepositions can also function as objects of other prepositions. Examples in this category are as follows:

(37) She crawled from *under the table*.

(38) Mr Moyo picked up a ball *from under the table*.

(39) We don't meet until *after the show*.

Finally, prepositions function as the subject of a sentence. Consider the following examples:

(40) *Between six and seven* suits her very well.

(41) *Across the road* was swarming with bees.

Understanding prepositions in English entails knowing that prepositions and PPs can be used as other Parts of Speech, as shown above. This complicates the acquisition of the category. According to Lam (2009), another reason why understanding English prepositions are challenging for EFAL learners is that prepositions appear differently in the learners' L1 than in English. As a result, negative transfer of linguistic knowledge from the L1 to English often happens. Learners typically cannot depend on their L1 knowledge only, since making assumptions of semantic equivalence between the use of prepositions in the L1 and L2 usually results in the erroneous use of prepositions. Inezan and Najim (2013) agree that difference in the number; meaning and usage of prepositions in a learner's L1 and L2 create difficulties for learners. Martel (2012:4) observes one such difference by stating that "students whose L1 has

postpositions rather than prepositions might never fully get the hang of which is which in ‘A is under B’.

Teachers should bear in mind that EFAL learners are likely to try and transfer their L1 knowledge to L2 situations, and that this may lead to errors. Many studies have reported that EFAL learners make an abundance of prepositional errors. In fact, such errors constitute the majority of syntactical errors in EFAL student’s speech and writing. Delija and Koruti (2013:5), concurring with Inezan and Najim (ibid), indicate that non-native speakers of English tend to have three types of problems with prepositions which are “choosing the wrong prepositions, omitting a needed preposition and using an extra preposition where one is not needed”. These types of errors will be discussed in more detail in section 2.5.5.1.

2.5.2. Challenges in teaching prepositions

As mentioned in the preceding section, prepositions pose many challenges to EFAL learners. By extension, this means that EFAL teachers might face challenges in teaching English prepositions. One of the biggest challenges is that, in order to ensure a deep understanding of prepositions, teachers have to teach *all* the different functions of individual prepositions (as demonstrated in the linguistic examples in the previous sections). Zindela, Mkhize, Ndlangamandla and Makoe (2013) observe that if prepositions or prepositional phrases are placed in incorrect positions in sentences, they can create confusion. Furthermore, sentences can often be interpreted in more than one way, depending on the position of the preposition. Zindela et al (ibid) provide the following example to demonstrate this confusion:

(42) The boy (past) saw a man with a telescope

In this sentence the confusion lies in the fact that there is ambiguity. The sentence could be understood as ‘the boy used a telescope to see a man’, or it can mean ‘the man who was carrying a telescope who was seen by the boy’. By implication, prepositions and prepositional phrases require careful planning and preparation on the part of the educator before he/she teaches them, in order to avoid confusing learners unnecessarily. In this regard Boquist (2009) warns against defining prepositions in abstract ways in the EFAL classroom, because in doing so the teacher, more often than not, uses one preposition to define another. This is problematic if the learner does not know the meaning of one or of both of the prepositions. Boquist (2009) advises that it is always advisable to demonstrate or illustrate rather than define the meaning of prepositions. Doing so makes abstract concepts more concrete. For example, explaining *on* to the student by

taking a ball and putting it *on* the table is easier than to say, “To be *on* something is to be located *over* it and still touching it”. Boquist (2009) complains about the lack of appropriate sections in EFAL textbooks that deal with prepositions, which further complicates the teaching of English prepositions. Text books written for L1 English learners are not always suitable for EFAL learners, as their explanations tend to be too abstract. As a solution, Boquist (ibid) makes use of pictures to show different objects in relation to other objects or in relation to space.

2.5.3. Approaches to teaching prepositions

Earlier in this chapter, the researcher discussed some studies in which explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods were employed to teach other language structures. This section focuses on how the same methods were used to teach prepositions.

2.5.3.1. The traditional approach

The traditional method of teaching preposition was through explicit grammar instruction, typically via pattern drills. Students focus on learning prepositions individually within each context, with no further explanation. This approach assumes that there is no predictability in the use of prepositions, and that they must simply be learned context by context (Lam 2009). Lam’s (2009) study revealed that students who were taught using this traditional method had little confidence in their ability to use prepositions properly and had minimal retention rates. According to Lam (2009) it is futile for learners to try to remember prepositions used out of context because different prepositions mean different things and in some cases one preposition can mean different things. Thus, it becomes prudent that language instructors must explore more explanatory methods when teaching prepositions. The point is that it is not necessarily the case that an explicit method of grammar teaching produces learners who understand concepts – it does depend on the type of explicit instruction. Traditional approaches such as drills and rote-learning are no longer favoured, as evidence suggests these types of instruction do not lead to implicit knowledge of target language structures.

2.5.3.2. The collocation approach

The second approach is the collocation approach, which comes as an alternative to the traditional approach. ‘Collocation’ refers to words that exist together in contexts. The terms ‘chunk’ ‘formulaic sequence’, ‘word co-occurrence (WCO) and ‘collocation’ are used interchangeably in different studies’ (Mueller 2011:484). The collocation method focuses on

words that should be processed as a group, rather than as individual words. Thus, instead of teaching prepositions individually, teachers can teach prepositions using ‘chunks’ or words that often occur together. This method is advantageous for several reasons. First, research has shown that learners of all ages are sensitive to the frequencies of linguistic input (Mueller 2011:481). Frequency-based learning is built upon the idea that humans naturally process groups of words as a single unit. Children, for example, often express phrases as single words, such as *alotta* instead of *a lot of* or *gimme* instead of *give me*. Secondly, chunk learning is thought to be a precursor step to linguistic pattern analysis. Mueller (ibid) maintains that such associative learning is necessary to account for the acquisition of irregular forms and rigidly fixed idioms. In addition, researchers believe that such forms may be stored as chunks initially, but after repeated exposure, they are more analysed by the learner. Thirdly, teaching prepositions through collocations allows for the use of corpora and concordance lines (Mueller (ibid: 481). This means that it allows for learning of specific vocabulary related to the selected themes, which is the basis for teaching registers.

2.5.3.3. The prototype approach

The third method is the prototype approach. Both Lindstromberg (1996) and Lam (2009) argue that teaching prepositions in an explanatory, semantically-based manner allows for deeper learning, increased learner confidence, and longer rates of retention. Both of their studies are based on Lakoff’s prototype theory. This theory claims that prepositions have multiple meanings, but one meaning is thought to be the most dominant, or prototypical. In the case of prepositions, the spatial, physical meaning is considered to be the prototype. For example, the preposition *on* has multiple meanings, but the prototypical definition is ‘contact of an object with a line of surface’.

The prototypical meaning of prepositions should be taught first and other meanings should follow later, by extending the prototypical meaning. This approach involves the teaching of the main meaning (prototype) more than other meanings (after all, prepositions are polysemous). In addition, teachers can use activities that show the differences between the prototypical meaning and the other meanings of the same preposition.

Following the brief introduction of broad approaches to teach prepositions, the next section will focus on specific methods that are used to teach prepositions.

2.5.4. Methods to teach prepositions

Before introducing the methods which the researcher thinks should be used to teach prepositions, it is useful to first consider how prepositions are typically taught in EFAL in the Grade 7-9 in the South African context. In sections 2.5.4.1 – 2.5.4.3, I provide a more in-depth discussion on how prepositions are taught in the senior phase level by most EFAL teachers, and I highlight problems with these instructional methods. In section 2.5.4.4, I conclude this section by explaining how prepositions ought to be taught, in my opinion.

2.5.4.1. Teaching and learning prepositions at Grade 7 level

Lloyd, Avery, Edwards, Gordon, Aston, Hendricks and Hendricks (2013:104-105) presented the idea of teaching prepositions in context, and theorised that a better way to help learners understand prepositions (rather than drilling these forms) is to teach the forms in context. Lloyd et al. (2013) presented learners with the following poem, by Bonnie Nims:

I go
Through Sunday's tunnel, hushed and deep;
Up Monday's mountain, craggy and steep;
Along Tuesday's trail, winding and slow;
Into Wednesday's woods, still halfway to go;
Over Thursday's bridge, shaky and tall;
Through the hidden gate in Friday's wall
To get to
Saturday.

The poem is, traditionally, used to teach literary skills, not grammar. However, in their approach, the authors first used the poem to teach literary devices, and then used the same poem in a later session to teach prepositions. The authors first provided a (somewhat problematic) definition of prepositions, by stating that “Prepositions are small words that tell us about action” – this seems more accurate as a definition of adverbs. The authors then proceeded to explain prepositions of time, place and movement, using the poem. The learning activity that follows asks learners to “Read the poem on page 104 again. Then find six prepositions in the poem”. In the researcher's opinion, this activity is not very meaningful, as merely identifying prepositions is unlikely to enhance a deeper understanding of these forms. The authors could have asked learners to produce creative pieces of work such as own

sentences or paragraphs in which the same or other prepositions are used, or, in this case, learners could have been asked to dramatise and act out the meanings of the prepositions, since the poem is telling a story full of action words.

2.5.4.2. Teaching and learning prepositions at Grade 8 level

To form an idea of how prepositions are taught in Grade 8 (first year of high school in South Africa), the researcher studied three different textbooks. The first was the book *Solutions for All Grade 8 Learner's Book*, by Kerr and Unterslak (2016). Very few activities in this book focus on prepositions. On p. 184, the following instructions are given to learners:

“Copy the following sentences into your books. As you do this, choose prepositions from the list below and write them in the spaces in the sentences.

Between, at, with, to, in, among, from

1. I want to throw the ball - - - him when he does not play seriously
2. I want to throw the ball - - - my friend.
3. He will share his lunch - - - the two of them.
4. He will share his lunch - - - many of the guests.
5. She is lost - - - thought.
6. They are absent - - - work.

In the researcher's opinion, there are several problems with this class activity, including that it is not challenging enough for Grade 8 level, and that there are not enough examples. Perhaps more importantly, learners' knowledge of prepositions remains limited. This type of activity also does not help learners to develop their writing skills.

The other activity provided in Kerr and Unterslak (2016:235) entailed that learners had to match verbs in one column with prepositions in another column, to construct two-word phrases (e.g. *get up, look out, break up, come in*). As with the previous activity, this activity is not helpful to Grade 8 learners who need to develop self-expression skills in a more in-depth manner.

The second textbook studied was Beynon, Baker, Blackburn, Brennan, Gulbrandsen, Ralenala, Reed, Stielau and Wilkinson (2013:185-186). In this text book, only one activity focused on prepositions, and it reads “Activity 8. Revise prepositions with phrasal verbs” and “Identify all the phrasal verbs in the given paragraph”. Once again, the activity is not as challenging as it

should be, and seems more suitable for learners in the intermediate phase. The textbook writers seem to include very easy activities, typically associated with lower-order skills. Little new learning or knowledge acquisition takes place.

The third text book studied was written by Burger, Roux, Holloway, Byrne, Holms, Peringuey, Aldridge and Mcloughlin (2012:130). These authors supply the following activity after defining (and providing examples) of different classes of prepositions, such as prepositions of place, direction and time:

“Unit 5 Prepositions: Using prepositions in sentences. (20 minutes).

Write these sentences in your workbook. Choose the correct preposition.

1. Signs of life in Marakele are hard to see (with / on) a stranger’s eyes. (1)
2. Sidney was crouching (under / over) a large, sandy depression. (1)
3. Sidney leads the way (around / through) the bushveld. (1)
4. The large male rhino folds his stocky fore legs (between / underneath) his body and lies down for a nap. (1)
5. I was not scared (of / with) the rhinos. (1)

Total: 5

The second activity (p. 152) is a 10-minute activity in which the learners have to fill in blank spaces in four sentences using the correct prepositions from a given list.

Notably then, for Grade 8 (just like for Grade 7), prepositions are not exactly taught but presented as very simple activities for learners to do.

2.5.4.3. Teaching and learning prepositions at grade 9 level

Finally, for Grade 9, the researcher examined the textbook by Awerback, Beynon, Gulbrandsen, Blackburn, Brennan, Ralenala, Reed, Stielau, Stielau and Wilkinson (2013:109-110), that contains just one activity (consisting of two exercises) that focuses on prepositions and prepositional phrases:

“Activity 8. Identify and use prepositions.

- 1: Underline the prepositions in the sentences.

- a) The rhino poachers killed another rhino in the Kruger Park on Saturday and cut the horn off its head.
- b) They quite often drive into the park before sunrise.
- c) Police helicopters flew over the area to try to spot the poachers between the bushes.
- d) The Police stop them along the road and search through the bakkie, but sometimes the poachers hide the horns under the bakkie.

2. Choose the correct preposition from the list below to complete the sentences. Use each preposition once.

by, from, onto, in, over, of, above.

Many different chemicals are being sprayed - - - crops to kill the insects that live - - - the area. These chemicals are made - - - substances that are poisonous if they collect in your body - - - a period of time. Doctors are noticing a lot - - - diseases that are caused - - - poisons. Scientists are trying to find out more - - - the problem.

Considering the ways in which prepositions are probably taught in classes (as demonstrated above for the senior phase), the researcher's position is that prepositions are not taught well, and that text books do not provide ESL teachers with the tools to instruct these forms in an in-depth manner. Learners are not exposed to activities that help would develop both their BICS and CALP skills. There is little or no learner-learner interaction and neither is there teacher-learner interaction. If learners are only given activities such as those described above, it essentially means that the teaching that precedes the activities will be of a similar nature. The activities can be completed by relying on lower-order skills and does not include all the prepositions that should be taught at the senior phase level (see point 2.5.6 for the comprehensive list of prepositions that should be taught, according to CAPS). The authors of the examined text books chose to ignore the more challenging prepositions such as:

- a) Compound prepositions (two-word prepositions) such as *according to, owing to, due to regardless of.*
- b) Complex prepositions (three-or-more word prepositions) that include *as far as; by means of; in addition to; in front of.*
- c) Prepositions of Mathematics such as in 'Ten divided *by* two equals five'
- d) Adjectives and prepositions such as in '*afraid of; bored with; impatient with; rude to...*

- e) Nouns and prepositions such as in ‘*invitation to; approach to; reason for; respect for; comment on.*

If only simple prepositions receive attention from textbook writers and from teachers, it can be concluded that prepositions are not taught in an in-depth manner. This is one of the reasons why the researcher decided to carry out the current study; as he wanted to not only establish whether explicit or implicit teaching is more effective to teach prepositions, but he also wanted to assess which (if any) explicit teaching methods would be effective in teaching learners more complex prepositions. The researcher’s intervention thus focused not only on simple prepositions, but also on complex prepositions categories. In the next section, the researcher examines how he believes prepositions should be taught.

2.5.4.4. Methods to teach prepositions at secondary school level

Prepositions should be taught with the aim of making learners aware of their meaning and function. There are various ways in which teachers can achieve this. Teachers can provide learners with a story in which prepositions are underlined. This type of exposure allows learners to discover how prepositions are used to convey meaning and introduces learners to the different functions that individual prepositions fulfil. Tied to this type of activity, learners could be asked to write a list of the prepositions they have been introduced to in a story or text, without referring to the learning materials. Afterwards, learners can compare their own lists with the prepositions in the learning aids used. Case (2012: 4) suggests the following activities which students can do to master prepositions:

- i. The first activity is that of gap filling. Teachers use a text from which all the prepositions have been removed. Students interact with the text and supply the removed prepositions. It is important for teachers to note that there may be cases of new prepositions being correct apart from those initially removed. Such prepositions should be accepted.
- ii. The second activity also involves the use of a text, from which just one preposition has been removed, for example, *on*. The teacher then explains to the learners that all the blank spaces were created by removing only one preposition which the learners should work out and use to fill in the blank spaces. While these activities are too easy for the learners in the FET phase, they can still be used to teach those in this phase who underperform in the area of prepositions.

- iii. The third activity is when the teacher prepares a text and removes all the examples or key words which he/she wants to focus on. The students then try to put the missing words back into their original spaces. This works well as a group activity in which the teacher gives learners an opportunity to give feedback on their activities. During such feedback sessions, peer-teaching could take place, and the teacher gets an opportunity to assess the learners' understanding of the given prepositions.
- iv. The fourth activity involves a picture and prepositions. A picture which shows an object or an animal that is placed in relation to another object. Learners are asked to describe the object as placed in relation to other objects in the picture. The learners should use sentences such as "The ball is *on* the table but *under* the table is a mat. *Beside* the leg of the table is a stool. From these sentences it is easy for the teacher to draw the attention of the learners to the prepositions and explain to the learners that prepositions show the positions of objects in relation to others.
- v. The fifth activity involves the use of an object such as a type of fruit or a toy or anything that can be used for learning purposes. The object is placed in a specific place where the learners can (or cannot) see it. There is no problem if the object is hidden and the learners look for it and describe its position in relation to other objects. The object should be placed at many different locations to enable learners to master as many prepositions of place as possible.
- vi. The sixth activity is actually a double activity: in the first activity the learners identify prepositions in a given text and explain why they say those words are prepositions (by explaining the function of such words as showing an object's position etc.). The second part of the activity involves the learners identifying wrongly-used prepositions and explaining why they are incorrect. Learners then provide the correct prepositions in each case. Teachers need to note that in cases where learners have not practised enough using prepositions, the task of identifying wrongly-used prepositions and replacing them with correct prepositions may present a challenge.

Despite the challenging nature of prepositions, Martel (2012: 4) believes that "very young learners can still be learning exactly what '*in front of*' means as a concept...and activities with *on*, *in* and *under* can be useful and fun from as early as three years old". Further to that, Martel (ibid: 4) maintains that "It is very easy to combine prepositions of position with other language

points such as classroom objects, household objects, animals and transport.” Although Martel (2012: 4) does not give any example of games which teachers can use to teach prepositions, the author suggests the order of teaching the following prepositions as demonstrated below:

1. *In, on, under*
2. *Next to*
3. *In front of, behind*
4. *On the right, on the left*
5. *Near (to), close to, far from*
6. *Opposite*
7. *Above, below*
8. *By. Beside*
9. *Beneath*
10. *Inside, outside*

Notable in this order of teaching prepositions is that in the majority of cases the opposite prepositions are taught at the same time. It is fairly easy to demonstrate *on* and *under* using an object which is placed *on a table* and then it is placed *under the table*. Since the essence of learning is remembering what we learn, there should definitely be ways in which learners are helped to remember what they learn. Inezan and Najim (2013) discuss different activities that can help learners to remember the prepositions they learn. The first activity is memorising through grouping. This idea entails grouping the prepositions according to alphabetical order. On the first day the learners memorise all the prepositions that start with ‘a’, the next day they memorise those starting with ‘b’. Finally, learners can use a song whose tune they know well and rewrite it placing the prepositions in the song. Singing the new song is fun and learners will respond to it positively (Inezan and Najim *ibid*).

2.5.5. Typical errors of EFAL learners

Although the focus of this section has been primarily on learning and teaching prepositions, it is also necessary to discuss the errors and mistakes made by learners of English as they learn prepositions. This next section examines some of the typical errors made by EFAL learners. Recall that, according to Inezan and Najim (2013), there are three categories of mistakes made by learners when using prepositions, namely:

- a. The use of an incorrect preposition.
- b. The omission of the required preposition.
- c. The inclusion of an unnecessary preposition

Inezan and Najim (ibid) provide examples of errors that occur in each of these categories, which are summarised below (The correct constructions are given in brackets):

2.5.5.1. The use of an incorrect preposition

- (43) I live *at* Jerusalem. (...*in* Jerusalem)
- (44) The plane is flying *at* the sky. (...*in* the sky)
- (45) After school I work *in* the tailor's (*at* the tailor's)
- (46) We help our father *in* the farm. (*on* the farm)
- (47) The driver stopped *on* the petrol pump. (*at* the petrol pump)

2.5.5.2. The omission of the required preposition

- (48) We sat ? the grass. (*on* the grass)
- (49) I went ? trip (*on* a trip)
- (50) In spring people go ? picnics (*on / for* picnics).
- (51) When we arrived ? Pretoria we bought fruits and vegetables. (*in* Pretoria...)
- (52) I went to pray ? temple (*in* the temple)

2.5.5.3. The inclusion of an unnecessary preposition

- (53) We came back *in* home (... come back home; exclude the preposition)
- (54) I visited *in* the zoo (... visited the zoo)
- (55) They came back *at* home (...came back home)
- (56) She went *at* home (... went home)

2.5.6. The expectations of the South African curriculum regarding prepositions

The South African English Syllabus CAPS Document for Grade 7-9 (2014:52) includes the following prepositions which must be taught:

- a) "Simple prepositions (one-word prepositions) such as *to; in; on; at*.
- b) Compound prepositions (two-word prepositions) such as *according to*.

