

## Explicit Knowledge of English Grammar and Sentence Writing with Implicit Knowledge by Korean Students

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The study investigates which grammar features need high priority of pedagogical intervention to develop implicit knowledge, unlike grammatical features in need of explanation of explicit rules. Two types of data were collected from 29 Korean college students: a sentence completion test in English and a meta-linguistic knowledge test (requiring students to both correct the underlined error and explain the grammatical rule) in Korean. Through statistical analyses, including a Wilcoxon signed rank test, this study finds significant differences in test achievements for tense, time prepositions (*for* and *since*), subjunctive moods, dative alternations, quantitative adjectives (*many* and *much*), gerunds, and third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense. Based on results obtained, this study proposes which specific grammar features need intensive pedagogical intervention for production skills, including sentence writing and speaking. Several practical suggestions are provided for EFL instructors and researchers to make more effective use of speaking and writing activities as well as formative testing.

**Key words:** explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge, EFL grammar acquisition, sentence completion test, meta-linguistic knowledge

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar has long been persistently discussed as one piece of core knowledge to master in language acquisition (Hinkel, 2016). However, a practical and critical question still remains unanswered in language teaching: Which grammatical features of a language are hard to acquire and for what reasons (Ko, 2021)? Hinkel (2017) noted the importance of this issue, pointing that no grammatical rules are ever acquired by learners with the same weight or difficulty. She further asserted that priorities should be introduced in teaching grammatical features, depending on learners' proficiency levels and learning background. In this context, comparative research on the difficulty that Korean learners face in acquiring different grammatical features in English is expected to directly contribute a profound understanding while effectively bridging potential developmental gaps in learners' acquisition and use of language.

A related critical linguistic issue in psycholinguistics is the characteristics of learners' grammar. Many researchers have discussed the importance of the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, or explicit and implicit knowledge (DeKeyser, 1998; Dixon, et al., 2012; Ellis, 2016; Ur, 2016). Integrating the approaches by DeKeyser (1998) and Ur (2016), this study defined explicit knowledge as conscious knowledge about something, which can be articulated as facts or descriptions in words. Examples include verbal instructions in a car, such as *Fasten the safety belt* and *Put the key in the ignition*. In contrast, implicit knowledge refers to tacit knowledge, or how to do something. Knowing how to drive or swim is an example of implicit knowledge. Note that the understanding or production of explicit knowledge itself is not enough to lead learners to be able to perform the target activity. Many authentic trials are essential to achieve unconscious use or performance of the target action, which is known as automatization (DeKeyser, 1998, 2003, 2007; Ur, 2016). Thus, the current study follows the perspectives of DeKeyser (1998), Ellis (2016), and Ur (2016) that language acquisition can be understood as the result of a development process from explicit to implicit knowledge.

Following these discussions on automatization, the question on the acquisition of grammatical features can be reformulated as follows: With which grammatical features learners have difficulty in expressing their thought in English in terms of explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. To answer this question, this research examines Korean college students' development of English, who have completed the national curriculum for secondary schools. The study also used a sentence completion test (henceforth, SC test) to measure learners' implicit knowledge and modified Rodríguez Silva's (2017) metalinguistic knowledge test (henceforth, MLK test) into a metalinguistic survey to measure explicit knowledge. Using statistics, the results of those two measurements are compared to determine whether their differences are significant for each grammatical feature. If they are,

some suggestions will be made on what specific grammatical features have priorities for pedagogical interventions as well as how to overcome the gaps, leading to their automatized use in EFL learners' writing.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Development of Grammatical Features by Korean English Learners

The study defines grammatical difficulty as “the result of teaching linguistic structures that learners are not developmentally ready to acquire yet,” following Graus (2018, p. 23). Regarding different grammatical difficulty among English grammatical features, three studies have focused on Korean learners' acquisition: Murakami and Alexopoulou (2016), Cheng and Lee (2020), and Ko (2021). Murakami and Alexopoulou (2016) examined the corpus data of writings by EFL learners with a different first language background. The researchers found that English morphemes were acquired earlier when learners' mother tongues had some forms corresponding to English rather than otherwise. Specifically for Koreans, Murakami and Alexopoulou (2016) reported that both past tense and progressive *-ing* of verbs had been acquired earlier than plural forms of nouns, possessive *ʻs*, and third-person singular *-s*. In addition, articles were found to be mastered latest.

