Examining the Effectiveness of Adopting an Inductive Approach to the Teaching of English Grammar

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Summary

Adopting an inductive approach to English grammar teaching can help students to rediscover their subconscious knowledge of English grammar and bring it to consciousness, as the grammar of a language is acquired through abstracting a set of grammatical rules from language data, rather than through imitation (Zhou, 2008). Although some local ESL teachers may be convinced of the benefits of the inductive approach to the learning of English grammar, it seems that not many of them have tried it out with their students due to their lack of faith in its effectiveness and/or students’ readiness. This paper reports on a research study investigating the effectiveness of adopting an inductive approach to the teaching of English grammar with six Secondary 1 students. The subjects, after learning how to use Wh-question words, were given a fill-in-the-blanks test and a sentence-production test with a view to examining its effectiveness. A follow-up group interview with all the six subjects was conducted to explore students’ feelings towards the inductive learning approach. The findings show that brighter students (mean score: 6 out of 7) benefited more from the inductive approach than the average (mean score: 3.5) or weaker (mean score: 2.5) students. In the interview, five out of the six interviewees responded that they preferred the inductive approach more and found it more effective in learning English grammar. It is hoped that this report can give Hong Kong ESL teachers some ideas on using the inductive approach.
1. Introduction

Language learners play a determining role in a language classroom as they directly affect the way the teachers teach, that is, the teaching approach (Ellis, 1997). Therefore, the suitability of teaching approaches for language learners and more importantly, the search for teaching methodology which yields the best learning outcomes in language learners has always been the hot issue for discussion.

Many educationalists have suggested that explicit teaching approaches have a more significant effect on the second language acquisition (Pica, 1983; cited in Ellis, 1997; Norris & Ortega, 2000; cited in Erlam, 2003) when compared to simple exposure or meaning-driven communication. There are numerous forms of explicit instruction (Norris & Ortega, 2000; cited in Erlam, 2003) and the two most commonly used yet controversial ones are the deductive approach and the inductive approach. Foreign languagemethodologists and teachers have long debated whether deductive or inductive teaching yields better outcomes for second language acquisition. Each of them carries both strengths and weaknesses (Thornbury, 1999).

As language learners and teaching approaches are the two main factors determining the whole teaching and learning scenario, the investigation of the learners’ attitudes towards the two types of explicit instruction will probably provide educationalists with some ideas about which teaching approach is more preferable in the second language acquisition.

In Hong Kong, English is regarded as one of the most important subjects in local mainstream schools. Most students learn English as a second language and they receive explicit instruction. Considerable emphasis is also placed on grammar learning (The Curriculum Development Council, 2001).

Chomsky (2002) suggests that an inductive approach can help students to rediscover their subconscious knowledge of English grammar and bring it to consciousness, as the grammar of a language is acquired through abstracting a set of grammatical rules from language data, rather than through imitation. It seems, however, that a number of teachers are still not fully convinced of the benefits of students’ self-discovery of grammar rules whereas, some still argue the direct transmission of grammar knowledge (i.e. a deductive approach)
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may not facilitate students’ long-term memory and application of the grammar rules acquired in appropriate contexts.

As aforementioned, learners’ opinions are of great importance in examining the value of deductive and inductive instruction in the second language acquisition. Therefore, research on learners’ opinions towards the two teaching approaches in learning grammar has probably become of interest to educators and language teachers in Hong Kong. The investigation of this area is essential.

Learners’ opinions towards deductive and inductive instruction are the topic of interest. The purpose of the present study, specifically, is to examine the learners’ attitudes towards deductive and inductive grammar teaching in English as a second language in a particular secondary one mainstream language classroom in Hong Kong. The teacher in that particular classroom uses various methods, including inductive and deductive, in teaching grammar. The former teaching approach involves rule explanation while the latter requires the learners to generalize patterns or rules from examples. We are interested in the learners’ opinions about the lessons with deductive instruction and inductive instruction. The opinions investigated which are the key variables in this survey research include two dimensions, the value of the teaching approaches in helping them grasp the grammatical concepts as well as motivating them to learn. The motivation here refers to the ‘intrinsic motivation’ which depends on how much the students are interested in the task or the lesson.