- c) Complex prepositions (three-or-more word prepositions) that include *as far as; by means of; in addition to; in front of.*
- d) Prepositions of time as in ‘She came *on* Monday.’
- e) Prepositions of place such as in ‘I live *at* 780 Street. The dog is *in* the garden.’
- f) Prepositions of movement such as in: He ran ‘*to; through, across, along, down, over, round.*’
- g) Prepositions of Mathematics such as in ‘Ten divided *by* two equals five’
- h) Adjectives and prepositions such as in ‘*afraid of; bored with; impatient with; rude to...*’
- i) Nouns and prepositions such as in ‘*invitation to; approach to; reason for; respect for; comment on.*’”

The CAPS document suggests that such prepositions should be taught to learners in Grades 7-9. Therefore, if prepositions are taught from Grade 7 to Grade 9, it means that by the time the learners get to Grade 10, they will have been exposed to prepositions for at least three years. As such, the assumption in this study is that at Grade 10 level, EFAL learners should not be completely unaware of prepositions and prepositional phrases.

2.6. THE ROLE OF THE L1 IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Research evidence on the role of the L1 in SLA or L2 learning has converged over several decades, and the general agreement is that a learner’s L1 influences the L2 learning process in several ways. This influence is noticeable in an individual’s acquisition of L2 morphology, syntax, vocabulary and even pragmatics. That being said, there also seems to be agreement that the developmental stages that L2 learners go through when learning a target language are remarkably similar to the stages that L1 learners of the same language go through (Lightbown and Spada 2013). Learners who acquire an additional language, whether in a natural or formal environment, develop an ‘interlanguage’. An interlanguage is defined as a the language that is produced by L2 learners that are still in the process of acquiring the target language. The interlanguage hypothesis states that “language learners possess a grammatical system that is different from both the first language and the target language but is nevertheless a natural language” (Richards and Schmidt 2010, 294). A learner’s ‘interlanguage’ is shaped by various different factors, including language transfer and overgeneralisation. In terms of the influence of the L1 on the L2, it has been reported that older L2 learners do not automatically assume that they can simply transfer L1 structures to the L2 (Lightbown and Spada 2013, 57). Learners

are aware of the differences between languages, but as their proficiency in the target language develops, they also perceive similarities between languages and they may generalise L1 patterns, sometimes incorrectly. Furthermore, they may linger at a particular stage, or add a sub-stage, or even restrict usage of grammatical forms as they begin to apply rules more productively (Lightbown and Spada 2013, 58). There are numerous similarities between the interlanguage stages of L2 learners, regardless of their mother tongue (Lightbown and Spada 2013, 58). For instance, a commonality between L2 speakers is their tendency towards avoidance, in which a particular language feature is avoided because it is perceived as too different from the L1. Furthermore, L2 speakers may struggle to notice that they use a particular language feature in a way that is not used by native speakers, such as using an adverb in an unconventional position in a sentence.

Research suggest that cross-linguistic influence (i.e. transfer of linguistic skills between two languages) is highly selective, very intricate, and not readily predictable. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was used to predict which features a L2 learner would have difficulty with, based on the features of his/her L1. A simplified version of the CAH predicts that where languages are structurally very different, errors would be bi-directional. Thus, the hypothesis predicted that, for instance, French speakers learning English and English speakers learning French would be equally likely to make errors when using direct objects, since the position of the direct object is different in these languages. However, actual data has shown that English learners learning French are more likely to make the predicted error (*Le chien mange le* instead of *Le chien le mange*) than French learners learning English (the corresponding error would be *The dog it eats*; instead of *The dog eats it*). Due to such mismatches between the predictions of the CAH and actual data, the CAH fell into disfavour, as it and cannot predict which features will be difficult to master for a L2 learner.

As a result of the over-emphasis of the CAH in the 1960s, researchers like Dulay et al. (1982, cited in Lightbown, 2000:455) rejected the idea that the L1 plays a role in the production of errors by L2 learners. However, research evidence has shown that most errors that occur in a learner's interlanguage are the result of interference from their L1 (Lightbown and Spada 2013:205). When learners perceive a similarity between their L1 and the language they are learning, they tend to hold on to the L1 structure or feature, especially when their peers make the same errors.

Pica (1994) questioned whether knowing a language impacts negatively or positively on the learning of another language. The answer is presented as two contradicting positions. Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) in Pica (ibid: 52) maintain that if there are areas of similarity between the L1 of the learners and their L2, acquiring language in those areas should not be a problem (these traditional views are in line with the ideas of Contrastive Analysis). Pica (ibid: 52) demonstrates how this observation can be erroneous in some cases. She observes that although the negative is expressed in the same way in Spanish and English, the concept is not learnt with similar ease as research demonstrates that English L1 learners of Spanish learn to express negation quicker than the Spanish L1 learners of English. Similarly, Pica (ibid: 52) observes that the Japanese L1 learners of English L2 acquire the negative structure (don't + verb) quite rapidly, yet the Japanese and English negation structures are different. Even so, Japanese learners acquire this structure faster than Russian and Italian ESL learners. Thus, it is not always the case that language transfer from the L1 to the L2 works in favour of the learners even when the learner's L1 is similar to the L2. (Pica ibid: 52).

Regarding the role of the L1 in L2 learning, Boquist (2009:9) believes that learners make use of different L2 rules as they acquire it. They transfer their L1 knowledge of rules and other aspects of grammar to new but similar areas of their L2. This transfer however, can be helpful (positive) or harmful (negative) transfer. Boquist (ibid: 9) identifies four areas of negative transfer as follows:

- (i) Overgeneralisation of the rules of L2 and their application to related situations
- (ii) Ignoring rules of L2 and using those of L1
- (iii) Incomplete application of the rule
- (iv) Creating an imaginary rule based on what the learner thinks the rule is in L2.

Bohnacker (2006:444) observes that "Few acquisition theorists would dispute that the first language (L1) plays a role in second language (L2) acquisition, but many disagree about its extent and whether it equally affects all second language modules". Bohnacker summarises a number of studies carried out to investigate the effect of L1 on the acquisition of L2, specially as it relates to word order and verb placement. According to Bohnacker (2006), L1 speakers of languages that have a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order (such as Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) erroneously carried this word order over to their L2 (German) which has a subject-object-verb (SOV) word order. This was found to be true for post-puberty learners of German, irrespective of their L1 – they all produced SVO utterances. It is clear, therefore, that the erroneous SVO utterances in

German came as a result of the L1 influence. Despite this evidence, Bohnacker (ibid) points out that “SLA researchers...continue to argue against L1 transfer”. In the same article, Bohnacker (2006:477-478) explains errors in the German utterances of L1 Swedish learners as “evidence of L1-syntax transfer” of properties from Swedish to German. Given the results of the studies cited in this section, it is observed that there are documented cases of both positive and negative L1 skills transfer.

In the light of the above discussion, teachers could anticipate errors in the use of the PP in ESL learners in these four areas. Research points to the fact that L2 learners can transfer their L1 skills to their L2 learning as long as they are at a certain level of L2 proficiency to enable them to cope with the demands of L2 literary skills such as reading and speaking.

2.6.1. Interference between first and second languages

As implied in the previous section, language acquisition may be affected by interference between first and second languages. Brown (2007) maintains that for young L2 learners, the interference from the L1 is quite minimal if not zero. On the other hand, older/adult L2 learners may use (or may try to use) the skills acquired in L1 more readily, given their cognitive maturity and awareness of the learning process. Older learners are likely to have been introduced to the concept of metalinguistic knowledge and will use all the resources available to them when learning L2 structures. However, this does not automatically mean that the interference of the L1 on the L2 in older learners will be very significant. Brown (2007) further observes that L1 interference on L2 is not always negative. Several studies that investigated L1 interference found no evidence of negative transfer. For example, Dulay and Burt (1974a) cited in Brown (2007:72) studied over 500 errors made by L1 speakers of Spanish who were studying English and concluded that the errors made by these students were not related to transference from their L1.

The next section examines the preposition and the prepositional phrase in the isiZulu and Sesotho languages, since the participants in this study are isiZulu and Sesotho L1 speakers. The overview intends to show areas of similarities and differences between these two languages and English, with regards to prepositions. Notably, the more similar nature of the of prepositions and the PP in English and Sesotho (isiZulu use an adverbial form to fulfil the function of prepositions) does not necessarily mean that the Sesotho learners will acquire the PP better than the isiZulu learners, as it is not always clear when positive transfer will happen and when not. However, following the traditional notion of positive transfer between languages

where a structure is comparable, it remains the position of this researcher that Sesotho learners are more likely to benefit from L1 knowledge in the context of this study than isiZulu learners.

2.7. THE NATURE OF THE PP IN ISIZULU AND SESOTHO

Although other syntactic categorisations of prepositions exist, the researcher identifies with Ramone (1997) and Mbeje (2005) for the purposes of this research. As will be demonstrated in this section, isiZulu and Sesotho have prepositions, although isiZulu has adverbial forms that serve a similar purpose to that of English and Sesotho prepositions. According to Mbeje (2005) the noun or the pronoun that the preposition connects to the rest of the sentence is called the object of the preposition. In the same vein, Ramone (1997) observed that some of the characteristics of prepositions are that they exist as objects and as objects of other prepositions. When a noun or a pronoun connects to the rest of the sentence (object of the preposition) it produces a prepositional phrase (PP). Below is a comparison of the isiZulu prepositional phrase to the English prepositional phrase as Mbeje (2005) presented it.

2.7.1. IsiZulu vs the English prepositional phrase

According to Mbeje (2005) the PP (and the preposition) shows the location, direction, time, manner, means and agent. Before examples of prepositions are given, consider the following rule or principle that governs the changes of the preposition *nga* from *nga* to *ngo* or *ngu*. If the final vowel in a word precedes an initial vowel morpheme, vowel loss happens. This means a vowel is lost, or it changes from /a-/ or /e-/ or /i-/ or /o-/ or /u-, depending on which word is causing the vowel loss. Some examples of vowel loss are:

- a). *nga + a- = nga eg nga = amanzi = ngamanzi.*
- b). *nga + e- = nge*
- c). *nga + i- = ngi*
- d). *nga + o- = ngo eg nga = omama = ngomama*
- e). *nga + u- = ngu eg nga + umntwana = ngomntwana*

The following are some isiZulu prepositions and PPs adapted from Mbeje, which are presented as a contrastive analysis of the isiZulu and English preposition and the PP.

Table 2.1 Locative markers, time markers and agent markers; with –e for names of places and kwa- and ka- for people’s names.

isiZulu adverbial forms (prepositions)	Function
Locative markers: -e <i>kwa / ka</i>	Used with names of places: UZodwa noLindiwe bahlala <i>ePretoria</i> . Zodwa and Lindiwe live <i>in Pretoria</i> . Used with proper nouns. UZodwa noLindiwe bahlala <i>kwaVilakazi</i> . Zodwa and Lindiwe live <i>at Vilakazi’s</i> .
Time markers <i>nga-</i>	Used to show the times at which things happen. <i>Sizohamba ngo11:00</i> We are leaving <i>at 11:00</i>
Agent markers: <i>nga-</i>	Used to show the agent of doing things. UKuhle ulukwa <i>nguZanele</i> . Kuhle is being braided <i>by Zanele</i> . <i>Baphekelwa ngabazali babo</i> . They are cooked for <i>bytheir parents</i> .

In Table 2.1, it is noted that isiZulu adverbial forms and English prepositional phrases that indicate location are respectively presented as *ePretoria* and *in Pretoria* as well as *kwaVilakazi* and *at Vilakazi’s*. The time marker *nga* is presented as the head of the prepositional phrases *ngo 11:00* (isiZulu) and *at 11:00* (English). To indicate agent in isiZulu, *nga-* is added to adverbial forms, as shown (*nguZanele* - isiZulu) and (*by Zanele* – English). This is because of the rule of vowel loss as explained above.

Table 2.2 Cause markers and means markers

isiZulu adverbial forms (prepositions)	Function
Cause markers: <i>nga-</i>	Used to show the cause of things happening. UMandela wanqoba <i>ngobuhlapani bakhe</i> . Mandela prevailed <i>because of his wisdom</i> .
Means markers: <i>nga-</i>	Used to show the means by which things are done. Sika <i>ngommese</i> . Cut <i>with a knife</i> .

The table above shows the prepositional phrases; adverbial forms that are used to indicate the cause and the means. The example *ngobuhlapanibakhe* and *because of his wisdom* are the isiZulu adverbial and English prepositional phrases respectively. In the example *ngommese nga* is used to indicate the means. So, the isiZulu adverbial and the English prepositional phrases are respectively presented as *ngommese* and *with a knife*. Consider the following table for more examples:

Table 2.3 Manner markers

isiZulu preposition	Function
Manner indicators <i>nga-</i>	Used to show the manner in which things are done. <i>Sala ngoxolo.</i> Remain <i>with peace</i> . <i>Usebenza ngomdladla.</i> She works <i>with energy</i> .

Table 2.3 shows the isiZulu adverbial and the English prepositional phrases respectively as *ngoxolo* and *ngomdladla* as well as with *peace* and *with energy*. There are many other prepositions that could have been given as examples here but these six will suffice. Following are examples of objects of prepositions in English which are contrasted with those in isiZulu. Mbeje (ibid) identifies the English object of the preposition as a noun or pronoun which receives the action of the verb through a preposition. Consider the examples in Table 2.4:

Table 2.4 The English object of the preposition

Subject	Verb	Object (object of the preposition)
Dumisani	Drove	<i>by the post office.</i>
Lungile	Bought	a present <i>for his wife.</i>

As demonstrated in the examples above, although Mbeje (2005) calls them ‘adverbials’, these forms are not entirely different from prepositions.⁶ In fact, Mbeje (2005) used them in the same

⁶ According to Wiesen (2022), “prepositions include words like *on* and *around* that help describe how two objects or ideas are related in terms of time or position. Adverbs, on the other hand, are used to describe a single word or object; they typically modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and include words like *quickly* and *very*. This clear distinction between a preposition and adverb can become a bit confusing, however, in that a prepositional phrase can act as an adverb in some sentences” (e.g. in the sentence *The squirrel ran up the tree*, the

categories as their respective equivalents in English. To supplement these examples Mbeje (ibid: 273) observes that there is a difference between isiZulu and English objects of prepositions. In English an object of the preposition receives the action of the verb through any preposition other than *to*. It answers the question *WHOM* or *WHAT?* Consider the following examples:

(57) Jabulile is shopping *for bags*

(58) Jabulile is shopping for *what? Bags* (*Bags* is the object of the preposition *for*)

However, in isiZulu common verbs require direct objects because their meanings already incorporate prepositions. This means that when one uses the isiZulu common verbs one does not need a preposition to follow the verb since verbs incorporate the preposition, unlike in English where verbs are separate from the prepositions that follow them. The examples presented in Table 2.5 (as observed by Mbeje (ibid: 273)) show isiZulu verbs which incorporate prepositions, and their English equivalents.

Table 2.5. isiZulu verbs which incorporate prepositions, and their English equivalents.

isiZulu verbs (with incorporated prepositions)	English equivalent phrasal verbs
Ukulinda	to wait <i>for</i>
Ukuuka	to look <i>at</i>
Ukuthela	to pour <i>into</i>
Ukufuna	to look <i>for</i>

The difference between the two categories of verbs is that the isiZulu verbs contain prepositions inside of them, while the English ones use verbs as shown above. In this case the differences discussed may lead to difficulties for isiZulu L1 EFAL students, as they attempt to learn the PPs in English. More specifically, isiZulu learners may transfer their L1 knowledge of verbs that already incorporate prepositions to similar situations in English and therefore omit obligatory prepositions in English. Table 2.6 shows examples of English objects of prepositions versus direct objects in isiZulu.

prepositional phrase is acting as an adverb. Even though it answers the question of ‘Where did the squirrel run?’ it also acts as a modifier for the word *ran*).

Table 2.6 Direct objects of prepositions in isiZulu and English

isiZulu direct objects	English objects of prepositions
Linda ufuna <i>izicathulo</i> .	Linda is looking for <i>shoes</i> .
Linda ufunani? <i>Izicathulo</i> .	Linda is looking for what? <i>Shoes</i> .

In the given examples the isiZulu student who produces *Linda is looking shoes* is making a negative transfer of his/her LI knowledge of direct objects to the L2 objects of prepositions. This is an error to anticipate among isiZulu L2 EFAL learners. Although the main focus of this study is not on how isiZulu affects the acquisition of the English PP, if such errors occur in large numbers among the isiZulu learners (in other words if such a pattern emerges in the results), it will be commented on accordingly. To continue with adverbials and prepositional phrases consider the following table:

Table 2.7. The isiZulu adverbials and their English equivalent

Isizulu adverbial forms	English prepositional phrases
<i>Njenga-</i>	<i>Like</i>
ULungile ukhuluma <i>njengengane</i> .	Lungile talks <i>like</i> a child.

In this example, it is clear that *njenge* is the isiZulu adverbial (preposition) and the English equivalent *like* is a preposition. It is also correct to say that both the isiZulu adverbial *njenge* and the English *like* in this case show the manner in which Lungile (an adult) speaks) – the way in which a child speaks. Also, consider Table 2.8 which shows the isiZulu adverbial *kuna-* and the English comparison *than*.

Table 2.8. The isiZulu adverbial *kuna-* and the English comparison *than*.

isiZulu adverbial forms	English prepositional phrases
<i>Kuna-</i>	<i>Than</i>
UZinhle mude <i>kunoThabisa</i> .	Zinhle is taller <i>than</i> Thabisa.

In this example it is clear that while *kuno* is the isiZulu adverbial, the English *than* is the preposition equivalent. In addition to this, the isiZulu adverbial form *ngango-* and the English *the same as* are used to indicate equality as demonstrated in Table 2.9 below:

Table 2.9. The isiZulu adverbial form *ngango-* and the English form *the same as*

isiZulu adverbial forms	English prepositional phrases
<i>Ngango-</i>	<i>Same --- as</i>
UVilakazi <i>ungangoThabisa.</i>	Vilakazi is of the <i>same age as Thabisa.</i>

Just like in the preceding examples, the isiZulu adverbial has its equivalent English preposition, even here *ngango* is equivalent to the English *same...as*. Lastly under isiZulu adverbial forms and English prepositional phrases consider Table 2.10 which shows association.

Table 2.10 The isiZulu adverbial *no-* and its English equivalent *with*

Isizulu adverbial forms	English prepositional phrases
<i>No-</i>	<i>With</i>
UThandiwe uhamba <i>noLungile.</i>	Thandiwe is walking <i>with Lungile.</i>

Table 2.10 shows the isiZulu adverbial *no-* and its English equivalent *with*. The way in the isiZulu adverbial forms and the English prepositional phrases have been examined may not have been exhaustive, but suffices for the purpose of this study, as the aim was only to demonstrate that there are structural differences between isiZulu and Sesotho when it comes to prepositional phrases (and that Sesotho resembles English more). Therefore, the next section discusses the structure of prepositions in Sesotho. It examines the different functions the prepositions as markers of location, time, direction, manner, means, agent etc. In other words, the section examines the syntactic and semantic properties of the Sesotho preposition as a comparative analysis with the English preposition.

2.7.2. Sesotho vs English prepositional phrase

Sotho-Tswana languages include Setswana, Northern Sotho (also known as Sepedi) and Sesotho (also known as Southern Sotho). These languages have similar root words and similar morphosyntactic structures, which makes it appropriate to consider them as very closely related

languages (referred to as the Sotho-Tswana group). They are thus mutually intelligible. This study draws from the description of the prepositional phrase in Sesotho, as described in Ramone (1997). Half of the participants in this study spoke a Sotho-Tswana language as L1, but the assumption here is that the description of grammatical structure of the prepositional phrase, as it occurs in Ramone (1997), is also representative of the other Sotho-Tswana languages. With that clarified consider the Sesotho prepositional phrase as discussed below.

