The Potential of Animated Videos in The Development of English Tense-aspect Usage for Saudi EFL Learners

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Implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge within a natural process without a conscious awareness of the task of learning while explicit learning tends to be a more conscious process in which the learner makes judgments of hypotheses to find/acquire the structure (Ellis & Rebuschat, 2015). Although explicit instruction raises rule awareness, it doesn't always lead to full mastery, particularly in complex areas like tense and aspect. In Saudi EFL classrooms, this reliance on explicit instruction has contributed to learners' ongoing difficulties in mastering these grammatical features.

This study examines the role of animated videos in tense-aspect incidental learning among Saudi EFL learners, comparing the effectiveness of enhanced versus non-enhanced input. Sixty intermediate-level female students were divided into three groups. Control Group **CG** (N=20) learned through reading dialogues that presented tense and aspect structures in the form of written texts. Treatment Group 1 **TG1** (N=20) watched enhanced animated videos where grammatical features were visually highlighted using colour coding. Treatment Group 2 **TG2** (N=20) viewed non-enhanced animated videos, where target structures were naturally integrated into the narrative without visual emphasis. Learners' knowledge was assessed using a forced-choice task, along with grammar judgment and error correction tasks, before and after the intervention

A Generalized Linear Mixed-Effects Regression analysis showed a statistically significant improvement in **TG2** (p= 0.000007). However, **TG1** didn't show significant changes (p = 0.3), and **CG** showed changes but not highly significant (p=0.02). Our study suggests that instructional interventions should carefully consider input saliency and cognitive load in incidental learning. It challenges assumptions about the benefits of enhanced input in SLA, emphasizing the role of naturalistic exposure in grammar learning but also the value of traditional grammar teaching.