Since our students often have difficulty forming grammatically correct ‘Wh-questions’ involving the confusion of ‘be’ and ‘do’, in this action research, the teacher researchers taught students how to form ‘Wh-questions’ using an inductive approach and conducted a test after two days. A follow-up group interview with all the six interviewees was conducted two days after the test. It is hoped that, through our action research study, reflection and sharing of findings and insights, our English teachers, as well as other English teachers in Hong Kong, can believe in and adopt an inductive approach to teaching grammar so as to increase students’ learning effectiveness.
2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Definitions of some key concepts Deductive and inductive approaches

Deductive approach is defined as a process that proceeds from the presentation of a rule by a teacher to the provision of examples in which the rule is applied (Thornbury, 1999; Norris & Ortega, 2000; cited in Erlam, 2003) followed by language practice that students can engage in. It involves applying a general rule to specific instances (Gollin, 1998).

Inductive approach is almost a reverse process of deductive approach. It starts with exposing students to examples of language use or even immersing them in the use of the target language items and then prompts students to generalize the patterns of the language (Thornbury, 1999; Decoo, 1996; Gollin, 1998). It involves inferences from the particular instances to general (Gollin, 1998) and discovering rules (Thornbury, 1999). That is why some researchers, like Robinson, used the term inductive as rule search.

2.2 Research in deductive and inductive instruction

There is little research on learners’ attitudes or opinions towards the two approaches. However, there is a great deal of quantitative experimental research on the relative effectiveness of the two approaches on the acquisition of certain grammatical items (Erlam, 2003; Herron and Tomasello, 1992; Robinson, 1996; Seliger, 1975; Shaffer, 1989).

Although each of these studies adopted different experimental designs, all of them used at least two experimental groups, each of which received different types of instruction, including deductive and inductive instruction. After the experiment, the subjects of different group were required to do at least a task or a test in which the scores were calculated and their performance were used to measure the effectiveness of the approaches. The tests or tasks administered were taken in various forms, including written forms (Herron and Tomasello; 1992; Shaffer, 1989) and oral forms (Erlam, 2003).

These studies presented conflicting evidence to the effectiveness of deductive and inductive instruction. Shaffer (1989) did not uncover any significant difference between the two approaches but only a trend slightly in favor of the inductive instruction. Erlam (2003), Robinson (1996) and Seliger (1975) detected an overall advantage for deductive instruction.
while Herron and Tomasello (1992) gave an opposite conclusion. Due to these conflicting findings, no definite conclusions can be made.

The limitations in these studies should be noted as they merely focused on the effectiveness of the two approaches on the acquisition of the language and only the learners’ performance in comprehension and production of the language items was taken into account. These studies overlooked the importance of the learners’ perceptions of the value of the teaching approaches in helping them grasp the grammatical concepts and motivating them to learn. The real value and importance of these two teaching approaches may sometimes be better revealed by qualitative survey research.

The other limitation of most of the aforementioned studies is that they used adults as the subjects, except the studies done by Erlam (2003) and Shaffer (1989). It is conceivable that the results or conclusions obtained from studies using adults as subjects may not be applicable to the cases of school-aged learners. Therefore, after conducting this review, we were still no closer in understanding the value and importance of the deductive and inductive teaching in students’ points of view.

3. Research Design (Methods and Instruments):

3.1 Teacher Researchers

The three teacher researchers were the English teachers of their own S.1 classes. All of them had possessed at least five years’ experience in teaching English at both junior and senior secondary levels. Also, they were all English majors at university and had completed a postgraduate education course on English language teaching.

3.2 Subjects

Based on the results of the S.1 English admission test, the top two students from the brightest class, the average two students from the middle-stream class, and the weakest two students from the low-stream class were invited to participate in the action research. By the time the study was conducted, all of them had reached the age of 12 and had been taught by the English teacher researchers for five months.
3.3 Instruments

Two days after the teacher researchers had taught students how to form ‘Wh-questions’ using an inductive approach (i.e. students’ self-discovery of knowledge), students were given the following test:

Q.1 What ___________________________? My name is David Chan.
Q.2 Where ___________________________? I live in Kwun Tong.
Q.3 When ___________________________? I usually do my homework at night.
Q.4 Which ___________________________? I like ‘Harry Potter’ most.
Q.5 Who ___________________________? My best friend is John.
Q.6 Why ___________________________? It is because the students and teachers in this school are very nice.
Q.7 How ___________________________? I go to school by bus.

Remarks:

1. Since the focus of the action research was on grammatical accuracy, the content of the questions formed was not counted.