According to Ramone (1997:31-38) the Sesotho prepositions are *ka*, *le*, *ke* and *ho* whose semantic and syntactic properties are discussed below. Sesotho prepositional phrases have unique properties and thus function differently from the isiZulu adverbial forms and the English prepositional phrases. Ramone (ibid) states that the Sesotho prepositions and prepositional phrase do not differ vastly from the English preposition. This means that in principle, the Sesotho L1 learner of EFAL is likely to find the English preposition easy to learn due to transfer of their L1 knowledge to comparable English constructions. Sesotho and English prepositions have the same functions and properties. Similar to English prepositions, Sesotho prepositions indicate different things such as agents, directions, means, time and manner. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the similarities between Sesotho and English are considered an advantage to participants who should find their L1 knowledge of the PP helpful to their acquisition of the English PP. The next section examines the nature of Sesotho PP.

2.7.3 The nature of Sesotho prepositions

In a contrastive analysis of the Sesotho and English PP, Ramone (1997: 87) presents the syntactic properties of the preposition *ka*. *Ka* can be used in combination with any noun phrase. Although Ramone (ibid:37) does not mention it in his examples, *ka* belongs to the same category as English PPs and isiZulu adverbial forms that indicate the means or instrument used to perform an action. The following examples illustrate this use:

Table 2.11 The Sesotho form *ka* and its English equivalent *with*

Sesotho prepositional phrase	English counterpart
Monna o bolaya noha <i>ka thipa</i> .	Man kills snake <i>with knife</i> The man kills a snake <i>with a knife</i> .
Ntweng eo batho ba bolawa <i>ka marumo</i> .	In war that people were killed <i>with spears</i> In that war people were killed <i>with spears</i>

The Sesotho PPs that indicate instrument are *ka thipa* and *ka marumo*, and their English counterparts are *with a knife* and *with spears*. *Ka* is also used together with the interrogative *eng* or *mang* as in these examples:

Table 2.12 The Sesotho *ka eng* and the English *with what* as interrogatives

Sesotho interrogative	English interrogative
Masilo o bua <i>ka eng</i> ?	Masilo is talking <i>about what</i> ? What is Masilo talking about?
Letsie o laula mabotho <i>ka mang</i> ?	Letsie commands armies <i>by whom</i> ? <i>By whom</i> does Letsie command the armies?

The PPs that form part of the interrogatives are in italics in Table 2.12. The next preposition analysed in Ramone (ibid: 266) is *le*. Note that the form *le* can also be used as conjunctive in coordinated phrases. For example:

- (59) Monna *le* mosadi ba bapala
 Husband *and* wife are playing
 (*The husband and the wife are playing*)

In this case *le* does not function as a preposition but as a conjunction (*and*). Example 58 can be contrasted with the following examples:

Table 2.13. The Sesotho form *le* acting as a conjunction

Sesotho	English
Monna o bapala <i>le</i> mosadi.	Husband is playing <i>with wife</i> . <i>The husband is playing with his wife.</i>
Mosadi o ja mokopu <i>le</i> monna.	Wife is eating pumpkin <i>with husband</i> . <i>The wife is eating pumpkin with her husband.</i>

In these examples *le* is a preposition and not a conjunction. The use of *le* as a preposition should be distinguished from the use of *le* as a conjunction. It is therefore important for Sotho learners to master this distinction for them to use the form appropriately in their productions. Also, the complements of the PP with *le* as head serve as another use of *le*. Consider these examples:

- (60) Monna otsamaya *le* mosadi

(*The husband is going with the wife*)

(61) Mme o bosela *le lese*

(*The mother smiles with the baby*)

In these examples the preposition *le* has the noun phrases *mosadi* (*wife*) and *lese* (*baby*) as its complement. Finally, *le* (like *ka*) is also used in conjunction with the interrogative *eng* and *mang*. In the following examples, the preposition *le* means *with*:

(62) Thakane o eme *le eng*?

Thakane is standing *with what*?

(*With what is Thakane standing?*)

(63) Monna o dula *le mang*?

The husband stays *with whom*?

(*With whom does the husband stay?*)

In the given examples, *with what* and *with whom* are the English PPs counterparts of *le eng* and *le mang* respectively. The next preposition to be discussed is *ke*. Ramone (1997: 403) analyses the syntactic characteristics of *ke* by showing the connection between the copula *ke* and the preposition *ke*. For example:

(64) Lefu lena *ke* lefuba

Disease this *is* tuberculosis

(*This disease is tuberculosis*)

Example 64, where *ke* is used as a copula, can be contrasted with the examples in Table 2.14:

Table 2.14. The Sesotho form *ke* and the English *with*

Sesotho	English
Teboho o bolailwe <i>ke</i> lefuba.	Teboho was killed <i>by</i> tuberculosis.
Mme o lonngwe <i>ke</i> ntja.	Mother has been bitten <i>by</i> dog. My mother has been bitten <i>by</i> a dog.

The examples in Table 2.14 serve to distinguish between the copula *ke* and the preposition *ke*. This means the PPs are found in the examples as *ke lefuba* and *ke ntja*. The preposition *ke* is

the head of the prepositional phrase. In addition to this, the preposition *ke* has similar complements to *ka* and *le* discussed above. The following examples show the noun phrase as a complement of the preposition.

- (65) Mosadi o bolailwe *ke lefuba*
(*The woman has been killed by tuberculosis*)
- (66) Mme o lonngwe *ke ntja*
(*My mother has been bitten by the dog*)

The prepositional phrases in these examples are *ke lefuba* and *by tuberculosis* as well as *ke ntja* and *by a dog*. The preposition *ke* can also be used in conjunction with the interrogative *ke eng* and *ke mang*. The following examples illustrate the point in question:

- (67) Masilo o bolailwe *ke eng?*
Masilo was killed *by what?*
(*By what was Masilo killed?*)

The PP with *ke* as head may also appear with the copulative verb *ba* (example 67), or with the negative copulative verb *se* (example 68):

- (68) Thabo e tla *ba mofutsana ke mosa wa hae*
(*Thabo will be a pauper because of his generosity*)
- (69) Ba ne ba *se kgotso ke papadi ya bona*
(*They were not happy because of their game*)

Finally, consider the following semantic characteristics of the preposition *ke* as head:

- (70) Mosadi o bolailwe *ke monna*
(*The wife is killed by the husband*)
- (71) Ngwana o nyantshwa *ke mmae*.
(*A child is sucked by its mother*)

The prepositional phrases in this case are shown as *ke monna* (*by the husband*) as well as *ke mmae* (*by its mother*). The last preposition that Ramone (1997:467) identifies is the locative

preposition *ho*. Ramone (ibid) explains that there are the three main methods of locative formation from nouns as follows, namely by fixing *-ing*, by prefixing *-ho (ha)* and by using unchanged nouns. The following examples demonstrate the point in question:

- (72) Moholwane o tswa *ho ntate* (*ho + ntate*)
(My elder brother comes from my father (*from + my father*))
- (73) Kgaitsemi o ya *ho mme* (*ho mme*)
(My sister goes to my mother (*to + my mother*))

In these examples *ho ntate* and *ho mme* are PPs with *ho* as head and they show how to form the locative. The points to note here are that the preposition in example 71 bears the semantic interpretation of source while example 72 bears the semantic interpretation of direction. Although *ho* and *ha* serve the same purpose and are prefixed to the noun, the following examples show how *ha* is used to form the locative. The locative *ha* is used to indicate ‘the place belonging to’:

- (74) Ke ahile ha *Letsie* (*ha + Letsie*)
(I live at Letsie’s)
- (75) Ke ya ha *Lerata* (*ha Lerata*)
(I go to Lerata’s)

The locatives in these examples, which are also PPs, are *ha Letsie* and *ha Lerata*. Furthermore, the locative *ho* is also used as PP with *ho* as head with verbs as shown below:

- (76) Monna o tsoha *ho mosadi* (*tsoha + ((verb)) ho + mosadi*)
(The husband wakes up from the wife (*wakes up ((verb)) + from wife*))
- (77) Ngwana o loka *ho mmae* (*o loka + ho mmae*)
(The child is right to its mother (*is right + to its mother*))

In these examples the verbs and the PPs relationship is demonstrated. Having examined the isiZulu adverbial forms and the Sesotho prepositional phrases, it seems clear that it would serve an EFAL teacher well to know the forms that the PP can take in the L1 of learners. If teachers understand to what extent PPs are the same or different in English and the learners’ L1, they will be able to use this knowledge to their advantage. The teacher will be able to consider how

L1 knowledge might interfere negatively or positively with the acquisition of English PPs. Having discussed the nature of the PP in isiZulu and Sesotho and contrasted them with the English PP, the researcher goes on to discuss other factors that influence the learning of a L2.

2.8. LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

Brown (2007:2) examines some of the factors that affect the acquisition of English as a Second Language. He analyses learner characteristics by asking a number of questions such as: *who are the learners? What are their ethnic and linguistic heritage? What are their native languages? And which life experiences they may have had which might hinder their learning.* These questions focus attention on the crucial variables affecting learners' success in acquiring a L2. The answers to such questions help teachers to decide on a number of issues, such as how to plan their lessons, which learning and teaching media to prepare, how to handle the diversity in their classes, what level the learners are operating at and so on. An effective teacher is expected to know a lot about her students. The main idea in this regard is for EFAL teachers to understand the nature of the students they teach for them to teach the learners well. Although there is no guarantee that the teacher's knowledge of her learners makes her effective as a teacher, the knowledge, nevertheless, prepares the teacher for her classes. Teachers should endeavour to understand their learners' motivational levels, the extent to which they are able to act as self-efficient learners, and the extent to which they can employ language learning strategies. Furthermore, when a teacher knows that the majority of her learners come from broken homes or from child headed families, or from families where verbal and physical violence are common, the teacher will find ways to handle such a class without exacerbating the learners' conditions. Similarly, if a teacher knows that a particular learner suffers from language learning anxiety, the teacher would take care not to expose the learners to situations that would increase this anxiety.

It was beyond the scope of the present study to investigate how such social, cognitive and affective variables might have affected the learning of English prepositions. The focus in this study was only to investigate whether explicit or implicit grammar teaching is more effective in assisting learners to acquire the English PP. However, the researcher acknowledges that other socio-affective or cognitive variables might also influence the language learning process, and one of the limitations of the present study is that the researcher was not able to control all of these variables in a systematic manner.

2.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter explained that grammar is a tool or resource that is used in the creation and comprehension of oral and written discourse. Knowledge of grammar affects language acquisition positively and it helps learners to develop skills in constructing texts in contexts of use. The chapter defined implicit and explicit knowledge and explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods and explained the rationale for teaching grammar. The researcher discussed some of the studies carried out to establish which type of corrective feedback (explicit or implicit corrective feedback) is more effective in helping students to acquire certain grammar structures. From the studies discussed it was seen that in some cases explicit corrective feedback is more effective and that in other cases there are no differences. The researcher highlighted reasons why the acquisition of the English preposition is challenging for EFAL learners, and explained different approaches to teaching grammar in general, and approaches and methods that have been used to teach prepositions specifically. Finally, the chapter focused on the role of the L1 in L2 learning and examined the nature of the preposition in isiZulu and Sesotho, in contrast to English.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in carrying out the study. Generally, the research methodology could be seen as the compass that provides directions to the researcher about how to proceed when investigating a problem. As such, this chapter provides a step by step explanation of the activities undertaken by the researcher in order to answer the research questions that were posed in Chapter 1. To this end, the researcher will describe the research approach and design, the research procedure, the participants, the research tools and the steps that were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the research tools.

The chapter describes the way in which data was gathered from the participants in both the pilot study and the main study. It also restates the research questions and the hypotheses of the study. The chapter justifies the methodology that was used in this study and explains why the study was valid. It explains in detail the teaching intervention that was carried out in the study and points out why the duration of the intervention was appropriate for the study. Finally, the chapter discusses the analytical framework.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

Masuku (1999:24) claims that “every research needs a plan or design”. Masuku (ibid) further observes that “designing a research may be described as a process of planning and organising the components that comprise the research study”. The research design is influenced by the chosen research approach. There are broadly two approaches to research, the synthetic (also known as the holistic approach) and the analytic approach (Dörnyei, 2007, Punch 1998, 2006; Seliger and Shohamy 1989; Welman and Kruger 2001). The holistic approach is normally qualitative and allows researchers to examine and view separate parts of a coherent whole. In this approach, the focus is on the interdependence of different interrelated systems that impact on the research problem. The analytic approach is typically quantitative and allows a researcher to identify and investigate one factor or a group of factors of one major system. This means that it concerns itself with analysing in greater detail only one part of a phenomenon, excluding other parts or factors that may influence the phenomenon. For example, in the field of L2 learning, a researcher may choose to focus on only one specific aspect of language learning (such as vocabulary, writing, pronunciation, reading or oral production) – this would be an

analytic approach. In addition, a researcher may choose to focus on all of these aspects simultaneously (this would be a holistic approach). The research approach that was used in this present study was analytical.

The research design, according to Yin (2003), is a plan of action that guides every step of the research process – formulating the research questions, developing the research instruments, collecting and analysing the data and interpreting the findings. In other words, the research design provides the parameters for the researcher to operate in. According to Kerlinger (1986) working within the stipulated parameters of a research design enables the researcher to answer the research questions clearly, objectively and accurately. Typically, research is conducted within one of three approaches, these being the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research approaches. In the next sections, these approaches will be explained in some detail.

3.2.1. Qualitative research designs

This section explains the qualitative research approach and associated designs. According to Berg (2001) qualitative research entails understanding phenomena by considering the meanings, concepts, definitions, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things. In other words, qualitative research emphasises the process of discovering how social meaning is constructed and stresses the relationship between the investigator and the topic studied (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Qualitative research is exploratory by nature and a researcher using it “explores situations and provides a complete and detailed description in response to the research question(s) (Van Den Berg 2018:56). Qualitative designs are often more concerned with the process rather than the outcomes of the study. According to Masuku (1999:24) a qualitative research design “is not concerned with statistics as a general rule”. This means that qualitative research concerns itself with data collected in word form (phrases, sentences or paragraphs). In other words, the main data in a qualitative design is not presented as numbers in tables or graphs and will not be analysed using mathematical calculations.

3.2.2. Quantitative research designs

Quantitative research entails understanding phenomena through measuring and counting things and the analysis of the relationships between variables. According to Masuku (1999), in a quantitative study, the researcher uses objective measurements that yield quantitative data, which is then analysed using statistical procedures. In addition, the design concerns itself with arriving at issues that can be generalised. Mullany and Stockwell (2010:48) concur with

Masuku (ibid) by observing that the principles of quantitative research methods include “objectivity, neutrality, replicability, generalisation and discovery of laws (rules and norms ...)”.

Quantitative research entails classifying and counting. Observations are explained in terms of the figures and quantities carefully and accurately measured (Punch and Oancea 2009). Since it involves the application of statistical techniques to analyse the data, the conclusions can, if certain prerequisites are met, be generalised to similar settings. One of the most noticeable caveats of quantitative research is that, despite the typical robustness of these designs, inherently it carries the risk of making errors of generalisation (such as treating all cases the same and not considering variety). To add to that, Mullany and Stockwell (ibid: 49) indicate that quantitative research tends to treat the informants “behaviour as something that is mechanically produced, thus arguably neglecting individual creativity and cognition...”. So, the research design assumes that human interaction is static, which can be studied via experimentation, and this may not always be the case.

The research approach and design that were selected for this study will be discussed below in Section 3.5.

3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although the research questions and hypotheses were formulated in the introductory chapter, they were restated in this chapter for ease of reference. To investigate the effectiveness of an explicit vs implicit grammar teaching approach, and to address the other aims of this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Are explicit grammar or implicit teaching methods more effective in instructing English prepositions and PPs to Sesotho and isiZulu EFAL learners?
2. What is the effect of learners’ home language (Sesotho and isiZulu) on the acquisition of PPs in English?

3.4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the available evidence (presented in the literature review in Chapter 2), the following research hypotheses were formulated:

3.4.1. Hypothesis 1

South African EFAL learners who have been instructed via explicit grammar instruction methods will develop better knowledge of prepositions and prepositional phrases, in comparison to learners who were instructed via implicit grammar teaching methods.

3.4.2. Hypothesis 2

Sesotho learners might fare better with English PPs, given the fact that there should be positive transfer from their L1 to English.

3.5. THE RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In this study, a quantitative approach was employed, and the researcher chose a quasi-experimental research design. A quantitative approach was chosen for this study since it will allow the researcher to express any differences between the two instruction groups under study numerically. Thus, it will enable the researcher to answer the main research question (whether explicit grammar teaching methods are more effective than implicit grammar instruction methods). Furthermore, since the researcher was interested in examining the effect of the learners' L1 on the acquisition of English prepositions (the learners had either a Sotho or isiZulu background), a quantitative approach is suitable to assess the effect of the L1. In short, a quantitative approach is the most suitable option to answer the research questions posed in this study. In this study, it will be more reasonable to quantify the variables and to make statistical inferences based on the numerical data. Hopefully, this will allow the researcher to observe actual differences between the instruction groups and to draw firm conclusions.

3.5.1. The quasi-experimental design

A quasi-experiment is an experimental design that does not rely on random assignment. Instead, the subjects are assigned to groups based on non-random criteria. A quasi-experimental design is different from an experimental design in that, in the latter, participants are randomly assigned to either the treatment or the control group, while they are not assigned randomly in a quasi-experiment. Moreover, in a quasi-experiment, the control and treatment groups are different not only in terms of the experimental treatment they receive, but also in other ways which are often unknown.

Two groups of participants participated in this study; with one group receiving explicit instruction (Group 2) to acquire English prepositions. This group was referred to as the

experimental group. The other group (Group 1) received implicit instruction (i.e. instruction that would be considered ‘business as usual’ in this particular research setting) to acquire English prepositions and was referred to as the control group.

3.5.2. Sampling and participants

Convenience sampling was used to identify the participants. Maree (2007) observes that, in convenience sampling, the selection of participants is done according to preselected criteria, which are based on a particular question. In convenience sampling, the participants are chosen before the research even starts. In this study the researcher included all the Grade 10 South African EFAL learners whom he taught, which amounted to 120 learners. These learners were divided into three classes of 40 each for the purposes of their normal classes, but for the purposes of the current study, two classes were maintained; while the third one was split (learners were shared between the control and the experimental groups).

In other words, the participants in the main study were divided into two equal groups: the implicit grammar instruction group (Group 1/control group) had 60 participants (30 females and 30 males); likewise, the explicit grammar instruction group (Group 2/experimental group) had 60 participants (30 females and 30 males). In group 1, 32 learners spoke isiZulu as their L1 and 28 had a Sotho language as their L1. For group 2, 30 learners had isiZulu as their L1 and 30 had a Sotho language as their L1. The average age for the learners in group 1 was 16.6 years and for the group 2 it was also 16.6 years.

All the participants indicated that they could read books in their respective first languages and that they could read books in English including books that were not directly related to their subjects at school. For both groups the learners had been exposed to English as a second language since they began schooling (i.e. since Grade 1). In addition, the learners indicated off the record that they had learnt prepositions before they got to Grade 10. The researcher had taught prepositions once or twice to some of the participants in their previous grade.

3.6. THE RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Following the research proposal phase of this study, the researcher proceeded to obtain ethical clearance from the University of South Africa for the research study (see Appendix 2). Once the ethical clearance certificate was obtained, the researcher approached the school where he taught EFAL, and requested permission from the principal to conduct the study. When this permission was granted, the researcher proceeded to invite all Grade 10 learners to participate

in the study. After explaining the purpose of the study to learners, as well as the ethical considerations, the researchers handed out informed consent forms, and explained to the learners that learners under the age of 16 had to obtain their parents' consent to participate in the study. Learners who returned signed informed consent forms were given a questionnaire to complete, to gather bibliographical data.