On the other hand, Cheng and Lee (2020) provided a more specified acquisition order among Korean learners. They analyzed compositions and answers of a SC test by Korean and Chinese college students and found significant differences between the two groups of students. Such results did not support what is called the natural order (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2005). In particular, Korean learners were found to acquire, in order, regular past tenses (*-ed*), progressive *-ing*/irregular past tense, possessive *ʻs*, plural forms of nouns, and third-person singular *-s*.

Recently, Ko (2021) performed a SC test for 15 grammatical features of English with Korean college students and reported significant differences between learners at the high and low levels in 11 grammatical features (passives, third-person singular *-s*, *yes/no* questions, modal verbs, *many/much*, *for/since*, dative alternation, infinitives, gerunds, participles, and relatives). Such results imply that those 11 grammatical features still need a pedagogically intensive intervention for the majority of Korean English learners even after secondary schooling. Ko (2021) also found that articles and comparative adjectives remained unmastered by intermediate learners and that past tense of verbs and subjunctive moods were generally unacquired across all levels of learners. Another interesting finding related to non-finite clauses. In the research, infinitives showed the highest achievement across all levels of learners, gerunds the intermediate achievement, and participles the lowest achievement.

In this context, a question may arise: what knowledge or activities do Korean college students need to accelerate their English acquisition of those grammatical features? Considering the developmental gaps found in the previous research, the researcher designs a procedure to find the answers in the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge of language, which is detailed next.

## 2.2. Relationship of Explicit and Implicit Knowledge of English Grammar

Explicit knowledge has been understood as a synonym of metalinguistic knowledge by Bialystok (1994), Han and Ellis (1998), Ellis (2004), and Roehr (2008) as well as declarative knowledge by Anderson (2005) and Hulstijn (2005). It includes a knowledge that can be brought into awareness and made available for verbal reports such as categories and their relationships.

Measures for implicit knowledge include elicited imitation tests, timed grammaticality judgment tests, oral narrative tests, and speaking tests (including description of pictures, discussion of topics, and report of plans or activities). To measure explicit knowledge, untimed grammaticality judgment tests and MLK tests were widely used (Absi, 2014; Hahn, 2009; Rodríguez Silva, 2017). In particular, Ellis (2006), Rodríguez Silva (2017), Rodríguez Silva and Roehr-Brackin (2016), Scheffler (2011), and Ziętek and Roehr (2011) concluded that an MLK test successfully measures explicit knowledge, although they could not reach any consensus on implicit measuring instruments.

Regarding the relationships of explicit and implicit knowledge, significant differences have been found between implicit and explicit knowledge in Bowles (2011), Ellis (2006), Gutiérrez (2013), Han (1999), Kim, Choi, and Kang (2016), and Zhang (2015). However, Rodríguez Silva (2017) pointed out that the characteristics of the two different types of knowledge seemed to be complicated in those previous studies by the functions of a timed or untimed grammaticality judgment test. Thus, it seems reasonable to consider those results in the previous studies as possibilities to be examined through more specified research design and refined research instrument, depending on the research context.

Regarding the development of Korean learners' explicit and implicit knowledge, Jo and Lim (2013) showed interesting results on English grammatical features. Analyzing the data from the metalinguistic knowledge test and elicited oral imitation test, they found significant differences for 12 grammatical features, but not for non-finite verbs (including infinitives), unaccusatives, possessive's, indirect questions, and adverb positions. Interestingly, the biggest superiorities of explicit knowledge over implicit knowledge were found for past tense, third-person singular -s, and since/for in order. Considering those results of Jo and Lim (2013), the current study designed new tests, focusing on the grammatical features with significant gaps between explicit and implicit knowledges. Thus, the current research

increases testing items per grammatical features from one to two sentences in an implicit knowledge test in order to improve its reliability. In addition, the research changes the format of metalinguistic knowledge test into asking for corrections and explanations (See Appendix A and B), instead of multiple choice questions, which may help observe what learners' grammar look like.