2. For each grammatical question formed (including word order, tense, the use of ‘verb-to-be’ and ‘do/does’), 1 mark was awarded.

3. The test scripts of all the six subjects were marked by an independent marker who was not involved in the study. The independent marker was an Assistant English Teacher in our school.

4. The test results of the different classes were compared to see:

   a. whether the adoption of an inductive approach is more effective than a deductive approach to grammar teaching; and

   b. to what extent students of varied ability (i.e. high, mid, and low) can benefit from an inductive approach to grammar teaching.
3.4 Focus Group Interview

A focus group interview consisting of 6 students (2 high-ability students, 2 mid-ability students, and 2 low-ability students in each class) was conducted to elicit interesting findings for a more in-depth analysis. The questions formed were based on students’ performance in the test. The interview was conducted in Cantonese to encourage students’ free and frank response.

Interview Questions

Q.1 Which approach did you find more interesting to you?

Q.2 Which approach did you consider more useful? Why?

Q.3 Would you like to learn grammar using an inductive approach or a deductive approach? Why?

Q.4 What were the difficulties encountered when learning grammar using an inductive approach? How did you overcome the difficulties?

Q.5 What kinds of students do you think are suitable for an inductive approach to learning grammar? Why?

Q.6 Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the two approaches to grammar learning?
3.5 Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Research Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Feb (Wed)</td>
<td>Teaching students how to form 'Wh-questions' using an inductive approach in a 55-min lesson (Students were given lots of 'Wh-questions' and asked to find out the features of 'Wh-questions' in groups such as 'word order, tense, the use of 'verb-to-be' and 'do/does'')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Feb (Fri)</td>
<td>Conducting the Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 25 Mar (Fri)</td>
<td>Marking of all students' test scripts by an independent marker who is not involved in the action research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 15 Apr (Fri)</td>
<td>Focus Group Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A focus group interview (i.e. high, mid, low classes) consisting of 6 students (2 high-ability students, 2 mid-ability students, and 2 low-ability students in each class) was conducted to elicit interesting findings for a more in-depth analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 24 Jun (Fri)</td>
<td>Drafting the research report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 29 Jul (Fri)</td>
<td>Finalising the research report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 31 Aug (Wed)</td>
<td>Submitting the finalised research report to Hong Kong Teachers' Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Findings

4.1 Test

4.1.1 Test Results

Table 2 Test Results Showing That Most Students are Able to Form Some Questions Correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Student 1 (Hi-ability)</th>
<th>Student 2 (Hi-ability)</th>
<th>Student 3 (Mid-ability)</th>
<th>Student 4 (Mid-ability)</th>
<th>Student 5 (Low-ability)</th>
<th>Student 6 (Low-ability)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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4.1.2 Inductive Approach being more effective, especially for brighter students

From the above findings, it is clear that most students have attained the right ways to form the grammatically formed questions by exploring various examples provided by their English teachers. Among them, Student 1 and 2 had near-perfect performance. The others performed satisfactory. Only Student 6 got 1 mark and he should have found it intricate to learn with inductive approach.

In addition, the higher level students have done much better than their weaker counterparts in the test. They are far more capable of following the inductive way of learning when attending the English lessons and learning various grammatical concepts.

Table 3 An Analysis of the Grammatically Wrong Questions Formed by Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question(s) wrongly formed</th>
<th>Word Order</th>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>‘Verb-to-be’ and ‘Do/does’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.2 Where are you live?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are you living?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.3 When does you do homework?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I did homework?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you is do homework?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.4 Which book you like?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which ‘Harry Potter’ is I liked?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.5 Who are my best friend?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who does your best friend?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who was my best friend?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.6 Why is the student and teachers in this school very nice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is it like in this school?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you very like the students and very nice teachers?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why it does it the students like this school teacher?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why they is like students and school teachers very nice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.7 How you do go to school by bus?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is I go to school?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3 Word Order

Some weaker students could not figure out the correct word order and formed quite a number of wrong questions throughout teachers’ inductive English lessons. Eight questions have word order errors.

They could not attain the ideas from the examples given by teachers. When they ask open questions for more information starting with an interrogative word or phrase such as What, How, Who, When, Which (film), this word or phrase must go in front of the auxiliary or modal verb. For example, ‘When are you going to Paris?’, ‘How can I help you?’, ‘Which film (interrogative phrase) did you see?’