Once the bibliographical data was gathered, the researcher divided the participants into the two groups, and conducted the pre-test with all learners. Following the collection of pre-test data, the intervention phase of the study started. After teaching English prepositions for four weeks (20 lessons of one hour each), either implicitly (to the control group) or explicitly (to the experimental group) an exercise (not a test) was administered based on the taught concepts and skills. After another two weeks of teaching prepositions, the researcher administered the post-test which evaluated the effectiveness of the two grammar teaching methods that were being studied. The post-test consisted of many different items to make it as comprehensive as possible. Finally, the delayed post-test was administered two months after the intervention, in order to test whether the learners sustained their acquired knowledge of prepositions. A two-month period was deemed suitable, considering time constraints – the researcher anticipated that there would be too many year-end activities at the school which might have made it impossible for the researcher to assess the learners as he would have wanted.

While the experimental group received explicit instruction, as will be explained in detail in Section 3.8 below, the control group was given instructions and teaching and learning aids which did not explicitly mention the acquisition of prepositions as the objectives of the lessons. In the learning activities completed by the control group, learners produced work which included prepositions, without having been told explicitly how to look for them in the learning aids and instructions, although examples were provided. Essentially, the control group used teaching and learning material that bore the same content and activities as that of the treatment group. However, areas that focused on prepositions were highlighted for the treatment group, and this was not the case for the control group. As a result of the instructional treatment, the researcher would explicitly explain and demonstrate the meanings of prepositions for the experimental group, whereas the control group would be asked to complete designed activities with the researcher checking for progress in this regard. On the whole, the control group activities' were chosen to (theoretically) support the learners to discover the meanings of the various prepositions on their own through implicit learning. The difference in these instructional approaches can be illustrated with the following example:

Instruction to treatment group: *“Find the preposition that shows that the book was in contact with the surface of the table in this sentence ‘The book is on the table’”*.

Instruction to control group: *“Underline the word that shows objects being in contact with each other”*.

The treatment group, as can be observed, got explicit information that could help them to attend to the areas of focus to reach the correct answer. In contrast, the control group had to infer and discover on their own using implied evidence that the word asked for was a preposition. In short, the learning activities completed by the control group, learners produced work which included prepositions, without having been told explicitly how to look for them in the learning aids and instructions, although examples were provided. The idea in the implicit instruction group was not to draw explicit attention to the grammatical form under investigation (i.e. the preposition). Even so, learners were given learning materials and they completed exercises that covered (amongst other things) the English prepositional phrase. Notably, both the groups received both oral and written feedback on how they performed during and after each lesson. The feedback was helpful as could be deduced in subsequent lessons for both groups.

3.7. THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

3.7.1. The grammar tests

The main data was gathered with three grammar tests, which focused on English prepositions exclusively. The data gathered with the three tests (a pre-test, (Appendix 1A), a post-test, (Appendix 1B) and a delayed post-test (Appendix 1C) provided information regarding the learners' competence levels before the intervention, immediately after the intervention, and eight weeks after the intervention. The biographical data of the respondents was gathered with a questionnaire (see Appendix 1D). The three tests used to gather data were structured as shown below:

3.7.2. The pre-test

In Section A of the pre-test, learners were required to circle the prepositions from a list of given words to see if they could identify prepositions. In each list there were 5 prepositions among other words so that the learner who got it all correct was supposed to pick all five prepositions. One mark was awarded for each preposition that was identified. Section B required the subjects to do two activities. First, the learners were to fill in blank spaces in statements, using the correct preposition from those given and secondly the learners had to indicate if statements

given were true or false. Seven marks were awarded for this activity. In Section C, participants were required to fill in blank spaces in each of the eight sentences with one or two correct prepositions depending on the instructions given. Eight marks were given for this activity. The maximum score that a student could obtain in the pre-test was 20 marks.

3.7.3. The post-test

In Section A of the post-test, students were required to fill in the blank spaces with the correct prepositions. There were no prepositions provided. There were five blank spaces to fill in, and Section A counted five marks. Section B required the subjects to underline the prepositional phrases in the given sentences. There were five prepositional phrases to be underlined and five marks were awarded. The following section, Section C, required learners to complete the blank spaces using the correct prepositions of their choices. There were five blank spaces to be completed and 10 marks were awarded for getting it correct.

Lastly, in Section D, subjects were required to write one or two paragraphs (100-120 words) in which they use the prepositional phrases that show the following:

- a) Location
- b) Cause
- c) Time
- d) Agent
- e) Means / Instrument
- f) Manner
- g) Association

Ten marks were awarded for this part of the test. The maximum score that a student could obtain in the post-test was 30 marks.

3.7.4. The delayed post-test

In Section A, subjects were required to write five correct sentences of their own in which they included a preposition. This section counted five marks. Section B likewise required the participants to write five sentences of their own, including a prepositional phrase in each of the sentences in order to get ten marks. Section C required the respondents to write seven sentences and include prepositional phrases to show the following:

- a) Location

- b) Cause
- c) Time
- d) Agent
- e) Means / Instrument
- f) Manner
- g) Association

As part of section C, learners were also asked to use the prepositions *on* and *under* in one sentence. The maximum score for this section was 16 marks.

Section D required the learners to write three sentences that begin with prepositional phrases for three marks. Section E required the subjects to write seven sentences using any two prepositions in each sentence so that there is a sentence for each of the following for 16 marks:

- a) Location
- b) Time
- c) Cause
- d) Agent
- e) Means
- f) Manner
- g) Association
- h) preposition “*between*”

The maximum scores that a student could obtain in the delayed post-test was 50 marks. The aim of the pre-test was to determine how much the participants knew about English prepositions at the outset of the study (i.e. how much they learnt about this part of speech before the study commenced). The questionnaire, which is discussed in the next section, was used to gather biographical data of the participants.

3.7.5. The questionnaire

Questionnaires, according to Masuku (1999), Chimedza, Chipoyera and Mupambireyi (2000:11) and Haralambos and Holborn (1991) should contain clear and relevant questions. Designing a questionnaire is a technical task which should not be rushed. Questions must not be vague but clearly worded in simple language so that the respondents understand what is required of them. Responses should be truthful emanating from the fact that the questions were understood by the respondents. The authors cited above give the following guidelines to the wording of questions to ask on the questionnaire:

1. Keep questions simple, clear and concise
2. Ask one question at a time
3. Avoid leading questions
4. Avoid ambiguous language
5. Avoid unnecessary precision
6. Avoid double negative questions

In the present study, a questionnaire was used to collect biographical information about the learners. The information obtained included their ages, genders, their home languages, and their ability to read in specific South African indigenous languages, to find out if they read English books that were not related to their school work and to find out if they enjoyed learning their subjects in English.

3.8. THE NATURE OF THE TEACHING INTERVENTION

Learners in the explicit grammar instruction group (the experimental group) were exposed to content that explicitly exposed them to the different types of English prepositions, and clearly demonstrated how prepositions are used in different contexts. Learners in the experimental group engaged in activities where they had to identify prepositions after these were explained and shown to them in such a way that they understood from the start that they were being taught about prepositions. The teacher used pictures (such as those in Figure 1 below), and manipulated real objects, as they demonstrated the meanings of prepositions. For example, to demonstrate how the preposition *on* is used, the teacher showed the learners pictures of objects that were *on* top of other objects, or manipulated a real object in the classroom (e.g. by placing a book *on* a table).

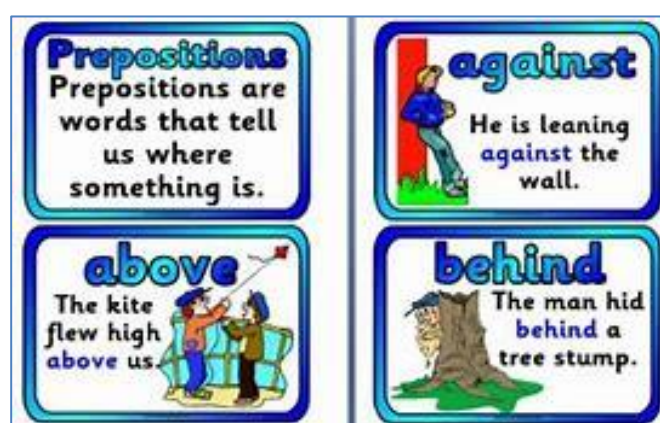


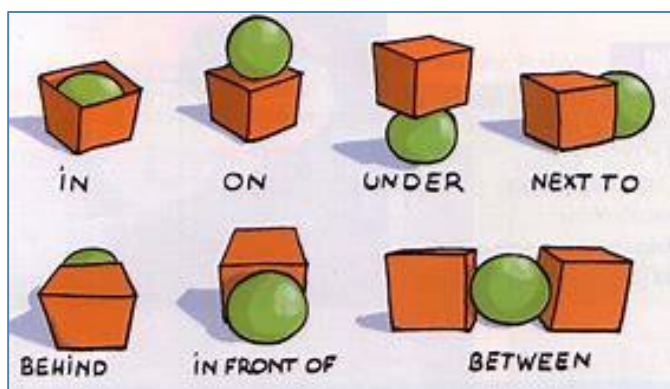
Figure 3.1. An example of pictures used by the teacher for explicit grammar instruction.

The picture above was used as an introduction to the lessons for the explicit grammar instruction group. It was considered very suitable because it has the definition of prepositions as well as illustrations. The lesson content for the experimental group was supplemented with teaching materials such as illustrations, which were sourced from the internet. The illustrations used were taken from the website <https://www.turtlediary.com/worksheet>. In the rest of this section, examples of the activities used in the explicit instruction group (i.e. the materials used in the intervention programme) will be discussed in more detail. Note that these activities were not carried out on the same day – they formed part of various lessons delivered over the course of the intervention period, which was four weeks in total.

3.8.1. Sample activity 1

INSTRUCTIONS

- Study the pictures below and note how and where the ball is placed in relation to the box.
- Take an object of your choice and place it in relation to another or other objects as you have seen in the picture provided.



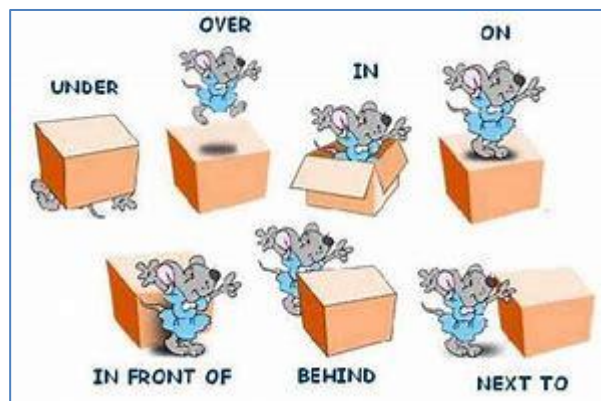
In this activity, the learners had to place objects *on*, *under*, *beside*, *next to* and *on top of* other objects such as tables and the floor. The activities they engaged in meant that the learning experience was very active and embodied, as learners had to manipulate the learning media as shown in the pictures. Placing the objects in or on different places and describing the relationships of the objects was very interesting to learners, and learners engaged very well with such active lesson content. Learners did not necessarily formulate sentences at this stage to describe where they placed the objects they were working with. Most of the activities they

carried out were not accompanied by spoken words. In sample activity 1 and 2, the teacher explicitly explained the pictures one after the other and by focusing on the corresponding prepositions. The teacher explained that prepositions indicate the position of something (or somebody) in relation to other objects (or other people) and then demonstrated the meanings of each preposition. The rationale behind this was that the participants had to understand clearly that the lessons were centred on the different types of prepositions that occur in English, and the different roles they play in different contexts. In other words, the teacher made sure that in each activity carried out by the participants, the learners always understood that the words they were focusing on were prepositions. The teacher also explained the various categories of such prepositions.

3.8.2. Sample activity 2

INSTRUCTIONS

- a) Study the pictures below and the prepositions that illustrate them.
- b) Draw pictures of your own that correspond with those in the pictures provided and label them with the correct respective prepositions.



In Activity 2 and Activity 3, learners in the treatment group were involved in expressing themselves in terms of where they placed themselves, such as *under*, *on*, *near*, *beside*, *between* and *behind* other people or objects. Learners also made sentences to indicate the current position of their peers in relation to their positions, for example using *in front of* or *behind*. For example, *I am **under** the table but you are sitting **on** the chair.*

3.8.3. Sample activity 3

INSTRUCTIONS

- Study the pictures below and the captions under each of them.
- Work with your partner to do the activities in the pictures and repeat the captions for the respective actions.
- Draw pictures or cut them from magazines and newspapers and write the appropriate captions for each of them.
- Exchange your work and identify the types of prepositions used.

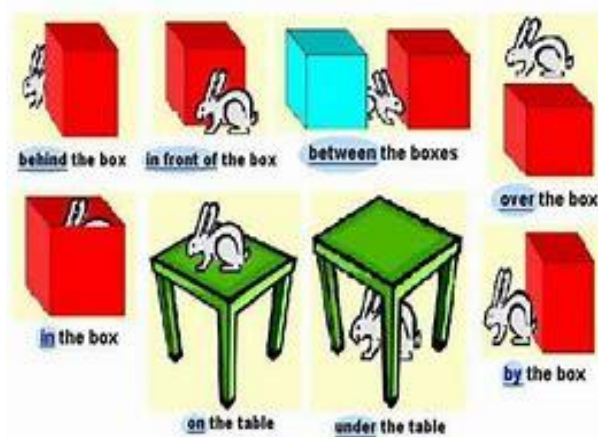


Furthermore, pieces of writings with highlighted prepositions and PPs were provided for the group to work with. For instance, the writing had a picture of a child standing in front of the table and it was written “I am **in front of** the table”, the preposition was in bold. The instructions given were clearly referring to the PPs as the ones the group was focusing on so that the learners were clear at all times that they were working with prepositions and PPs.

3.8.4. Sample activity 4

INSTRUCTIONS

- Separate the pictures and the captions.
- Put the captions in a separate container from the pictures.
- Pick a picture and find a caption that goes with it.



Constant reference to the meanings and purposes of different prepositions helped the group to keep the objectives of the lessons in mind as they worked with the prepositions. In short, the teaching and learning aids highlighted prepositions, and the instructions directed the learners' attention to the prepositions being taught. In their written work they even indicated the topic and definitions of PPs and prepositions so that they remained aware that they were working with prepositions.

Consider the following example of prepositions which the explicit instruction group worked with. (This is an extract from the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Oscar Wilde).

3.8.5. Sample activity 5

INSTRUCTIONS

- a) Identify the words that are written in bold font.
- b) Explain their role in the sentences.
- c) Use each of the words (prepositions) in sentences of your own that are similar to the ones in the text.

The studio was filled **with** the rich perfume **of** flowers. Lord Henry Wotton lay smoking. Everything was still. In the centre **of** the room was a portrait* **of** a beautiful young man. The artist, Basil Hallward, was sitting **in front of** it, smiling. ‘It is your best work,’ said Lord Henry. ‘Show it **at** the Grosvenor.’ ‘No, I can’t. There is too much **of** me **in** it,’ answered Hallward. ‘You don’t look like the picture!’ said Lord Henry. ‘You have an intellectual face but this young man is an Adonis. He is beautiful. He never thinks, I am sure. You are not like him at all.’ ‘You don’t understand, replied Hallward. I know I don’t look like him, I would be sorry to. Dorian Gray’s beauty will disappear. It is better to be ugly and stupid, and live **in** peace.’ ‘Is that his name?’ asked Lord Henry. ‘Yes,’ answered Hallward. ‘I didn’t want to tell you. I prefer secrets, they are more romantic.’ ‘I agree,’ said Lord Henry. ‘I know nothing **about** my wife, and she knows nothing **about** me. The two young men laughed and went **into** the garden where they sat **in** the shade.

Similar paragraphs and passages were given to the experimental group throughout the intervention to practise their knowledge of prepositions. The group also completed activities where they had to underline the prepositions in given texts, as is shown in sample activity 6 below.

3.8.6. Sample activity 6

INSTRUCTIONS:

- a). Read the following passage taken from “*English Today Grade 9, 2015*” and underline all the prepositions in it.
- b). Use the prepositions you have underlined in your own sentences.

SAVING OUR TREES

When the Gautrain project started in 2006 in Gauteng Province, hundreds of kilometres of new train lines had to be built. This caused disruption throughout the Pretoria and Johannesburg areas for more than five years, until the first line was opened in 2011.

The Gautrain is a high-speed train, which runs on two main routes – one from OR Tambo International Airport to Sandton, and one from Sandton to Pretoria. There is also a branch line, which goes to Park Station via Rosebank Station. The decision to build the Gautrain was taken in order to reduce the number of cars on the roads between Pretoria and Johannesburg. It was hoped that many people would use the Gautrain to commute to the city and to the airport. In order to make this easier, free buses transport commuters from the stations to the surrounding suburbs.

New stations were built along the routes. There are nine stations altogether along the Gautrain routes. The new Rosebank Station was built deep underground beneath Oxford Street. When the station was built, many trees had to be removed as the lines into the station and the roads for public transport were built.

For every tree that was removed for the construction of the Rosebank Station, Gauteng Environmental Management planted three indigenous trees. These trees were not planted in the Rosebank area, which is already full of trees, were planted in the surrounding areas that needed trees.

Many of the trees in Rosebank were removed to be replanted elsewhere. With the help of environmental specialists from Johannesburg City Parks, 95 trees were carefully uprooted from Rosebank and replanted in Emmarentia, Soweto, and along the Golden Highway.

However, some of the trees which were removed could not be replanted. Many of the trees were too old and would not have survived in a new location. Others were classified as alien invasive trees. Examples of the alien trees removed are the Jacaranda trees, which actually came from Argentina and were planted here many years ago. Jacarandas have a short life and become brittle and dangerous as they grow older. No alien trees are welcome in South Africa. They need too much of our precious water in order to grow and they make it difficult for our own plants and trees to grow. The Gautrain management therefore decided to plant young indigenous trees instead. They planted three trees for each one removed. By taking care of trees, Gautrain pays attention to its Environmental Management Plan.

(Extracted from *English Today First Additional Language Grade 9*)

In Activity 6, the participants had to underline the prepositions in the text, and had to report back to each other as pairs or small groups of four. They also went on to use such prepositions in their own contexts.

In the next section, the results of the pilot study, which was conducted to assess the feasibility of the study, and to test the reliability of the research instruments will be discussed.

3.9. THE PILOT STUDY

In order to determine the viability of the current study, a pilot study was carried out with 20 Grade 10 learners. The pilot study involved 6 weeks of teaching and testing (three grammar tests were conducted, as was planned for the main study). A further aim of the pilot study was to test the research instruments, to see if they were valid and reliable.

3.9.1. Pilot study participants' biographical data

A questionnaire similar to that described in Section 3.6.2.2 was used to collect biographical information about the learners in the pilot study. Table 3.1. shows the biographical data of the 20 participants.

Table 3.1. Age and demographic details of participants in the pilot study

	Average age	Female	Male	Total
Totals		10	10	20
Zulu	16.5	5	5	10
Sotho	16.6	5	5	10
Can read Sesotho books		5	5	10
Can read IsiZulu books		5	5	10
Can read English books		10	10	20
Enjoy learning subjects in English		10	10	20

The table shows that all the 20 respondents in the pilot study could read books in their respective L1s. It also shows that they all could read books in English. All the respondents indicated that they enjoyed learning other subjects in English. As mentioned above, the pilot

study was carried out with a total of 20 participants. The control group (implicit grammar group, labelled Group 1) had 10 participants, and the treatment group (explicit grammar instruction group, labelled Group 2) also had 10 participants. In group 1, five learners had isiZulu as their L1 and five learners had Sesotho as their L1. In group 2 the distribution was the same as in group 1. The pre-test was administered to both groups, to establish their competence levels with regards to English prepositions. Therefore, most of the questions in the pre-test were about identifying prepositions from the contexts given. Since it was a pre-test, no teaching had been done before the administering of the test. In the next sections, the content of the tests employed in the pilot study will be discussed.

3.9.2. The pilot research instruments

The research instrument that were used in the pilot study closely resembled the instruments that were used in the main study. These instruments are recapped here, for easy reference.