More specifically, the current study mainly adopts Rodríguez Silva's (2017) MLK test to measure explicit knowledge and also designs a SC test (or a fill-in-the-blank test) to examine implicit knowledge. Previous examples of a sentence completion task as a measurement for EFL production skills can be found in Karahan (2015), Maneewan (2017), Sogut (2019), and Wijaya and Winstin (2021). Note that the instruction of the SC test simply says *Fill in the blanks with appropriate English words*, without any specification of grammatical features. Thus, the test in the current study leads the participants to integrate all the linguistic clues to determine the message of each sentence to deliver, using implicit knowledge of grammatical features.

To select grammatical features to measure, the current study mainly followed Rodríguez Silva (2017). The current study included passives and participial constructions (Hawkins & Filipovic, 2012), instead of plural forms of nouns as in Rodríguez Silva (2017), in order to measure the development of critical grammatical features for the college students who complete the national curriculum of Korea for English. Thus, fifteen grammatical features of English were included in the two tests as they are the ones commonly taught and measured through both the implicit and explicit research instruments (i.e., the SC test and the MLK test, respectively, in the current study): tenses, subjunctive moods, third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense, comparative adjectives, infinitives, gerunds, articles, modal verbs, quantitative adjectives (*many/much*), participial constructions, *yes/no* questions, time prepositions (*for/since*), dative alternations, relatives, and passives.

Note that, through comparative analyses of an elicited imitation or oral narrative test and the MLK test, Rodríguez Silva (2017) reported a positive but weak correlation ( $r = .22$  in a Pearson correlation, while  $\rho = -.54$ ,  $p = .058$  in a Spearman's rank order correlation) between implicit and explicit knowledge. The significant correlation between implicit and explicit knowledge partly supports Absi (2014), Akakura (2012), Alipour (2014), Ellis (2005), Scheffler and Cinciała (2011), and Rodríguez Silva and Roehr-Brackin, (2016). At the same time, the trend toward a non-significantly negative association between implicit and explicit knowledge partly supports Ellis (2006) and Rodríguez Silva and Roehr-Brackin (2016). In this context, the current research with Korean university students may contribute to the discussion on EFL grammar development, expanding the previously limited language background. Moreover, the study is expected to provide insightful results through the revised measurement of Rodríguez Silva (2017), reflecting grammatical features on issue in the national English curriculum for Korean learners. Ultimately, the results may help with

specified suggestions on which grammatical features need more intensive pedagogical interventions in classrooms for automatized language use with implicit knowledge in English.

According to Rodríguez Silva (2017), these results indicate that, in particular, L2 learners with longer L2 learning experience developed either explicit or implicit knowledge first and then the other type of knowledge for each targeted grammatical feature. Such interpretation seems reasonable, especially considering the studies on third-person singular *-s* by Absi (2014), Erlam (2006), Ellis (2005), Rodríguez Silva and Roehr-Brackin (2016), and Rodríguez Silva (2017). Their results indicated that third-person singular *-s* belongs to an easy grammatical feature in terms of explicit knowledge but a difficult one in terms of implicit knowledge. Moreover, Rodríguez Silva (2017) found similar patterns for *yes/no* questions, time prepositions (*for/since*), quantitative adjectives (*many/much*), modal verbs, and comparative adjectives. Interestingly, the researcher also found the contrastive development pattern for relative clauses, indefinite articles, and dative alternations. For these grammatical features, the Mexican EFL learners in Rodríguez Silva's (2017) study showed much lower scores in explicit knowledge than in implicit knowledge.

The current study adopts a similar contrastive approach as previous studies on grammatical features in which EFL learners suffer from gaps between implicit and explicit knowledge. The research examines for which grammatical features Korean EFL learners have difficulty in providing an answer on SC and MLK tests. Specifically, the research is designed to answer the question, whether there are significant differences in learners' achievement between the SC test and the MLK test for fifteen grammatical features, respectively. The results can provide valuable information, particularly regarding for which grammatical features the learners need intensive pedagogical intervention in terms of either implicit or explicit knowledge. As a result, EFL learners and teachers in Korea may enhance their understanding of English acquisition and find more efficient ways or more helpful contents than their current curriculum.