3.9.2.1. The pre-test

In Section A of the pre-test, learners were required to circle the prepositions from a list of given words to see if they could identify prepositions. In each list there were five prepositions among other words, so that the learner who got it all correct was supposed to identify all five prepositions. One mark was awarded for each correctly identified preposition. Section B then required the subjects to do two activities, first the learners had to fill the blank spaces in statements using the correct preposition from those given. Secondly, they had to indicate if the other statements given were true or false. Seven marks were awarded for this activity.

In Section C, participants were required to fill in blank spaces in each of the eight sentences with one or two correct prepositions depending on the instructions given. Again, one mark was given for each correct answer. The maximum score that a student could obtain in the pre-test was 20 marks.

3.9.2.2. The post-test

In Section A of the post-test, students were required to fill in the blank spaces with the correct prepositions. There were no prepositions provided. There were five blank spaces to fill in, and Section A thus counted five marks. Section B required the learners to underline the prepositional phrases in the given sentences. There were five prepositional phrases to be underlined and the section counted five marks. Section C required learners to complete blank spaces using the correct prepositions of their choices. There were five blank spaces to be completed and 10 marks were awarded for getting it correct. Lastly in Section D, participants were required to write one or two paragraphs (100-120 words) in which they use the prepositional phrases that show the following:

- a) Location
- b) Cause
- c) Time
- d) Agent
- e) Means / Instrumental
- f) Manner
- g) Association

10 marks were awarded for this part of the test. The maximum score that a student could obtain in the post-test was 20 marks.

3.9.2.3. The delayed post-test

In Section A, learners were required to write five sentences of their own, in which they include a preposition (in each of the sentences). Section A counted five marks. Section B required the participants to write five sentences of their own, including a prepositional phrase in each of the sentences in order to get 10 marks. Section C required the respondents to write seven correct sentences and include prepositional phrases to represent the same functions as in a) to g) above.

Section C also required of learners to write one sentence that included the prepositions *on* and *under* in one sentence. 16 marks were awarded for this section. Section D required the learners to write three sentences that begin with prepositional phrases, for three marks. Section E (counting 16 marks) required the learners to write seven sentences using any two prepositions in each sentence so that there is a sentence for each of the following: a) Location b) Time c) Cause d) Agent e) Means f) Manner g) Association h) preposition “*between*”

The maximum scores that a student could obtain in the delayed post-test was 50 marks.

3.9.3 THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY

In this section the results obtained in the pilot study on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test are reported. In section 3.9.1, the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation (SD) and standard error of the mean (SEM) are presented for each of the groups. Section 3.9.2 presents the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, which was used to determine whether the data obtained on each of the tests in the pilot study were normally distributed. In section 3.9.4, the researcher presents the results of an independent samples T-test, which was used to determine if there were any group differences between the groups in the pilot study. Finally, in section 3.9.4, the researcher discusses how the reliability and validity of the research instruments (the three grammar tests) were determined. The Pilot Study data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.9.3.1. Descriptive statistics: pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test

Table 3.2. present the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation (SD) and standard error of the mean (SEM) are presented for each of the groups.

Table 3.2. Pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test descriptive statistics

	Group	N	Mean %	SD	SEM
Pre-test	1	10	53.5	14.54	4.6
	2	10	52.	8.88	2.81
Post-test	1	10	69	15.24	4.82
	2	10	68	10.8	3.41
Delayed post-test	1	10	73	13.3	4.21
	2	10	67	15.53	4.9

Group 1 = implicit grammar instruction, Group 2 = explicit instruction group

The pre-test was administered to test the participants' knowledge of English prepositions before the intervention. Group 1 obtained an average 53.5% (SD = 14.53), while Group 2 obtained an average of 52% (SD = 8.88). The post-test was meant to test the effect of the type of grammar instruction that was administered to each of the groups. In the post-test, Group 1 obtained an average of 69% (SD = 15.23), while Group 2 scored an average of 68% (SD = 10.8). The results of the delayed post-test indicated that Group 1, on face value, outperformed Group 2 (M Group 1 = 73.44%, SD = 13.3; M Group 2 = 68.11%, SD = 15.5). However, as will be demonstrated below, there were no significant differences in the performance of the implicit grammar instruction and explicit grammar groups in the pilot study.

3.9.3.2. Test of normality

In this section, the statistics about the normality of the data are presented. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess whether the data gathered with the three pilot instruments were normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test tests the null hypothesis that a sample came from a normally distributed population (Razali and Wah 2011). The null hypothesis is rejected when the p-value is less than 0.05. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test is reported in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3. The Shapiro-Wilk test

	Group	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	1	0.868	10	0.094
	2	0.914	10	0.311
Post-test	1	0.859	10	0.074
	2	0.929	10	0.442
Delayed post-test	1	0.852	10	0.061
	2	0.960	10	0.783

Group 1 = implicit grammar instruction, Group 2 = explicit instruction group

The results of the normality tests above indicate that the null hypothesis of normality is not rejected, since all p-values are greater 0.05. The implication of this is that the assumption of normality was found to hold in both groups, and for all three data collection instruments (i.e. the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test).

3.9.3.3. Independent Samples T-Test

In the pilot study, the researcher utilized independent samples T-tests in order to determine if there were any significant differences between the mean scores obtained by the two groups. The T-test is an inferential statistic that is used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups – here, the two groups in comparison are the groups that received implicit and explicit teaching methods. The results of the T-statistic reported below are accompanied by the Levene’s test for the equality of variance. Levene’s test is an inferential statistic that is used to assess the equality of variances for a variable calculated on two or more groups. The null hypothesis for the T-test is a statement of equality which means that the mean scores between the two groups in this study are the same, while the alternative hypothesis states that there is a significant difference between the mean scores for the two groups. Levene’s test has a null hypothesis that assumes equal variances across the two samples. The results of these two tests are reported in the Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4. Levene's test for Equality of variance and T-test for equality of means

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	6.425	0.021	0.278	18	0.784	1.5
	Equal variances not assumed			0.278	14.896	0.785	1.5
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	2.866	0.108	0.169	18	0.867	1.0
	Equal variances not assumed			0.169	16.216	0.868	1.0
Delayed post-test	Equal variances assumed	0.161	0.693	0.866	18	0.398	5.6
	Equal variances not assumed			0.866	17.584	0.398	5.6

The results showed that the null hypothesis of equal variances can be adopted for both the post-test and delayed post-test ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the variation in scores in the two groups was homogeneous. However, in the pre-test, the null hypothesis should be rejected ($p < 0.05$). The implication is that, in the pre-test, the variation in scores were less homogeneous (the variances in scores obtained by the two groups were not the same).

The results of the T-tests showed that there were no significant differences between Group 1 and Group 2 in any of the means obtained on the pilot tests, since the probability values are all greater than the 0.05. The implication is that there was no difference in the mean scores for the two groups. This could be attributed to a smaller sample being used in the pilot study and the limited teaching materials used in the explicit grammar group. Despite this finding of the pilot study, the researcher decided not to discard the study, since the main study would have a larger sample than the pilot study and the teaching materials will also be revisited to significantly distinguish the explicit grammar instruction (experimental) group from the implicit grammar instruction (control) group by giving more exposure to the former.

3.9.4. Reliability and validity of the research instruments

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989:185) reliability “provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate”. Data is said to be reliable if it does not change – this means that if the same study is carried out with different participants, the data that is collected should be the same across the two studies. Reliability includes the following factors: consistency, accuracy, reproducibility or replication of the results. Cacumba (2013:113) maintains that internal reliability refers to “the consistency of data collection, analysis and interpretation”. This means that should an independent researcher reanalyse the data, he/she should produce the same results as those produced by the original researcher. Also, the conclusion made by the independent researcher should be the same as those of the original researcher. Cacumba (ibid: 114) defines external reliability as “the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those of obtained by the original study”. According to Cacumba various ways can be used to guarantee external reliability including quantification and the statistical application of a reliability test to test the reliability of test items.

The reliability of research instruments can be measured with statistical techniques, such as the Cronbach Alpha. Nunnally (1978) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001:248) concur that a Cronbach Alpha of .70 or higher is acceptable and can be taken as an indication that a research tool is reliable. The research instruments used in the pilot study were tested for reliability. The Cronbach Alpha test was used in this regard. The pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test were administered. The results of the reliability assessment is presented in the next section.

3.9.4.1. Reliability Statistics

Table 3.5 below shows the reliability of the instruments pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test.

Table 3.5. Reliability Statistics: Pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test

	Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Pre-test	0.732	0.733	20
Post -test	0.578	0.574	30
Delayed post-test	0.809	0.812	50

From the results of the pre-test it was deduced that the Cronbach's alpha was computed as 0.732 which indicates that the instrument was reliable, as the value of the Cronbach's alpha lies on the acceptable range of internal consistency (Cohen 1988).

Regarding the post-test, it can be deduced from Table 3.5 that the reliability of the test was questionable. The implication for the researcher was that the reliability of this test was deemed unacceptable, and thus the researcher had to look for the problematic items and eliminate them from the test. In doing so, it was established that items 7, 13, 15, 19 and 23 seemed to be unreliable, and these items were thus removed from the reliability analysis. The remaining 25 test items were tested again for reliability and the results were more favourable. The Cronbach's alpha statistic improved to 0.69 which can be rounded off to 0.70. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 is deemed acceptable. The argument here is that the removal of the five items which were problematic rendered a more reliable test, and thus these five items of the post-test were also removed from the final post-test, which was used in the main study. Table 3.5 above indicates that the Cronbach's alpha for the delayed Post-test was 0.81. This implies that this test was very reliable since the value of the Cronbach's alpha statistic indicates that the internal consistency of the test was good. The pre-test and the delayed post-test that were used in the pilot study were thus used in exactly the same format in the main study.

Validity is also needed for a study to be acceptable. Validity can be defined as "the extent to which the data collection procedure measures what it intends to measure" (Bell 1995:65). Here, the focus is on how the data is obtained from the participants. In other words, for instance, if a researcher wants to measure a specific language skill, the test used to assess the skill should measure performance on that skill (i.e. if a researcher is interested in students' writing ability, students should be given a writing task). According to Cacumba (2013: 114) there are many threats to validity, including "participant mortality or attrition, practice effect and maturation". Attrition refers to those participants who are lost from the study for different reasons. Another threat is the practice effect. A practice effect refers to how the learners' practice during the study affects the results of the study. The third threat is maturation, which refers to physical or psychological changes in the participants over time and the participants desire to meet expectations meaning exhibiting performance that participants believe is expected of them. This means that if any of these occurs during data gathering then the study's validity may be compromised. However, in this study, the researcher ensured that there was no attrition. The researcher encouraged the learners to attend classes without fail which they did. In addition, there was enough time between the assessments to avoid a practice effect. Moreover, even if

the practice effect had occurred, one would expect it to be the same in both groups in which case it would not hamper the validity of the study results. With regards to maturation, the study took place over a reasonably short time – four weeks of study. Therefore, maturation was unlikely to be a threat to the validity of the research results. However, if maturation occurred it would be appropriate to assume that it was the same in both groups.

Validity consists of two components, namely internal and external validity. According to Mackey and Gass (2005:119) internal validity is defined as “the extent to which the results of a study are a function of the factor that the researcher intends”. The results of the present study are not biased. They are objective (as far as this is possible in quantitative research) and not subjective. If there are any differences they can be attributed to the intervention (explicit grammar instruction) under study. In short, it is important to ask if the research design would enable the researcher to obtain valid results, and in this case, a quantitative quasi-experimental design allowed the researchers to obtain valid results, given the aims of the study. Also, internal validity was guaranteed by using grammar tests that assessed learners’ knowledge of English prepositions. While it is not impossible that poor overall grammar skills could have affected learners’ ability to complete the grammar tests accurately, it is still correct to state that the grammar tests that were designed for the study assessed learners’ competence regarding the use of English prepositions.

Mackey and Gass (2005: 119) define external validity as “...generalisability of our findings,... the extent to which the findings of the study are relevant not only to the research population, but also the wider population of language learners”. To add to this, Cacumba (2013: 116) believes that the question that needs to be asked is “Is the research design such that we can generalise beyond the populations, situations, times or environments under investigation to a wider population?”. What can be noted here is that external validity depends on internal validity. Once the results are internally valid then it follows that externally the results are valid. External validity is all about going beyond just the study results. It is taking the results of the study and linking them to other similar situations, accepting the results and being able to apply them in the same situations globally.

3.10. IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON THE PILOT STUDY OBSERVATIONS

Although the research instruments were reliable (albeit with slight changes to the post-test), they still needed to be adjusted to improve readability and to make it easier for the learners to

answer the questions. These adjustments were cosmetic and did not involve setting new questions. The changes involved the layout of the content on the question papers for the tests given. The following cosmetic changes were made:

3.10.1. Pre-test improvements

Section A: The spaces between the answers from which the participants would choose were too small, resulting in the answers being too close to each other. Some participants asked for clarifications in this regard and the researcher had to show the distinctions between the answers. It was therefore seen that the question paper needed to be improved and the researcher implemented this change, namely increasing the spaces between the answers. The change was helpful in that it eliminated the need for the participants to ask for clarifications since they could then see all the questions (and in some cases possible answers) clearly.

Section B and Section C of the pre-test had questions that required subjects to fill in the blank spaces on the question paper itself. During the administration of the test it was seen that the fill in spaces provided were too small and the learners had to squeeze their answers which was difficult for those whose handwritings were large. This necessitated a change in which the spaces for the answers were enlarged. After enlarging the spaces, it was much easier for the learners to fill in their answers on the question paper as planned.

3.10.2. The post-test

The post-test also needed to be improved. Section A and Section C of the question paper had spaces for filling in answers. However, just like in the previous test, the spaces were very small. During the administering of the test it was discovered that there was need for the spaces to be enlarged. This was done, to ensure that learners could complete the test with ease.

Section D of post-test had a space for the participants to write their answers. The spaces had no lines for the subjects to write on. That was a problem in that some participants would not write neatly on the space provided. In adapting the tests, lines were drawn on which the answers would be written. It was a very necessary change on the question paper because it enabled the participants to write their answers properly. There were no improvements made on the delayed post-test.

3.10.3. Questionnaire improvements

The questionnaire needed some improvements also in that the spaces for the answers which participants needed to write were small; also, the answers to be chosen from were too close to each other. So, the necessary changes were made on the questionnaire.

In improving the questionnaire, the answers were separated to be visibly far from each other. This was necessary to avoid cases in which participants would be forced to choose the answers that did not apply to them because they would not see the appropriate ones. In addition, enlarging the spaces for writing on ensured that the participants would not be forced to squeeze their answers together making such answers invisible, clumsy and difficult to read which would make the researcher guess at what participants would have written. Enlarging the spaces for filling in blank spaces had the effect of making the participants write their answers properly and clearly for easy reading.

In short, the changes made were just structural and did not involve changing the wording of any question on the assessments. The post-test instrument had 30 questions and after testing for reliability the Cronbach's alpha was below the acceptable cut-off of 0.70. There were five items on the instrument that were problematic and these were removed from the research instrument. Following this, the instrument was internally reliable. So, the instruments were reliable to be used in the main study for the purposes for which they were designed. The instructions on all the research instruments were in simple language for the participants to understand. The blank spaces for filling in were large enough to accommodate all lengths of answers.

3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are as important as the validity and reliability of the study in that an unethically conducted research is fraudulent and cannot be taken seriously. Research has to be conducted in such a way that the respondents are not disadvantaged, humiliated, belittled, degraded or exposed to unfavourable conditions before, during and after the study. The research should be conducted in a principled way. Silverman (2000: 201) observes that while researchers conduct their studies, they should remember that they are getting access into the participants' private spaces, so the researchers should "respect the rights, needs, values and desires of informants..."

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 420) observe that ethical guidelines “include ...issues related to informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, harm to subjects, and privacy and others.” The following (paraphrased from Cacumba 2013) are some of the steps taken to ensure that a research study is conducted in an ethical manner. First, informed consent involves the prospective participants being told about what the research is about and what are expected from them during the research. They are also informed about any risks involved in participating in the research. In addition, they are advised that they are free to withdraw their participation at any level of the study should they so wish. Then prospective participants are invited to give their consent.

Secondly, confidentiality and anonymity involve the researcher keeping the identities of the participants unknown to third parties. The researcher should not share the data from the participants with any unauthorised person(s). Third, honesty and trust entail that researchers should strive for honesty in all scientific communications. They should not falsify the data they collect in order to fabricate desirable results. They should not misrepresent facts and they should not mislead other researchers or members of the public. Fourth, courtesy involves researchers not intruding unnecessarily into participants’ lives or making unfair or unnecessary demands on participants’ time and knowledge. Fifth, objectivity entails that the researcher should strive to be unbiased at all times. The facts should be reported on as they are. The researcher should not have any preconceived ideas about the outcome of the research. Sixth, carefulness involves the researcher taking all the necessary steps to make sure that accurate data are gathered. The researcher should avoid careless errors and mistakes. Seventh, the researcher should have respect for intellectual property. All the sources that are consulted should be acknowledged by the researcher.

3.11.1. Ethical conduct in this study

Data cannot just collect in a haphazard manner. Procedures have to be followed, and these have to be ethically appropriate. In the present study, the first step was to obtain ethical clearance for the study from The University of South Africa (UNISA). The researcher submitted his ethical clearance application to the Linguistics department for approval by the ethical review committee. The researcher was notified that ethical clearance was granted. The clearance letter from UNISA is attached as Appendix 2.

In order to conduct the present study at the school where the researcher teaches, the researcher requested written permission from the principal (see Appendix 3). The permission was given by the principal who signed the consent letter given to him by the researcher (see Appendix 4). For the private school, the principal is in complete charge of the school and a private school is given a degree of autonomy by the Department of Basic Education to decide on its affairs hence the consent of the principal was considered enough. In addition, the researcher requested for the consent of those parents whose children were under 18 (Appendix 5) and these underaged learners were asked to complete an assent form (over and above the consent from their parents / guardians were asked to complete). Learners who were 18 and above were asked to provide informed consent (Appendix 6). Learners were only included in the study if consent and, where applicable assent were obtained.

Following this, the researcher addressed the three Grade 10 classes and explained to them that he wanted to study how learners acquired English prepositions. He explained to the learners that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point. The researcher further explained that learners who were under 18 who wished to participate in the study had to get written permission from their parents. In such cases, the parents were provided with letters, which requested informed consent for participants younger than 18 to take part in the study. Learners aged 18 were invited to sign the consent forms themselves, but were encouraged to share information about the research study with their parents or guardians. All this happened before the start of the study. After all the necessary communications were made, the signed informed consent forms were returned to the researcher. Following this, the study started.

3.11.2. Ethical issues relating to the dissemination of the findings

According to Cacumba (2013:120) “Dissemination is generally understood as the tailored and targeted distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific public audience of researchers, teachers, educators, learners, decision-makers and other stakeholders ... done through the traditional vehicles of journal publication and academic conference presentations or through a process of extracting the main messages derived from research results in a way that encourages the audience to react and act through new ideas, practices, and new materials.”

If ethical considerations are not adhered to, it is easy for confidential information to end up in the public domain. If the results of a study are to be known by the public, the onus is with the

researcher to assure that the anonymity of the people involved in the research is not jeopardised. In the present study, the anonymity of participants was guaranteed in the following manner:

1. Participants' names on tests and on the questionnaire were replaced by numerical identifiers. For example, the identifiers 101; 102; 103 etc. were used to identify the participants in the implicit instruction group, whereas the identifiers 201; 202; 203 etc. were used to represent the participants in the explicit instruction group.
2. No individual learner data was reported; all scores were presented as group scores.
3. The name of the institution where the study was conducted was not given.

Thus, anonymity was preserved as the researcher had promised the respondents before the start of the study.

3.12. THE MAIN STUDY

The main study was conducted at the same school as the Pilot Study in the months of June, July and August 2019. In these months the three tests (pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test) were administered to the participants. This was done so as not to hinder the participants during the examination month of September which were mid-year exams. The delayed post-test was given in the month of November in which the end of year examinations were undertaken. It did not interfere with the school examination calendar since it was scheduled to be given one week before the start of the school examinations. As such, it served as extra preparation for the Grade 10 EFAL examination. None of the participants who formed part of the pilot study were included in the main study, and the data obtained in the pilot study was not included in the main analysis (which will be presented in Chapter 4). Table 3.6 below shows the biographical data of the participants in the main study:

Table 3.6. Biographical data of the participants in the main study

Groups	N	Girls	Boys	Age Range	Average Age	Sesotho L1	IsiZulu L1
Implicit instruction (Group 1)	60	30	30	15 – 18	16.6	30	30
Explicit instruction (Group 2)	60	30	30	15 – 18	16.6	30	30

3.13. CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the research approach and design. It observed that the research design is generally influenced by two approaches to research namely the synthetic or the holistic approach (qualitative approach) and the analytic approach (quantitative approach). In the holistic approach researchers examine and view separate parts of a coherent whole. In the analytic approach researchers identify and investigate one factor or group of factors of one major system. The chapter explained the qualitative and the quantitative research designs and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of these designs. Given that the most suited approach for the present study was a quantitative approach, the chapter further explained the research design (a quasi-experimental design) and explained every step of the research process including formulating the research questions, developing research instruments and collecting and analysing data as well as interpreting the findings. The chapter recaptured the research questions as previously stated in Chapter one of this study. Two research hypotheses were posed. The chapter examined how the pilot study was carried out and how validity and reliability were ensured in the main study, based on the observations of the pilot study. The chapter reported on the findings of the pilot study as well as the amendments that were made to the research instruments to make sure that there were internally consistent, reliable and valid.

The next chapter will present the data and data analysis from the main study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE MAIN STUDY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and findings of the present study. As was explained in the previous chapter, the main study adopted a quasi-experimental design, which means that data were obtained with a pre-test, a post-test and a delayed post-test. The pre-test sought to establish the baseline knowledge of English prepositions in the two groups of participants before the start of the intervention. The post-test sought to test the participants' mastery of English prepositions following the two types of instruction (explicit vs implicit grammar instruction). The delayed post-test sought to test the participants' retention levels eight weeks after the intervention. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides the preliminary data analysis (descriptive statistics) for the entire sample as well as for the two instruction groups. The second section presents the findings of normality tests, which were conducted to assess whether the data obtained for the two groups are normally distributed. The third section presents the results of the inferential statistical tests, which were conducted to determine whether the two groups were significantly different from each other following the teaching intervention.

4.2. THE RESULTS OF THE MAIN STUDY

This study sought to establish whether implicit or explicit grammar teaching methods are more effective in teaching grammar to EFAL learners who have a Sotho language or isiZulu as L1. The research also aimed to determine whether the L1 of the learners had an effect on the mastering of English prepositions. In the following section, the descriptive statistics for the study are reported and this is done so as to understand the characteristics of the sample that is dealt with in the study. The two language groups were split across the explicit and implicit instruction conditions.

4.2.1. Descriptive statistics for the entire sample

In this section descriptive statistics will be presented using measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and other descriptive statistics. These will show how the data is distributed and may indicate if there are any abnormalities in the data. IBM SPSS (version 26) was used for all the statistical analyses.

Table 4.1 below indicates that a sample of 120 learners participated in the pre-test, post-test as well as the delayed post-test. Thus, the same number of participants was tested in the three tests that were conducted in this study. It is also important to note that there were no missing cases in the data used in the study as all cases were valid.

Table 4.1. Number of valid cases for each of the tests conducted

Test	Number	Percentage of valid cases
Pre-test%	120	100%
Post-test%	120	100%
Delayed post-test%	120	100%

Table 4.2 reports a summary of the descriptive statistics for the pre-test, post-test as well as the delayed post-test, as obtained for the entire sample

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test for the entire sample

Test		Statistic	Standard error
Pre-test	Mean (%)	54.54	0.84
	Variance	86.13	
	Std. Deviation	9.28	
	Skewness	-0.75	0.22
	Minimum	30	
	Maximum	70	
	Kurtosis	0.02	0.4
Post-test	Mean (%)	70.33	1.06
	Variance	135.84	
	Std. Deviation	11.65	
	Skewness	-0.4	0.22
	Minimum	43.33	
	Maximum	90	
	Kurtosis	-0.55	0.4
Delayed post-test	Mean (%)	67.83	0.82
	Variance	80.84	
	Std. Deviation	8.99	
	Skewness	-0.25	0.22
	Minimum	46	
	Maximum	84	
	Kurtosis	-0.8	0.44

Given the data reported above, it is evident that the mean scores for the pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test were 54.54%, 70.33% and 67.83% respectively. Generally, by just observing how the mean changes from 54.54% to 70.33% it seems to be that the mean score obtained on the English prepositions tests improved in the sample as a whole after grammar instruction took place. The delayed post-test results indicated a drop in the performance of the learners as the average score was found to be equal to 67.83%, which perhaps indicates that the students tended to forget some of the content that they had been taught during classes. Respectively, the standard deviations were 9.28, 11.65 and 8.99. This means that there was greater deviation from the mean in the learners' test scores in the post-test than in the other two tests.

Skewness is a measure of how symmetric the probability distribution of a given data set is, in other words it represents the extent to which a given distribution varies from a normal distribution. The value of skewness can be positive, negative, zero or undefined. If skewness is less than -1 or greater than 1, then the implication would be that the distribution is highly skewed. If skewness is between -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5 and 1 it is said that the distribution is moderately skewed. Lastly, if the skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5, the distribution is approximately symmetric (Ayadi, Cao, Lazrak and Wang 2019). Based on the values of skewness reported in table 4.2, it is noted that the data for the pre-test was moderately skewed to the left, while that of the post-test and the delayed post-test was approximately symmetric. Kurtosis is a measure of the pointedness of a data set. If the kurtosis value is negative it means the data has a tail to the left and if it is positive it has a tail to the right. If it is greater than positive 1, the distribution is too peaked and if it is less than positive 1, the distribution is too flat. If the kurtosis is equal to 1 the data is normally distributed. A value of greater than 3 suggests that the distribution has a heavy tail, and if it is less than 3 it has a light tail (Gujarati 2008). From table 4.2, the kurtosis values were 0.07, -0.55 and -0.8 for the pre-test, the post-test and delayed post-test respectively which means the distribution of the data was flat with light tails in all three tests.

4.2.2. Descriptive statistics for the two instruction groups

The first research question asked whether there is a significant difference in the learning outcomes (with regards to the PP) of learners that were instructed via explicit methods, compared to learners that were instructed via implicit methods. Given that detecting differences between the two instruction groups was the researcher's primary research interest, it follows logically that the descriptive statistics for the implicit and explicit instruction groups need to be presented. In Table 4.3, the descriptive statistics for the two instruction groups are given.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics for the two instruction groups (implicit and explicit)

Test	Group		Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-test	1	Mean	54.50	1.132
		Variance	76.86	
		Std. Deviation	8.78	
		Minimum	35	
		Maximum	70	
		Skewness	-0.56	0.30
		Kurtosis	-0.26	0.60
	2	Mean	54.58	1.27
		Variance	96.86	
		Std. Deviation	9.84	
		Minimum	30	
		Maximum	70	
		Skewness	-0.90	0.30
		Kurtosis	0.22	0.61
Post-test	1	Mean	65.28	1.21
		Variance	87.87	
		Std. Deviation	9.37	
		Minimum	43.33	
		Maximum	83.33	
		Skewness	-0.39	0.31
		Kurtosis	-0.52	0.61
	2	Mean	75.39	1.5
		Variance	134.12	
		Std. Deviation	11.58	
		Minimum	43.33	
		Maximum	90.	
		Skewness	-1.17	0.31
		Kurtosis		

		Kurtosis	0.84	0.61
Delayed post-test	1	Mean	64.70	1.09
		Variance	70.76	
		Std. Deviation	8.41	
		Minimum	46	
		Maximum	80	
		Range	34	
		Interquartile Range	14	
		Skewness	0.00	0.31
		Kurtosis	-0.55	0.61
	2	Mean	70.97	1.1
		Variance	72.34	
		Std. Deviation	8.50	
		Minimum	48	
		Maximum	84	
		Skewness	-0.63	0.31
		Kurtosis	-0.45	0.60

Group 1 = Implicit grammar instruction; Group 2 = explicit grammar instruction

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the two groups performed similarly in the pre-test (Group 1 M = 54.58% and Group 2 M = 54.50%). In the post-test, the following means were recorded respectively: Group 1 M = 65.23%; Group 2 M = 75.39%. Thus, Group 2 seemed to outperform Group 1 in the post-test. In the delayed post-test the same result occurred, with Group 2 obtaining a mean percentage of 70.97 and Group 1 obtaining a mean percentage of 64.70. Therefore, both groups improved in the post-test, but the explicit instruction group (experimental group) seemed to improve more than the implicit instruction group (control group). The performance in both groups dropped in the delayed post-test – this may be due to the fact that the learners had forgotten how some English prepositions functioned. Nevertheless, the experimental group again obtained a higher mean score (M = 70.97%) than the control group (M = 64.70%).

The standard deviation of 9.37 and 11.58 for Group 1 and 2 in the pre-test shows that there was slightly more variation in the deviations from the mean among learners in Group 2. This was true for both the pre-test and the delayed post-test. The skewness of -0.56 and -0.9 for Group 1 and 2 respectively show that both groups in the pre-test were negatively skewed, but group 1 was more symmetric than group 2. In the post-test both groups were negatively skewed but

group 2 (-1.17) was more symmetric than group 1 (-0.39). In the delayed post-test, Group 1 showed the positive skew of (0.001) and Group 2 was still negatively skewed (-0.63). Kurtosis indicates the pointedness of the data. The statistics obtained for the two groups showed that in the pre-test, Group 1's data was more peaked than Group 2's, and the former had a positive tail while the latter had a negative tail. In the post-test, Group 1 (-0.52) and Group 2 (0.844) had exchanged the direction of tails and the peakedness. In the delayed post-test, Group 1 (-0.54) and Group 2 (-0.45) behaved the same as in pre-test, but both had negative tails.

4.2.3. Descriptive statistics for the language groups

The second research question asked whether there are any significant differences in the acquisition of the English PP in learners who have a Sotho language as a L1, compared to learners who have isiZulu as a L1. To better understand the data patterns between the two language groups, the descriptive statistics for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics for the language groups

			Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-test	isiZulu L1	Mean	54.92	1.26
		Variance	94.48	
		Std. Deviation	9.72	
		Minimum	30	
		Maximum	70	
		Skewness	-0.81	0.31
		Kurtosis	0.07	0.61
	Sotho L1	Mean	54.17	1.15
		Variance	78.96	
		Std. Deviation	8.89	
		Minimum	30	
		Maximum	70	
		Skewness	-0.73	0.30
		Kurtosis	0.07	0.60
Post-test	isiZulu L1	Mean	69.61	1.67
		Variance	167.64	
		Std. Deviation	12.95	

		Minimum	43.33		
		Maximum	90		
		Skewness	-0.35	0.31	
		Kurtosis	-0.87	0.61	
	Sotho L1	Mean	71.06	1.32	
		Variance	105.27		
		Std. Deviation	10.26		
		Minimum	46.67		
		Maximum	86.67		
		Skewness	-0.49	0.31	
		Kurtosis	-0.19	0.61	
	Delayed post-test	isiZulu L1	Mean	67.27	1.26
			Variance	94.64	
Std. Deviation			9.73		
Minimum			46		
Maximum			84		
Skewness			-0.18	0.31	
Kurtosis			-0.98	0.61	
Sotho L1		Mean	68.40	1.06	
		Variance	67.77		
		Std. Deviation	8.23		
		Minimum	48		
		Maximum	84		
		Kurtosis	-0.61	0.61	

From Table 4.4, it is shown that the two language group performed very similarly in the pre-test as indicated by the means (isiZulu L1 M = 54.92 and Sotho L1 M = 54.17). In the post-test and delayed post-test, the Sotho L1 group improved slightly more, and seemed to marginally outperform the isiZulu L1 group as shown by the means in the post-test (Sotho L1 M= 71.1 and isiZulu L1 M = 69.6) and in the delayed post-test (Sotho L1 M = 68.40; isiZulu L1 M= 67.27).

In terms of variation, the isiZulu group has a standard deviation of 9.72 and while the Sotho group has a standard deviation of 8.9 in the pre-test results. This means that there were more deviations from the mean among the learners' scores in the Sotho group than in the isiZulu

group. In the post-test, the learners in the isiZulu group showed a larger overall deviation from the mean than the Sotho group with standard deviations of 12.95 and 10.26 respectively. In the delayed post-test, the result was similar to that of pre-test with standard deviations of 9.73 and 8.23 respectively.

In terms of skewness, both the isiZulu group and Sotho group were negatively skewed throughout the test results. In pre-test, the two groups were similar in terms of symmetry with -0.08 and -0.7 respectively. In post-test the figures were -0.35 and -0.49, that is the isiZulu group was more symmetric than the Sotho group. In the delayed post-test, both language groups' data became more symmetric (isiZulu = -0.18 and Sotho = -0.28), thus the data obtained from the isiZulu language group was more symmetrically spread than the data obtained by the Sotho language group. Regarding kurtosis, the statistics obtained for the two groups showed that in the pre-test, the isiZulu group data was very similar to the Sotho group, and both had positive tails. In the post-test, the isiZulu group data distribution was more peaked (-0.87) than the Sotho group (-0.19). In the delayed post-test, both language groups showed a similar distribution as in pre-test, but both groups had negative tails (isiZulu group = -0.98 and Sotho group = -0.61).

The next step in the data analysis (following the calculation of the descriptive statistics), was to test whether the group data was distributed normally. The reason for this is that the researcher's selection of suitable inferential statistical techniques depended on whether or not the data showed a normal distribution.

4.3. TESTS OF NORMALITY FOR THE GROUP DATA

Normality tests are used to determine if a data set is well modelled by a normal distribution (Mishra, Pandey, Singh, Gupta, Sahu and Keshri 2019). Two normality tests were conducted in order to determine which type of inferential statistical tests the researcher could use to analyse the obtained group data. Inferential statistical procedures are parametric or non-parametric, and enable the researcher to reach conclusions about significant group differences. If the data is found to be not normally distributed, then it would be imperative to make use of non-parametric tests to analyse the data, given that one of the primary assumptions of parametric tests is that the data set is normally distributed. The null hypothesis for the normality tests is that the data follows a normal distribution while the alternative hypothesis states that the data set is not normal. For the purpose of this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the

Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to test for the normality of the data. The results of the tests are reported in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Normality tests

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	1	0.17	60	0.00	0.93	60	0.003
	2	0.20	60	0.00	0.90	60	0.00
Post-test	1	0.135	60	0.01	0.96	60	0.08
	2	0.188	60	0.00	0.87	60	0.00
Delayed post-test	1	0.126	60	0.02	0.97	60	0.10
	2	0.15	60	0.00	0.93	60	0.00

Group 1 = Implicit grammar instruction; Group 2 = explicit grammar instruction

Table 4.5 shows the results of the normality tests for the pre-test, post-test as well as the delayed post-test, in both the implicit instruction and explicit instruction group. As mentioned earlier, the null hypothesis states that the data follows a normal distribution. The decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis when the probability value (p-value) is less than 0.05 (when the confidence interval is set at 95%). The findings reported in Table 4.5 indicate that the null hypothesis has to be rejected in almost all cases (i.e. for all three tests and in both instruction groups), since the p-values are less than 0.05 most of the time. Two exceptions can be seen in the results obtained from the Shapiro-Wilk test for the implicit instruction group. This test suggest that the post-test and delayed post-test data were normally distributed in the implicit instruction group ($p = 0.077$ and $p = 0.1$). However, the Kolmogorov-Smirnova tests suggested that these data sets were not normally distributed ($p = 0.009$ and $p = 0.019$). Overall then, the researcher interpreted these results as an indication that the data gathered in this study was not normally distributed. The non-normality of the data implies that parametric tests should not be applied to derive inferences about the population. As such, the researcher opted to use non-parametric tests for the statistical analysis of the data. Specifically, Mann-Whitney tests were conducted to assess group differences. It should be noted here that tests will only be run to determine differences between the two instruction groups, and to determine differences between language groups, as these were the research questions that the researcher was primarily interested in. The results of these tests are presented in the next sections.

4.4. INFERENCE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

4.4.1. Group differences

As mentioned, the Mann Whitney U test was used to determine if there were statistical differences between the instruction groups in the pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test, and between the language groups in each of the three tests. The Mann-Whitney U was utilised because the normality assumption of the independent sample t-test (which would be the parametric alternative) was violated. The null and alternative hypotheses for the Mann-Whitney U test are stated as follows:

H₀: the samples were selected from populations having the same distribution

H₁: the samples were selected from populations with different distributions

The tests were conducted first to determine if the explicit teaching method was more effective in helping Grade 10 learners to acquire English prepositions than the implicit teaching method. Secondly the tests were conducted to see if Sesotho learners would fare better with English prepositions, given the fact that there should be positive transfer from their L1 to English. In all cases, the confidence interval was set at 95%, which means that the p is significant at 0.05 or smaller (put differently, the null hypothesis is retained when p is larger than 0.05). The results of the non-parametric tests are reported in the subsequent subsections.

4.4.1.1. Mann-Whitney hypothesis testing: differences between the implicit and explicit instruction groups

This section reports the results of an independent samples Mann-Whitney test that was used to compare the mean scores of the implicit and explicit instruction groups in the pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test. Instruction group (implicit or explicit) was entered as independent variable, while the values obtained on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-tests were entered in the test field (as dependent variables). The findings of the tests are presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6. Mann-Whitney tests: differences between implicit and explicit instruction groups in the pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test.

	Null Hypothesis	Significance	Decision
1	The distribution of pre-test mean percentage is the same across categories of Group	.730	Retain the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of post-test mean percentage is the same across categories of Group	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of delayed post-test mean percentage is the same across categories of Group	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is 0.05			

As indicated in Table 4.6 above, the first null hypothesis states that the distribution of pre-test percentage is the same for the explicit and implicit instruction groups, while the alternative hypothesis states that the distribution of percentages is different for these groups. The result of the Mann-Whitney test indicates that the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that the pre-test percentages for the two groups are more or less the same. In practical sense this result implies that there was no significant difference between the means obtained by the two groups of learners in the baseline assessment of English prepositions (i.e. the two groups performed similarly in the pre-test).

As indicated in Table 4.6, the second null hypothesis states that the distribution of the post-test percentages are the same across both instruction groups. The result shows that the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that the performance of learners from the implicit and explicit group is statistically different from each other. In other words, the mean difference of 10.16% that was observed in the post-test was significant, and thus Group 2/explicit instruction group ($M = 75.39$) performed significantly better than Group 1/implicit instruction group ($M = 65.23$). The result for the delayed post-test is the same because the null hypothesis is once again rejected; indicating that the mean difference of 6.27% between the two groups in the delayed post-test was significant. As was the case in the post-test, the experimental group

(Group 2) (M = 70.97) performed significantly better than the control group (Group 1) (M = 64.70).

4.4.1.2. Mann–Whitney hypothesis testing: differences between the language groups

As mentioned above, the Mann-Whitney test was also conducted to see if the Sotho learners would fare somewhat better with the English preposition, given the fact that there could be positive transfer from their L1 to English. For this analysis, Language group (Sesotho or isiZulu) was the independent variable, while the values obtained on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-tests were entered in the test field (as dependent variables). The results of the tests are reported in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Mann-Whitney tests: differences between language groups in the pre-test, the post-test and the delayed post-test.

	Null Hypothesis	Significance	Decision
1	The distribution of the pre-test mean percentage is the same across categories of L1	.513	Retain the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of the post-test mean percentage is the same across categories of L1	.698	Retain the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of the delayed post-test mean percentage is the same across categories of L1	.533	Retain the null hypothesis
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is 0.05			

The results reported in Table 4.7 indicate that the null hypotheses are retained in all the three tests, indicating that the means of the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test percentages are not different across the language groups. The implication is that the two different language groups performed similarly in the three tests, and that there was no strong or significant effect of first language on learners' competence in terms of English prepositions.