Thus, the current study focused on finding answers to the following question: For which grammatical features do Korean learners demonstrate significant differences between the SC test and the MLK test?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Participants and Research Questions

The participants were recruited from the course, English Grammar, which the researcher taught at a university in Ulsan, Korea, for two semesters. 14 students participated in the research in the first semester and 15 students in the second semester. The homogeneity of these two groups were tested and reported in 4.1. In response to oral and written announcements, 29 students in total volunteered to participate for the SC test first and then the MLK test before the class instruction of English grammar started in the first or the second week of each semester. Such a schedule served two purposes: to prevent responses on the SC test from being influenced by the explicit knowledge potentially activated by the MLK test (Suzuki, 2015) and from being influenced from the course instruction of the course itself. The participants' average TOEIC score (composed of listening and reading) was 601.36 and ranged from 453 to 880, suggesting the group was made up of intermediate English learners studying at local universities in cities with a population of about 1,000,000 in Korea. Their mean age was 19.14 years, with range from 17 to 24 years. Ten of them are male and the rest female.

#### 3.2. Research Instruments and Data Collection

The research employed a SC test (see Appendix A) and the MLK test (see Appendix B) in Rodríguez Silva (2017) and Ko (2021), which were designed to measure EFL learners' implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge of English grammar, respectively. The SC test was administered before the MLK test in order to minimize any potential influence through the activation of explicit knowledge. The SC test contained 42 incomplete sentences with two blanks per sentence. Among those incomplete sentences, 30 sentences included target items measuring the implicit knowledge of the fifteen previously mentioned grammatical features and the remainder were filler items preventing participants from scoring better by guessing. On the other hand, the MLK test contained one sample sentence and 21 testing items in English (one filler and 20 target sentences, including 15 grammatical features). Among the 20 sentences, time prepositions (*since/for*), comparative adjectives (*-er/more*), participial constructions (*-ing/-ed*), quantity adjectives (*many/much*), and modal verbs (*do/must*) were presented in two independent sentences with blanks for one of two forms. Meanwhile, the other grammatical features were presented in one example sentence. Thus, each item of the MLK test required the participants to correct and explain the reason or grammatical rule. The SC test and the MLK test were both administered untimed. Most participants finished the SC test in 25 minutes and the MLK in 20 minutes, although a few

spent an extra five minutes.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

Each correct answer scored one on the SC test. Thus, the maximum score for a grammatical feature was two. Correct answers included all the expressions that met these two conditions: firstly, a response in the blank of the SC test was judged comprehensible and secondly, the target grammatical feature was correctly used. For example, *This car (look) (better) than mine.* was counted as a correct answer for comparative adjectives, while *This car (is) (expensive) than mine.* was not. Meanwhile, on the MLK test, the maximum score for a grammatical feature was two or four: each correct rewriting scored one and each correct explanation of the reason for rewriting or a grammatical rule also scored one, except for five grammatical features with two different forms — time prepositions (*since/for*), comparative adjectives (*-er/more*), participial constructions (*-ing/-ed*), quantity adjectives (*many/much*) and modal verbs (*do/must*) — which scored the maximum of four. Separate scoring for two forms of those five grammatical features was adopted to examine a potential difference in their development, considering formal and functional complexity mentioned in Ellis (2002). The reliability was 0.84 for the SC test and .81 for the MLK test using the Cronbach alpha test when analyzed using SPSS 22. According to Dörnyei (2007), Salkind and Frey (2020), Shin (2014), both of those tests have very good reliability, indicating that the tests statistically function well enough to measure learners' knowledge.