4.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings from the main study. The chapter first presented the descriptive statistics for the entire group, as well for the different instruction groups and for the different language groups. The diagnostic tests were done in order to determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests should be used to test the various hypotheses. The normality test indicated that the data that was gathered in this study is not normally distributed and thus it was not appropriate to use parametric tests to determine the equality of means. For this reason, the researcher opted to use Mann-Whitney tests to determine whether any significant group differences exist in the data set. Based on the results from the Mann-Whitney tests, the null hypotheses were rejected in the post-test and delayed post-test, when groups were compared based on the instruction that they received. This suggests that, on average, the explicit instruction group performed significantly better than the implicit instruction group in the post-test and in the delayed post-test. The L1s (Sesotho and isiZulu) were not found to impact significantly on the performance of the learners. The final chapter of this dissertation will provide an in-depth discussion of the results, will highlight limitations, and will provide recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The present study investigated the effectiveness of the two types of instruction in teaching English prepositional phrases to South African EFAL learners. The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar instruction in teaching this Part of Speech to EFAL learners in the South African context. After a reflection upon the existing literature, the study focused on Grade 10 learners, as the researcher could find no previous literature that investigated the effectiveness of these two types of the instruction (focusing specifically on the instruction of prepositions) in high school EFAL learners in South Africa. In the present study, Grade 10 learners were assigned to each of these instruction groups, and both groups' competence in terms of English prepositions was assessed before and after the instructional intervention.

In this chapter, the results described in the previous chapter will be discussed, recommendations will be given and a conclusion will be provided. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section will discuss the findings by answering the research questions and evaluating the hypotheses of the study. The second section will add on to this discussion of findings by situating the findings in the wider literature, the third section will provide recommendations stemming from the study, the fourth section will provide the limitations of the study and the last section will provide a conclusion to the study.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings of the study. In answering the research questions, the study will add to our existing understanding and knowledge regarding the acquisition of grammar by South African EFAL learners – specifically our understanding of how L2 teachers should teach English prepositions to L2 learners in the South African context. The central concern of the study was to investigate the research questions posed in section 1.5. The main findings related to each of the research questions will be discussed in turn. Following the discussion of the findings, the researcher will indicate if the research hypotheses could be accepted not.

5.2.1. Research question 1

- Are explicit grammar or implicit teaching methods more effective in instructing English prepositions and PPs to Sesotho and isiZulu EFAL learners?

The research question was answered through statistical analysis that is both descriptive and inferential. Although the focus of the analysis was primarily on determining differences between the two instruction groups, it is always interesting to also consider the performance of the entire sample. With regards to the results of the entire sample, the data indicated that the learners improved from 54.54% (pre-test) to 70.33% (post-test) in terms of their knowledge of English prepositions. This suggests that grammar instruction, on the whole, had a positive effect on learners' ability to manipulate English prepositions accurately. In the delayed post-test, the entire sample's performance dropped, as the average score was found to be 67.83%. This could indicate that the students tended to forget some of the content that they had been taught during classes (Refer to table 4.5.2).

The descriptive statistics for the two instruction groups (implicit and explicit instruction) suggested that the two were very similar before the intervention, as shown by their average scores of 54.58 and 54.50 respectively. In the post-test, Group 1 (implicit instruction) obtained a mean of 65.23, while Group 2 (explicit instruction group) obtained a mean of 75.39 and thus Group 2 outperformed Group 1. In the delayed post-test the same result occurred with 70.97 (Group 2) and 64.70 (Group 1) as the means respectively (Refer to table 4.5.2).

In order to determine whether the mean differences obtained in pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test were statistically significant, the researcher performed three Mann-Whitney tests. The result of the Mann-Whitney tests indicated that the null hypothesis should be retained for the pre-test only. This implies that there was no significant difference between the means obtained by these two groups of learners in the baseline assessment of English prepositions, and that the two groups' competence in terms of English prepositions were not significantly different from each other at the onset of the study.

With regards to the post-test, the result indicated that the null hypothesis should be rejected, which implies that the performance of learners from the implicit and explicit groups was statistically different. The result for the delayed post-test was the same, because the null hypothesis was once again rejected, indicating that there was a significant difference between the two groups in the scores obtained on the delayed post-test. In other words, in both the post-

test and in the delayed post-test, the explicit instruction group performed significantly better than the implicit instruction group.

The Mann-Whitney tests confirms the pattern shown in the descriptive statistics that Group 2, which received explicit instruction on the English preposition, performed better in the test than the implicit group (Group 1) in both post-tests. The findings thus suggest that explicit grammar instruction was more effective than implicit grammar instruction to improve EFAL learners' knowledge of prepositions. Learners' improved competence was demonstrated by the ability of learners to improve significantly more in their average test score than those who did not receive explicit instruction on English PPs.

Taken together, the results from the Mann-Whitney tests provide evidence that the explicit grammar instruction methods used in this study to teach PPs were more effective than using implicit instructional methods (which in the present context meant teaching students as they are normally taught). Therefore, the answer to the first research question is, yes; explicit grammar teaching methods are more effective in helping Grade 10 ELS learners to acquire the English PP than implicit grammar teaching method.

Given the statistical evidence, the researcher can, with some confidence, conclude that the explicit group progressed more than the implicit group after the instructional intervention. Hence, the results of the study support research hypothesis 1, which stated:

South African EFAL learners who have been instructed via explicit grammar instruction methods will develop better knowledge of prepositions and prepositional phrases, in comparison to learners who were instructed via implicit grammar teaching methods.

The researcher thus can conclude that explicit grammar teaching methods are more effective in helping Grade 10 ELS learners to acquire the English PP than implicit grammar teaching methods in the South African context. The discussion now moves on to the second research question.

5.2.2. Research question 2

- What is the effect of learners' home language (Sesotho and isiZulu) on the acquisition of PPs in English?

The second research question was also answered through statistical analysis. The descriptive analysis (refer to Table 4.4) shows that the two language groups (learners with isiZulu as L1 versus learners with Sesotho as L1) performed similar in the pre-test, as indicated by the means. In the post-test and delayed post-test results, the Sotho group performed slightly better than the isiZulu group, yet there was no significant statistical difference between the performance of the two language groups.

In order to determine whether the mean differences obtained in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test were statistically significant, the researcher performed three Mann-Whitney tests. For all three Mann-Whitney tests, the results of the Mann-Whitney tests indicated that the null hypothesis should be retained, thus there was no difference in the performance of two language groups in any of the three performance measures.

The results of the Mann-Whitney tests support the pattern observed in the descriptive analysis and thus the answer to the second research question was, no, Sotho learners did not have an advantage over isiZulu learners in acquiring the English preposition. The null hypotheses (that the groups are the same) are thus retained in all three tests, indicating that the distribution of the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test percentages are not different across the language groups. The implication is that, in this particular context, the mother tongue of the learners did not have any significant effect on the performance of the learners, and that there was no clear evidence that positive transfer happened more readily from Sesotho to English than from isiZulu to English. Hence, the results of the study did not support the second research hypothesis which stated:

Sesotho learners might fare better with English PPs, given the fact that there should be positive transfer from their L1 to English.

The findings with regards to second research question suggested that the second research hypothesis should be rejected. There was no statistical evidence that the Sotho group was at an advantage with regards to the learning of English prepositions, and the fact that their L1 was more similar to English in terms of prepositions than the isiZulu group played no big part in this study. The result of the minimal role of linguistic transfer in the study came as a surprise to the researcher, given the existing body of knowledge in this field. The researcher expected the results to corroborate those of the studies he had referred to in the literature review. However, there was no convincing evidence that there was linguistic transfer (negative or positive) that influenced the outcome of the study.

5.3. POSITIONING THE PRESENT STUDY WITHIN THE FIELD OF L2 GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

5.3.1. Explicit versus implicit grammar instruction

With regards to the first research question, which asked whether explicit or implicit grammar instruction methods or more effective in assisting EFAL learners to acquire English prepositions, the results obtained in the present study supported the findings of applied linguists such as Carroll et al. (1992), Celce-Murcia (1991, 2001), Schmidt (1994), Erlam (2006), Ayliff (2006) and Nazari (2013), who all found that L2 learners benefit from explicit grammar instruction. For example, Carroll et al. (1992) found that a group of L2 learners that received explicit corrective feedback directed at two complex French noun suffixes (*-age* and *-ment*) outperformed a group that received no feedback (although it was not possible to generalise the finding to the learning of nouns not presented during the intervention).

Researchers such as Celce-Murcia (1991:463) maintains that adolescents and adults benefit greatly from some “explicit focus-on-form instruction”. In line with this general notion, the present study supports previous studies, such as Smith (1993:176), who found that explicit grammar teaching helps learners to attend to the aspects of grammar that are being taught. The above-mentioned position is centred on the notion that learners taught via explicit instruction produce grammatical constructions correctly, as they pay attention to those areas that they are meant to master. Explicit grammar teaching methods enable students to focus on the target concepts under instruction. Despite evidence from older studies that explicit grammar teaching is effective in formal L2 learning contexts, the debate centering on this topic continued in the 21st century. Nazari (2013) for example, demonstrated that for various different grammar structures, students who were exposed to explicit grammar teaching generally outperformed students who were only exposed to implicit presentations of the relevant grammar structures, in both receptive and productive grammar tasks. Students who underwent explicit grammar instruction were also “more precise in detecting and correcting ungrammatical sentences” (Nazari 2013: 160). This finding is similar to what has been reported by scholars working in South African context – as will be seen in the next paragraph.

In the South African context, it has been demonstrated that explicit grammar instruction seems to yield better results in EFAL grammar learning in formal contexts. Scholars such as Ayliff (2010) and Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005) have highlighted the need for explicit grammar instruction in the South African EFAL learning context. These researchers reported that, when

taught via a CLT approach only, South African learners acquire BICS, but not CALP skills, which they need to succeed academically. Ayliff (2006) believes that focusing on forms could also help adult and high school students to produce “more accurate written discourse”, which to a large extent determines CALP. If older learners are able to perform better in explicit grammar instruction contexts, it means the explicit grammar instruction could be considered among the grammar teaching methods for South African adolescent and adult learners who will benefit from noticing the target concepts under instruction. Importantly, existing evidence suggests that insufficient knowledge of English grammar contributes to learners’ weak CALP skills (Ollerhead and Oosthuizen 2005). It seems, at least in the South African context, problematic to focus only on communicative skills, as many learners do not receive rich linguistic input in English inside or outside the classroom. Explicit focus on forms is thus necessary for EFAL proficiency. The present study adds to these existing studies, and provides clear support for the important role of explicit grammar instruction in the South African context.

Some researchers have investigated the effectiveness of different types of explicit feedback in grammar instruction. Havranek and Cesnik (2003) found that elicited explicit self-correction and explicit rejection followed by a recast were more effective than recasts alone. Havranek and Cesnik’s results suggested that both these types of explicit corrective feedback were effective in helping learners to achieve the target structures. The current study did not go into this amount of detail, as the researcher did not use recasts systematically in the implicit instruction group. However, evidence from literature overwhelmingly shows that although both types of feedback can be effective, recasts which are more explicit in nature tend to be more effective than recasts that are entirely implicit. The current researcher agrees with scholars like Havranek and Cesnik (2003) that it will be more effective to use explicit instructions than implicit instructions in grammar teaching.

Not all scholars agree that explicit grammar instruction yields better results in L2 learning. The finding of the current study in favour of explicit grammar instruction conflicts with the findings of scholars like Kim and Mathes (2001), who found that implicit feedback is as effective as explicit feedback. The duo did a quasi-experimental study with 20 Korean adult ESL learners (high beginners and intermediate), focusing on the acquisition of dative verbs. They found no significant difference in performance between the two groups, suggesting that the two types of feedback used had similar effects in facilitating the acquisition of the target structures. Their result was also in line with studies such as DeKeyser (1993) who found no significant

difference in the performance between the group which received explicit grammar feedback and those that received the implicit grammar feedback. A number of studies (e.g. Nicholas et al. 2001), however, reported that implicit feedback, provided in the form of recasts, also have a beneficial effect on the acquisition of grammar elements. In the broader literature, most scholars agree that grammar knowledge promotes the process of language acquisition. Many applied linguists today promote a teaching context in which grammar is taught via a combination of explicit and implicit teaching methods. Implicit grammar teaching is more likely to stimulate a relaxed atmosphere, where teachers and students can interact: a L2 classroom that incorporates implicit teaching will generally be more active compared to a L2 classroom where only explicit teaching is used. More and more, scholars agree that both implicit grammar teaching and explicit grammar teaching have advantages and disadvantages and that these approaches should be treated as methods on a continuum, rather than as contradictory methods. Many recent papers on this topic recommend that “teachers should combine the implicit grammar teaching with the explicit grammar teaching explicitly in teaching practice in the light of the actual situation of students and the teaching reality of environment and conditions” (Ling 2015: 558). In the present study, there was some evidence that the implicit instruction group also made progress (albeit less pronounced) in their acquisition of English prepositions, and thus the researcher does not dismiss the role of implicit grammar instruction. However, the researcher agrees with Ling that L2 teachers have to carefully consider their teaching environment, and must make informed decisions about which aspects of the curriculum they can teach via implicit methods, and which aspects they need to instruct more explicitly.

The present findings do support the notion put forward by Schmidt (1994) and Erlam (2006), who stated that although explicit and implicit knowledge and explicit and implicit learning are related, they should be treated separately. There is no empirical evidence that implicit knowledge is entirely dependent on implicit learning, because implicit learning can be a product of learners’ conscious practice in linguistic forms or structures. As such, explicit teaching methods can supplement implicit teaching in developing implicit knowledge, as learners continue to consciously practice linguistic forms. It seems clear that, in the South African context, some grammar structures (such as prepositions), will be grasped better by South African EFAL learners when taught explicitly.

5.3.2. The role of the mother tongue in L2 grammar learning

With regards to the second research question, the conclusion reached in this study contradicts earlier findings of Fries (1945), Lado (1957) and Pica (1994: 52) who maintained that if there are areas of similarity between the L1 and the L2, acquiring language in those areas should not be a problem. In line with these traditional views on linguistic transfer in SLA, the current study had hypothesised that learners with Sesotho as their L1 would find the concept of English prepositions easier than learners with isiZulu as L1, since Sesotho grammar is more similar to English in this respect. This hypothesis turned out to be incorrect. The findings of the study however are supported by Pica (*ibid*: 52) who demonstrated that the idea that similarities between the L1 and the L2 should ease acquisition of the L2 can be erroneous in some cases. For instance, Pica observed that although the negative is expressed in the same way in Spanish and English, the concept is not learnt with similar ease: L1 speakers of English learn how to express negation in Spanish quicker than vice versa (i.e. L1 speakers of Spanish take longer to acquire negation in English). Thus, it is not always the case that language transfer from the L1 to the L2 works in favour of the learners even when structures in the L2 are similar to structures in the L1.

Several explanations as to why the L1 did not play a big role in acquiring L2 for the South African EFAL learners are possible. To begin with, the learners in the study that is, the Grade 10s, may have been brought to a comparable level of understanding English grammar, since they had been learning about prepositions for quite some time. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the CAPS (2014) contains lists of prepositions which the Grade 7- 9 EFAL learners should cover. This means that at Grade 10 level the participants should have had a minimum of three years of learning English prepositions. So, the knowledge from the first language might no longer be significant, rather it would be other factors such as the personal learning attributes and the instructions methods used. Moreover, the result could be explained by the fact that the L1 was structurally so different to begin with that the learners didn't attempt to transfer their L1 knowledge, and rather relied on other sources of information. Despite the fact that the Sotho languages have lexical items that could be categorised as prepositions, it is possible that learners could not easily connect these languages and therefore they used other information such as that provided by instruction.

Brown (2007) maintains that for young L2 learners, the interference from the L1 is quite minimal if not zero. On the other hand, older/adult L2 learners may use (or may try to use) the skills acquired in L1 more readily, given their cognitive maturity and awareness of the learning

process. This observation did not apply to the Grade 10 learners in this study though. Thus, although older learners are likely to have been introduced to the concept of metalinguistic knowledge, and will use all the resources available to them when learning L2 structures, the current study found that other factors, such as instruction, probably played a bigger role in learners' acquisition of L2 structures in the present context.

Several studies that investigated L1 interference found no evidence of negative transfer. For example, Dulay and Burt (1974a) cited in Brown (2007:72) studied over 500 errors made by L1 speakers of Spanish who were studying English and concluded that the errors made by these students were not related to transference from their L1. These studies are supported by the current study which did not find the evidence that the L1 skills played a significant role in learners' understanding of the preposition in English.

5.3.3. Theories of linguistic transfer

Following the results of the study which contradicted many other studies on linguistic transfer, new ways of viewing linguistic transfer should be considered. The results demonstrated that even when the languages are more similar in terms of how they represent a structure, linguistic transfer does not play a big role when other factors such as explicit instruction are present. Perhaps English and Sesotho are too different to allow for much transfer. The results of the current study support the idea that it is not always the case that transfer happens during grammar instruction. Since the results of the current study contradicts those of the studies referred to earlier, it means that the results of the current study rather support the views of scholars, such as Kubota (1998) and Murphy (2003) who have long argued that linguistic transfer is an intricate process and very specific to the context, and that patterns of transfer or influence of the L1 cannot be determined based on the structural similarities or differences between the L1 and the L2.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

As was explained in Chapter 2, there is very little guidance in the South African EFAL curriculum on how to instruct specific aspects of English grammar, such as prepositions, to learners. A range of explicit instructional methods were incorporated in the explicit teaching approach that was used in this study, and based on his experience with using these methods in the present study, the researcher can now make practical recommendations about how prepositions can be taught to EFAL learners in the South African context.

5.4.1. Use of actions to identify prepositions

The learners were asked to identify prepositions, to match pictures and the prepositions and also to use prepositions in sentences. It is recommended that to improve their understanding of prepositions, learners should also be involved in embodied actions, which indicate prepositions. For instance, one student can go under a table and another student will be asked to explain where the former is, in terms of the location. The learners will exchange information until they have grasped the concept of prepositions and then using the same activity they can use prepositions in sentences. Boquist (2009) advises that it is always advisable to demonstrate or illustrate rather than define the meaning of prepositions. Doing so concretizes abstract concepts. For example, explaining *on* to the student by taking a ball and putting it *on* the table is easier than to say, “To be *on* something is to be located *over* it and still touching it”.

5.4.2. Use of visuals

From the activities conducted in this study and the results obtained, the researcher recommends the use of visuals, such as video lessons where learners will sit, listen to and watch how prepositions are used. This will enhance the grammar teaching methods and it will increase the attention of learners, as they are naturally attracted to watching videos. Instructional videos can repeat areas which need emphasis and learners will benefit from following what is being demonstrated in the video. Visual stimuli make it easier for learners to remember abstract concepts. Visuals also reduce boredom and the learners can pay attention for longer periods. The results from this study indicate that the learners tend to forget as shown by the delayed post-test scores, which had lower averages and higher standard deviations suggesting that some learners tend to forget more than others. The use of visuals can therefore increase the attention and chances of remembering for the learners over time. Boquist (2009) complains about the lack of appropriate textbooks for EFAL learners, which further complicates the teaching of English prepositions. Text books written for L1 English learners are not always suitable for EFAL learners, as their explanations tend to be too abstract. As a solution, Boquist (ibid) makes use of pictures to show different objects in relation to other objects or in relation to space.

5.4.3. Identifying prepositions from a list of words

From the experience in this study, the researcher found that identifying prepositions from a list of words is effective as it demonstrates the level of understanding of the learner in terms of differentiating prepositions from other words which are not prepositions. The method is useful

especially at the initial stages of testing the understanding of prepositions. Identification of prepositions will be a good start in the learning of prepositions; following this teachers can move to other methods such as completing sentences using prepositions. The study therefore recommends the teaching of prepositions should be done in stages, starting with the mentioned method of identifying prepositions from a list of words. The teacher will concentrate on this stage until the learners are able to identify prepositions. After this stage has been completed, then the teacher can move to other methods which may be more difficult.

5.4.4. Identifying prepositions in a sentence

Recall that, according to Inezan and Najim (2013), there are three categories of mistakes made by learners when using prepositions, namely:

- a. The use of an incorrect preposition,
- b. The omission of the required preposition,
- c. The inclusion of an unnecessary preposition

The learners committed errors such as these when placing prepositions in the sentences given. Completing sentences with the correct prepositions was a difficult task for many learners, as some could not even understand the meaning of the sentence and hence failed to insert the correct preposition. In line with the observation by this study, Zindela et al. (2013) observed that if prepositions or prepositional phrases are placed in incorrect positions in sentences, they can create confusion. Furthermore, sentences can often be interpreted in more than one way, depending on the position of the preposition. The CAPS document accentuates that activities surrounding language teaching and learning should aim to develop the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). In addition, the methods that should be used to teach grammar must enable learners to master functional language, discourse or language that produces transactional texts. The focus is not on producing independent sentences, but on producing continuous pieces of writing that convey messages to the readers or texts that perform functions (like in the functional syllabus mentioned above).

5.4.5. Grouping of learning material according to difficulty of prepositions

It is recommended that instructors should group prepositions depending on the level of difficulty so that learners begin with the less difficult prepositions, thus gaining understanding of what they are doing. Once learners have developed a basic understanding and gained some confidence, learners can continue to build their knowledge of prepositions in stages until they

grasp the concept and the various complex functions of individual prepositions. In the end, the learners will be expected to identify prepositions in sentences and build their own sentences containing prepositions. Teachers should ideally identify the different stages at which learners are and should approach each learner differently whenever possible, so that they will all understand the concept of prepositions.

5.4.6. Exposure to reading materials

Learners need to read in order to develop literacy, and in order to read, learners need to be exposed to printed material. However, in South Africa, the majority of learners come from an oral English tradition without being exposed to reading material at a young age since reading is not an integral part of the learners' culture and home environment (Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007:56). Consequently, young learners grow up without books and print based reading material therefore young learners often have low vocabulary levels and they struggle to learn to read. The Grade 10 learners in this study seemed to have poor understanding of English grammar generally, and of English prepositions specifically. Although the researcher did not systematically investigate the effect of the learners' prior literacy experiences on grammar knowledge, it is pointed out here as an aside that a lack of the reading materials is likely to result in poor language skills, including underdeveloped grammar skills. Therefore, it is recommended that establishing a text-rich classroom environment will be a good starting point.

5.4.7. Improving teacher knowledge of grammar instruction methods and of specific structures

Often, South African teachers use a narrow range of grammar teaching methods or, if they are aware of other grammar teaching methods, they may not be confident in using these methods (Pretorius, Jackson, McKay, Murray and Spaul 2016). If teachers do not know the underlying pedagogical theory of the various grammar teaching methods, there is a risk of using unsuitable grammar teaching methods. The study therefore recommends that teachers need to develop a wider understanding of how various aspects of English grammar should be taught, and teachers furthermore need to understand how they can interactively present their knowledge about grammar to learners. This will improve the understanding of, amongst other aspects, English prepositions by learners in the senior phase. Having examined the isiZulu adverbial forms and the (Se)Sotho prepositional phrases, it seemed clear that it would serve an EFAL teacher well to know the forms that the PP can take in the L1 of learners. If teachers understand to what

extent PPs are the same or different in English and the learners' L1, they will be able to use to their advantage. The teacher will be able to consider how L1 knowledge interferes negatively or positively with the acquisition of English PPs.

5.4.8. Peer to peer learning

It was observed that the learners were ready to discuss content with each other, even if the instructor had not instructed them to do so. Based on this observation, it is recommended that the classroom setting should be as interactive as possible, as learners often learn from their peers. The CAPS (2014) instructs teachers to teach grammar 'for real life', rather than to perform well in tests and examinations only. By implication, L2 teachers should prepare their grammar lessons to teach learners to produce functional or transactional texts such as letters, dialogues, etc. This means that the learners should be exposed to learning environments that promote learner interaction and the use of learning resources such as books, work cards, recorders, CDs etc. to enable learners to practise the structures and concepts planned as much as possible. Other scholars, such as Swain (2001) have also found that language learning is successful when teachers encouraged learners to work together, by using collaborative tasks in the L2 classroom. However, the CAPS (2014) do not clearly stipulate the methodology to use to achieve the above outputs. This creates problems in that teachers use trial and error methods to teach the identified syllabus.

VanPatten (1993:432) observes that "During the last two decades, language instructors have been encouraged to move toward more communicatively oriented approaches to the classroom". These approaches seek to help learners acquire implicit knowledge. The most popular among such methods is the CLT, which is well-suited for peer-to-peer learning. CLT entails that learners' interact in classroom situations that depict various daily life experiences. In other words, the learners interact in situations where they use language in real life situations, and where there is little focus on grammatical form. Fotos and Ellis (1991:609) observe that the aim of the CLT is to offer the learners opportunities to "participate in interaction to exchange meaning rather than to learn the L2". Essentially, CLT promotes implicit grammar learning, and the belief is that using CLT in the classroom leads to implicit knowledge about language structures. It should be highlighted clearly at this point that the researcher, despite the present findings in favour of explicit grammar teaching, is not against communicative approaches to L2 teaching and learning. Rather, it the belief of this researcher that the explicit instruction of some aspects of EFAL grammar will improve L2 learning outcomes in a CLT

environment. This recommendation is in line with previous research, such as Fotos (1994, 1998, 2002) and Gass, Mackey and Ross-Feldman (2005) that suggested that grammar instruction could be integrated meaningfully in CLT classrooms by using tasks that raise learners' consciousness with regards to grammatical structure. The present researcher believes that it is vital, especially in certain contexts (such as the South African context where learners do not receive much standardised language input outside the EFAL classroom) to introduce explicit grammar teaching in CLT classrooms.

5.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the present study yielded several positive insights, there are limitations to the study that must be noted. To begin with, the sample was relatively small. The study used a total of 120 learners in two groups, which may not permit for generalisations to be made about the entire population of the Grade 10 learners in South Africa. The number was only sufficient for the study since it was conducted under limited time. Further studies can be carried out in order to cover a larger sample with adequate financing and time. Increasing the sample size will allow incorporation of other grades thus encompassing the older or the younger learners which may give a different result that can contribute to the literature concerning the learning of English as a second language by African learners.

Moreover, the study used the two sitting exams for mid-year and end of year, thus the span of the study can be considered short. However, this too was constrained by the Department of Education which only allows research to take place at schools in the second and third term (the first term being set aside for learners to settle in and the fourth term dedicated to the end-of-year exams). The researcher therefore utilized the maximum time allowed by the Department of Education.

Also, the activities and assessments used for the study can be considered to be somewhat limited, in that they did not test understanding of all the functions of individual prepositions. The activities can be increased and can be varied so as to test a wider range of knowledge of prepositions. Other activities that can be included as recommended by the study include the use of plays among learners so that they grasp the concept of prepositions in a way that they will enjoy. A further limitation with regards to the research instruments are that the use of metalinguistic terms such as 'prepositions of means, instrument and location' may have placed the implicit grammar instructional group at a disadvantage, especially in the post-tests – the reason being that the CAPS does not explicitly use these terms to classify prepositions, and

thus learners in the implicit instruction group might not have been introduced to these terms before the post-tests.

5.6. CONCLUSION

The chapter discussed the effect of explicit grammar instruction on the acquisition of the prepositional phrases by South African EFAL learners. The study demonstrated that the explicit grammar teaching methods were effective in teaching English prepositions to Grade 10 learners, and that the group that received explicit grammar instruction gained a better understanding of prepositions than the group who received only implicit instruction. It was also shown that there was no difference in acquisition between the (Se)Sotho and IsiZulu first language learners of EFAL. The difference in the scores was thus explained by other factors which are not the first language of a learner, but which include the explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods.

Based on the teaching intervention that the researcher designed, the present study recommends the use of a larger range of teaching materials by EFAL teachers. Specifically, explaining prepositions via embodied exercises and with the use of visuals were found to be particularly helpful for learners to easily grasp prepositions. The instructors were encouraged to and advised to group the prepositions depending on the levels of difficulty so that learners begin with the less difficult prepositions thus gaining understanding of what they are doing.

This study's main contribution to the field of Applied Linguistics lies in its assessment of the effectiveness of explicit grammar teaching methods to teach specific aspects of English grammar to L2 learners. The debate centering on whether grammar should be taught to L2 learners, and if it should be taught which methods should be used has continued for several decades. The present study supports previous findings which suggested that explicit grammar teaching is needed in L2 teaching and learning, especially for more complex grammatical structures. In the South African context, where the majority of learners receive limited input in English in their formative years, and where EFAL learners often do not know the rules of English grammar by the time they go to high school, there seems to be no doubt that explicit focus on form activities, that introduce learners explicitly to English forms, should be included in the EFAL curriculum.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A

PRE-TEST

PRE-TEST

SECTION A

1. You are required to answer the questions according to the instructions given in each section.

Circle a preposition in each of the following cases:

- | | | | | |
|------------|------|---------|---------|-----|
| 1. Fine | with | some | the | (1) |
| 2. Over | is | are | there | (1) |
| 3. Because | and | beneath | benefit | (1) |
| 4. Like | as | ever | behind | (1) |
| 5. Run | long | of | yellow | (1) |

(Total 5 marks)

SECTION B

Answer the questions in this section by circling the correct alternative.

6. A preposition can come at the beginning of a sentence. TRUE / FALSE (1)
7. A prepositional phrase always starts with a ---. (Verb Noun Preposition Capital letter). (1)
8. A preposition can be used in a sentence to show all these except: (Location / place / time cause / size) (1)

In the following questions, indicate if the statement given is TRUE or FALSE.

9. A preposition can show the agent in a sentence. TRUE / FALSE (1)
10. In a sentence, a preposition can be used to show means (instrumental). TRUE / FALSE. (1)
11. The manner in which something is done can be shown by a prepositional phrase. TRUE / FALSE (1)
12. There is a category of prepositions that shows association. TRUE / FALSE (1)

(Total 7 marks)

SECTION C

Answer the following questions according to the instructions given.

13. Fill in the blank space with the correct preposition:

- Our car broke down so we completed the journey ----- foot. (1)

14. Underline the prepositional phrase in: The lady in a crimson jacket is our new English teacher. (1)

In each of the following cases, fill in the blanks with two correct prepositions.

15. The girl collected books _____ the table and put them _____ the book shelf. (2)

16. The principal peeped _____ the window and saw children leaning _____ the wall (2)

17. Mr Sibanda flew _____ Durban _____ South African Airways. (2)

(Total 8 marks)

GRAND TOTAL = 20 MARKS

APPENDIX 1B

POST-TEST

SECTION A

Fill in the blanks with the correct preposition in each of the following cases:

1. Our school starts -----08:00. (1)
2. The examination was so easy that we finished it -----30 minutes. (1)
3. A valley is a low-lying area found -----two mountains. (1)
4. Mother hid my tennis ball ----- a bed. (1)
5. We write examinations ----- either black or white ink. (1)

(Total 5 marks)

SECTION B

Underline a prepositional phrase in each of the following sentences.

6. The man sitting on a green chair is my uncle. (1)
7. She flew to China by Air Zimbabwe. (1)
8. All the candidates who scored above seventy-five percent got bursaries. (1)
9. My brothers like playing soccer on the dirty streets. (1)
10. He cut the goat's throat with a blunt knife. (1)

(Total 5 marks)

SECTION C

Complete each of the following sentences with a correct prepositional phrase.

11. My brother walked briskly ----- (2)
12. We always have extra lessons ----- (2)
13. He likes reading his books ----- (2)
14. She poured the tea ----- (2)
15. The confident team ran ----- (2)

(Total 10 marks)

SECTION D

Prepositions are used in sentences to show the following:

- a) Location (1)
- b) Cause (1)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| c) Time | (1) |
| d) Agent | (1) |
| e) means / instrumental | (1) |
| f) manner | (1) |
| g) association | (1) |

Write sentences (a) – (g) and use a preposition to show the function of the preposition in each of these categories. For (h); (i) and (j), write a sentence in which you use each of these prepositions:

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| (h) At | (1) |
| (i) With | (1) |
| (j) Near | |

(Total 10 marks)

GRAND TOTAL = 30 MARKS

APPENDIX 1C

DELAYED POST-TEST

SECTION A

QUESTION 1

Write your own 5 sentences including a preposition of your choice in each of the 5 sentences.

(Total 5 marks)

SECTION B (PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES)

QUESTION 2

Write your own 5 sentences using a prepositional phrase of your choice in each of the 5 sentences.

(Total 10 marks)

SECTION C

In this section you are required to write 7 sentences using a prepositional phrase to show the category given in each of the 7 sentences: Make a sentence

11. To show location (2)
12. To show time. (2)
13. To show cause. (2)
14. To show agent. (2)
15. To show means / instrumental. (2)
16. To indicate manner (2)
17. To indicate association (2)
18. Write a sentence and include the preposition *on* in it. (1)
19. Write a sentence and include the preposition *under* in it. (1)

(Total 16 marks)

SECTION D

Write any sentence that starts with a prepositional phrase from 20-22:

20.

21. _____ (1)

22. _____ (1)

(Total 3 marks)

SECTION E

23. Write 7 sentences with 2 prepositions in each so that there is a sentence showing:

- (a) Location (2)
- (b) Time (2)
- (c) Cause (2)
- (d) Agent (2)
- (e) Means / instrumental (2)
- (f) Manner (2)
- (g) Association (2)
- (h) Write your own sentence in which you use the preposition *between*. (2)

(Total 16 marks)

GRAND TOTAL = 50 MARKS

APPENDIX 1D

QUESTIONNAIRE ON BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

QUESTIONNAIRE ON BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

INSRUCIONS TO RESPONDANTS

1. This questionnaire seeks to get information for the purposes of research **ONLY** so all the information you give will be held in confidence. The researcher will take all the necessary steps to make sure that **NO UNAUTHORISED** persons get hold of it.
2. You are requested to be honest and truthful in filling in the needed information.
3. Where answers are given for you to choose, please circle the appropriate answer.
4. In cases where you are required to answer in your own words, please use the spaces provided for the answers
5. Write the number (not your name) that you were given for the purposes of the studies that you agreed or were permitted by your parents to participate in, for example: 101; 102; 103; ... 201; 202; 203...

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

1. My gender is _____ (Male / Female)
2. My age is _____ years old.
3. What is your home language? _____ (Sesotho / IsiZulu.)
4. How old were you when you started Grade 1? _____ (6 years/ 7 years / 8 years/ 9 years)
5. How old were you when you started learning English? ____ (6 years / 7 years / 8years/ 9 years)
6. Do you always use English to communicate at home? _____ Yes / No / Sometimes / Never
7. Do you read English books that are not related to your school work? ____ Yes / No / Sometimes / Never
8. Do you enjoy learning all your subjects in English? _____ Yes / No / Sometimes / Not sure.

APPENDIX 2

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND MODERN LANGUAGES:
RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

15 February 2016

Ref #: AL_RC013_2016

Mr Rhinos Chimbeva

Student #: 45293376

Dear Mr Rhinos Chimbeva

Decision: Ethics Approval

Name: Mr Rhinos Chimbeva
605 Unisig Flat
Gezina
Pretoria
0083

Supervisor: Dr CA Wilsenach

Proposal: THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE BY
AFRICAN ESL LEARNERS

Qualification: MA – Applied Linguistics

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance received on *03 February 2016* by members of the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) for the above-mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the research undertaken for the duration of your master's studies.

For full approval: The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages Research Ethics Review Committee on 03 February and again on 15 February 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be*



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communicated in writing to the

- 3) *Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages Research Ethics Review Committee Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
- 4) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Note:

The reference number (top right corner of this communiqué) should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication (e.g. Webmail, e-mail messages, letters) with the intended research participants, as well as with the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages RERC.

On behalf of the departmental RERC, we wish you everything of the best with your research study. May it be a stimulating journey!

Kind regards



Prof EJ Pretorius

Chair: Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages RERC
Tel: (012) 429 6028
pretoej@unisa.ac.za



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APPENDIX 3

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO STUDY AT COLLEGE X

603 Unisig Flat
12th and Adcock Street
Gezina
Pretoria
0083
24 January 2016

The Principal
College X



Pretoria

Dear Mr. [REDACTED] L

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY INVOLVING GRADE 10 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

I would like to ask for permission to carry out a research study at your school involving the grade 10 English Second Language (EFAL) classes. The research seeks to establish which teaching method (explicit or implicit) is more effective in helping EFAL learners to acquire English prepositional phrases. The study forms part of my MA in Applied Linguistics degree, for which I am registered at UNISA. The title of my research study is **The acquisition of prepositional phrases by South African English Second Language learners**. The study is supervised by Professor A.C. Wilsenach whose contact details are as follows: Tel: 0124296045 and email: wilseac@unisa.ac.za

I undertake to remain as professional as I have always been in my handling of the learners during the study period. Furthermore, the research will be conducted in an ethically responsible manner. I hope the results of the study will help us as a college to decide on which method to adopt.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours faithfully

CHIMBEVA RHINOS

APPENDIX 4

PERMISSION TO STUDY GRANTED

30 January 2016

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION GRANTED TO RHINOS CHIMBEVA

Your letter of the 16th January 2016 refers.

Your request to carry out a research project that will involve Grade 10 learners who are doing English Second Language (EFAL) at this school is hereby granted.

Kindly note that the management of this school and the parents of the learners who will be involved in your research expect ethical conduct and professionalism of the highest standard by you.

In doing your research, you more specifically must ensure that:

- Your study is in line with the Grade 10 English Second Language syllabus.
- The research results of your study will be held in confidence.
- The research will not disadvantage the learners in any way.
- The integrity and anonymity of the learners will not be compromised.

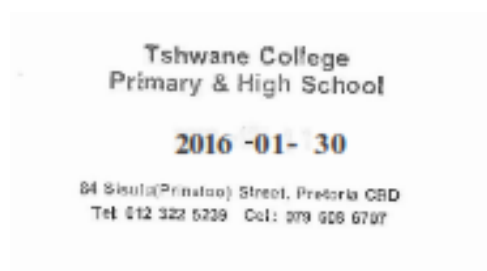
The management of this school wishes you the best in your research project. It is hoped that the findings of your research will immensely contribute towards effective teaching and learning in this country and abroad.

Yours Faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

(Principal)



APPENDIX 5

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS UNDER 18

603 Unisig Flat
Corner 12th and Adcock Streets
Gezina
Pretoria
0083
24 January 2016

Dear Parent (of a student under 18 years)

**Ref: REQUEST FOR YOUR CHILD’S PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY
CARRIED OUT AT HIS / HER SCHOOL**

I hereby request your child’s participation in a research study that I intend to carry out at ██████████ College from February to June 2016. The study forms part of my MA in Applied Linguistics degree, for which I am registered at UNISA. The study is supervised by Professor C. Wilseac whose contact details are as follows: Tel: 0124296045 and email: wilseac@unisa.ac.za

The research will be carried out during normal teaching hours and therefore will not put your child at a disadvantage in any way. However, it is of great educational value to your child and will add to our understanding of how learners acquire English as a second language.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

CHIMBEVA RHINOS

--
Please complete and return this slip:

I, _____, the parent of _____, a Grade 10 student,

AGREE

DO NOT AGREE

To let my child participate in the UNISA research study which his/her teacher, Mr R. Chimbeva is carrying out in his / her class.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 6

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS 18 YEARS AND OLDER

605 Unisig Flat
Corner 12th and Adcock Streets
Gezina
Pretoria
0083
24 January 2016

Dear Student (18 years and above)

Ref: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY CARRIED OUT AT SCHOOL

I hereby request your participation in a research study that I intend to carry out at [REDACTED] College from February to June 2016. The study forms part of my MA in Applied Linguistics degree, for which I am registered at UNISA. The study is supervised by Professor C. Wilsenach whose contact details are as follows: Tel: 0124296045 and email: wilseac@unisa.ac.za

The research will be carried out during normal teaching hours and therefore will not put you at a disadvantage in any way. However, it is of great educational value to you and will add to our understanding of how learners acquire English as a second language.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

CHIMBEVA RHINOS

--

Please complete and return this slip:

I, _____, a Grade 10 student,

AGREE

DO NOT AGREE

to participate in the UNISA research study which my teacher, Mr R. Chimbeva is carrying out in my class.

Signature _____