To compare the differences between the two tests, the data were analyzed with a Wilcoxon signed rank test, using SPSS 22, as the data were found to be non-parametric in terms of skewness and kurtosis, except for *for/since* and *many/much*. The data for those two grammatical features were analyzed using two dependent samples *t*-test (or matched paired samples *t*-test).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

When the researcher checked about the homogeneity between 14 students of the first semester and 15 students of the second semester, the *t*-test results showed no significant difference in both the SC test and the MLK test ( $p = 0.5864$ ,  $t = 0.5507$ ,  $df = 27$  for the SC test;  $p = 0.7186$ ,  $t = 0.3641$ ,  $df = 27$  for the MLK test). Thus, the data collected from the 29 students were analyzed together below.

Table 1 shows the results of descriptive statistics of the SC test and the MLK test.



**TABLE 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics of SC and MLK Tests (n = 29)**

	SC test			MLK test		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Median	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Median
Tense	.72	.59	1.0*	1.34	.94	2.0*
<i>For/since</i>	.79	.82	1.0*	1.26	.80	1.0*
Comparative	1.24	.79	1.0*	1.47	.65	2.0*
Article	1.28	.75	1.0*	1.31	.85	2.0*
Subjunctive mood	.90	.90	1.0*	1.38	.94	2.0*
Dative alternations	1.07	.75	1.0*	1.48	.83	2.0*
Participial construction	.38	.56	.0	.45	.74	.0
<i>Many/much</i>	.79	.73	1.0*	1.72	.59	2.0*
Relative	1.38	.82	2.0*	1.31	.93	2.0*
Question	1.45	.69	2.0*	1.45	.71	2.0*
Modal verbs	1.55	.63	2.0*	1.34	.90	2.0*
Gerund	.79	.77	1.0*	1.24	.91	2.0*
Infinitive	1.86	.35	2.0*	1.90	.31	2.0*
Third person -s	0.66	.72	1.0*	1.45	.91	2.0*
Passive	1.76	.51	2.0*	1.52	.83	2.0*

Note. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the median is greater than 1.

As Table 1 indicates, the SC test shows lower means than the MLK test for all grammatical features except relatives, questions, modal verbs, and passives. In particular, the means are lower than .80 for tense, *for/since*, *many/much*, gerunds, and third-person singular -s on the SC test but greater than 1.23 for all the grammatical features in the MLK test. In terms of median, larger differences (i.e., greater than 1) are found for all the grammatical features except participial constructions.

#### 4.2. Differences Between SC and MLK Tests

In light of the results, are the differences described in 4.1 between the two tests statistically significant? The results of two dependent samples *t*-tests provide the answers for *for/since* and *many/much*, while those of a Wilcoxon signed rank test provide the answers for the remaining of grammatical features.

Table 2 shows the results of two dependent samples *t*-test for the parametric data with *for/since* and *many/much* on the SC test and the MLK test.

**TABLE 2**  
**Results of Paired Samples *t*-test for SC and MLK Tests**

	Paired Differences			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error Mean			
<i>For/since</i>	-.47	.77	.14	-3.27	28	.003*
<i>Many/much</i>	-.93	.80	.15	-6.28	28	.000*

Note. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the number is significant at the  $p = .05$  level.

As Table 2 indicates, the results show significant differences for time prepositions (*for/since*) and quantitative adjectives (*many/much*) at the .05 confidence level. Integrating the results of Table 1, the results demonstrate that Korean participants showed significantly higher scores for the two grammatical features in the MLK test than on the SC test. In other words, the Korean learners could not perform as well on the SC test as on the MLK test for time prepositions and quantitative adjectives. It indicates that the learners tended to fail to correctly write *for/since* and *many/much* in English sentences, though successfully showing explicit metalinguistic knowledge of these two grammatical features.

On the other hand, Table 3 shows the results of the Wilcoxon signed rank test for the non-parametric data from the SC and MLK tests.

**TABLE 3**  
**Results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for SC and MLK Tests**

	<i>Z</i>	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Tense	-3.08	.002*
Comparative	-1.67	.095
Article	.00	1.000
Subjunctive mood	-2.03	.042*
Dative alternation	-2.31	.021*
Participial construction	-.47	.641
Relative	-.29	.771
Question	-.04	.972
Modal verb	-1.15	.250
Gerund	-2.67	.008*
Infinitive	-.38	.705
Third-person singular -s	-3.35	.001*
Passive	-1.56	.118

Note. *Z* scores were calculated based on negative ranks.

An asterisk (\*) indicates that the number is significant at the  $p = .05$  level.

As this table demonstrates, the results show significant differences for tense, subjunctive moods, dative alternations, gerunds, and third-person singular -s in the simple present tense. The results from Tables 1 and 3 indicate that the Korean participants showed statistically significant gaps for these grammatical features between implicit and explicit knowledge in

English. More specifically, they revealed significantly lower competence in English sentence writing, which requires using their implicit knowledge, but higher competence in terms of explicit metalinguistic knowledge.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through the SC test, the present study first found low achievement by the Korean EFL learners, particularly for six grammatical features: tense, *for/since*, participial constructions, *many/much*, gerunds, and third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense. Such findings provide overall support for Ko (2021). Note that the findings of the current study emphasize the necessity of pedagogical interventions for specified gaps in second or foreign language development. Although Ko (2021) reported low achievement for tense by advanced learners, and for gerunds by intermediate and low learners, the present study found low achievement for those two grammatical features by learners at the intermediate level with the mean of 601.36 in TOEIC. The study suggests that pedagogical priorities for Korean EFL learners should be given to the six grammatical features mentioned. Opportunities to practice automatized meaningful use of English need to be enhanced much more than the current curriculum for Korean EFL learners, particularly at or under the intermediate level.

Compared to Jo and Lim (2013), the low achievement for *many/much* and gerunds found in the current study belongs to new findings. It indicates that the intermediate and low learners, as in the current study, need additional training or practices in the classrooms particularly for these two grammatical features.

To consider the cause of such low achievements, it is noteworthy that all of the grammatical features with low achievement found in the current study share a relatively high syntactic complexity (Rodríguez Silva, 2017). Tense, gerunds, participial constructions, and third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense have higher difficulty than other grammatical features on the tests as learners determine their correct forms considering contextual relationships (such as time sequences and modification) as well as the syntactic structure of the whole sentence. The psychological process required must be more complex and burdensome than other grammatical features, which require understanding of a simpler relationship or literal meaning between adjacent words.

Furthermore, Korean learners show a low achievement on time prepositions (*for/since*) and quantitative adjectives (*many/much*), which have rarely been the focus in previous studies on EFL acquisition. Such low achievement on *for/since* and *many/much* may be because their distinctions are too subtle for the learners in the study to adopt in the middle of composing a sentence. Ellis (2006) pointed out the potential involvement of perceptual salience (how easy to notice in the input), functional value (how clear or distinct to map the

function), and processibility (how easy to process) in determining structural difficulty. Another point to note about time prepositions (*for/since*) and quantitative adjectives (*many/much*) is that each pair in the comparison do not have an independent corresponding form in the learners' L1, Korean. As Graus (2018) discussed, the lack of L1–L2 correspondence in either form or function, as perceived by learners, may contribute to increasing grammatical difficulty in L2 acquisition.

More interestingly, the study also found significantly lower achievements for tense, time prepositions (*for/since*), dative alternations, subjunctive moods, quantitative adjectives (*many/much*), gerunds, and third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense on the SC test than the MLK test. These findings indicate that these seven grammatical features were acquired, particularly in terms of implicit or automatized knowledge, significantly later than explicit knowledge. Interestingly, contrastive results have reported in Jo and Lim (2013): tense, time prepositions tense (*for/since*), and third-person singular *-s* in the simple present tense showed significantly higher scores in an implicit knowledge test (i. e., an oral imitation test) than two explicit knowledge tests (i. e., an untimed grammaticality judgment test and a multiple choice metalinguistic test). Note that the participants' English proficiency ranged from 453 to 880 in TOEIC in the current research, while 655 to 956 in Jo and Lim (2013). Jo and Lim (2013) also reported that 40% of the participants had lived in the English culture for more than six months. In addition, the current study asked the participants to correct and explain the errors in the metalinguistic test, while Jo and Lim (2013) to choose one of the explanations. Further studies may examine the role of the participants' English proficiency and provide more integrated explanation on the development of explicit and implicit knowledge.

On the other hand, to resolve the learning problem of these grammatical features, EFL practitioners need to maximize classroom activities to lead learners to use their implicit knowledge rather than to recite explicit rules of these seven grammatical features. As DeKeyser (1998) concluded, the key components of such activities or tasks include unrehearsed contexts and authentic communication purposes. An example can be a sentence completion quiz with blanks in speech or writing that asks learners to talk about themselves and the people around them. In addition, the study emphasizes that formative assessment also needs to focus on the seven grammatical features mentioned, emphasizing the importance of their mastering as well as measuring the implicit knowledge development.

Finally, the study found no significant difference between the SC test and the MLK test for comparative adjectives, articles, participial constructions, relatives, questions, modal verbs, infinitives, and passives. All of these grammatical features, except participial constructions, seem to be developed in tandem, showing mean scores ranging from 1.24 to 1.90 on both tests. In contrast, participial constructions show much lower mean scores: 0.38 on the SC test and 0.45 on the MLK test. What is called, the non-finite verbs, such as

infinitives, gerunds, and participial constructions, show different development patterns in the study. Infinitives were found to be acquired most successfully on both tests, while participial constructions were least successfully acquired on either test. Interestingly, gerunds were successfully acquired on the MLK test, but not on the SC test, as seen in the Wilcoxon signed rank test results. There seem to be at least two factors working behind these phenomena: a general development pattern called automatization, starting with explicit knowledge and reaching the state of implicit knowledge; and the frequency or exposure effect made through the Korean national curriculum at school or learners' learning history outside the classroom. Thus, to find the most efficient way to accelerate the automatized use of gerunds and participial constructions, the study's findings suggest further studies should focus on comparing the treatment effects by classroom activities to activate implicit knowledge and by the input frequency for gerunds and/or participial constructions.

Despite these interesting findings, the current study has limits. It did not classify participants into groups depending on EFL reading proficiency due to the small sample size. Further research with enough participants may provide more specified explanation or make more generalized conclusions on the automatized use of EFL grammar.

Applicable levels: Secondary, tertiary

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APPENDIX A
Sample of Sentence Completion Test

Version 4.0

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Read and complete the following sentences with appropriate expressions.

- 1. When he finished his homework, ( ) ( ) a movie.
2. Teachers have used the ( ) ( ) two years.
3. This car ( ) ( ) than mine.
4. They ( ) ( ) new house.
5. The postman gave the letter ( ) ( ) woman and she read it.

APPENDIX B
Sample of Metalinguistic Knowledge Test

Version 4.0

Instructions:

Each of the following 18 items contains an instance of unacceptable use of English. Please correct the highlighted mistake and then describe and explain why the underlined part represents a mistake. You can give your description and explanation in English or Spanish. Please provide as much detail as possible when describing and explaining your correction of each sentence.

다음의 21개의 문항은 영어의 부적절한 표현을 포함하고 있습니다. 표시된 오류를 올바른 표현으로 고쳐 쓰고, 고치기 전 표현이 어떤 상황에서 어떤 이유로 부적절한지를 설명하십시오. 설명은 영어나 한국어로 쓰면 됩니다. 어떤 상황에서 어떤 이유로 수정하였는지를 가능한 한 자세히 쓰시오.

Examples: If I have had enough money last year, I would have bought a house.

Correction(수정): had had

Explanation(설명): When a past situation that did not happen is being referred to, past perfect tense is required. (일어나지 않은 과거 상황을 이야기할 때, 과거완료 시제를 사용한다)

You will find that some items are harder than others, although they are not presented in order of difficulty. Please provide as much detail as possible when describing and explaining your correction of each sentence.

문항은 정해진 순서없이 제시되었고, 어떤 문항은 다른 문항보다 어려울 수 있습니다. 어떤 상황에서 어떤 이유로 수정하였는지를 가능한 한 자세히 쓰시오.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When he finished his homework, he watch a movie.

Correction: .....

Explanation:

.....  
.....

2. Teachers have used computers since two years.

Correction: .....

Explanation:

.....  
.....