The only exception to this rule is the verb ‘to be’ which does not take an auxiliary in the present and past simple tenses. They just have to invert the subject and verb in open and closed questions. For example, ‘Are you tired?’, ‘Were you late for your appointment?’, And ‘How are you?’

However, we do not add an auxiliary for subject questions. In questions where the question word or phrase is the subject, there is no added auxiliary in the present or past simple nor any inversion. ‘Who plays football in this class?’, ‘Which car will arrive first?’, and ‘Who loves you?’

4.1.4 Tense

To all S.1 students, the subject of English tenses is a vast and difficult one, so it deserves its own special place as a conspicuous component in the English curriculum. As revealed by students’ test performance, four questions were formed with inappropriate tenses. This clearly demonstrates that broadly speaking, students of various level of English competency are lack of confidence and ability to tackle the tense issue when asking questions.
4.1.5 ‘Verb-to-be’ and ‘Do/does’

Thirteen questions were formed with inappropriate use of ‘Verb-to-be’ and ‘Do/does’. This further backs up the state that the difference between Chinese (Ss’ L1) and English (Ss’ L2) is weakening and undermining their ability of employing grammatically questions in their English studies.

4.2 Interview

Group interviews with students furnish another source of evidence that the test results are more accurate, trustworthy, useful, and believable than student ratings and written comments. The teacher researchers consider the interview results as most useful for teaching improvement.

4.2.1 Inductive Approach being more effective, especially for brighter students

The teacher researchers think that “Inductive approach” is better because, on one hand, if students can find a grammatical rule by themselves, it might be harder for them to forget the rule than just learning from a teacher. That is to say, for a teacher, it is better to ask students a question before explaining a grammatical rule than to just explain the rule.

On the other hand, “Inductive approach” is something like giving a mystery. Starting a class with mystery is very effective to attract students to the class. Students might try to find a grammatical rule, just like solving a mystery. Finally, this process will lead to more successful grammar learning.

From a student’s perspective, an inductive approach enables him/her to think more before formulating some concrete ideas about a language item. Learning acquisition should be voluntary. Thus an inductive approach sounds better which will give students more thinking opportunities than a deductive approach. Also through an inductive approach to learning, students can have various answers throughout peer interactions and independent thinking. The inductive approach seems to benefit the active students more than the passive ones though.
Teachers would like to use inductive approach to teach English. Then their students’ ability of thinking will increase by using inductive approach since the students try to find the rules from given examples and then understand by themselves. As a result, their brains work well. In fact, it is definitely important for learners to think and find out the law to a problem rather than being spoon-fed by their instructors during the passive learning process with deductive approach.

In addition, learning in lessons with the inductive approach is more meaningful. Deductive English learning is similar to behaviorism methodology and this kind of methodology doesn’t help the student understand the grammar in a useful way. They will only memorize the verbs for a period of time.

4.2.2 Inductive Approach being more interesting

From the days of grammar translation, the deductive approach to language learning, in which a grammar rule is explicitly presented to students and followed by practice applying the rule, has been the bread and butter of language teaching around the world and still enjoys a monopoly in many course books and self-study grammar books. However, the low levels of attainment associated with this type of teaching, plus an ever-developing awareness of the complexity of language brought by corpus linguistics, have pointed out problems with deductive instruction. Rules given by teachers and textbooks are often seen, at best, as helpful but over-simplistic generalizations; and at worst, as fallacious and misleading distortions of real languages which contribute little or nothing to learner’s productive mastery of linguistic forms. In view of this, inductive learning is conducted in the English lessons. Students can now enjoy learning English in various ways but all share the feature that they do not start with explicit presentation of a language rule. Rather, the learners are prompted in some ways to discover for themselves how language works. As a result, they find English learning far more interesting and interactive.

It avoids the interference of the first language. Trying to teach grammar to learners explicitly by telling them the rules without using grammar in context makes it difficult for learners to store the target features in their long-term memory and for these features to become grammatically automatized. That is one of the reasons why Chinese learners tend to
remember grammar rules by translating them into their mother tongue. In this case, not only a lot of grammatical mistakes, but also cultural differences, which result in improper use of the language, appear in their language learning. Teaching grammar through communicative tasks or CR activities which make the language meaningful and interesting for them can help them to use the language in real-time communication more automatically.

4.2.3 Difficulties Encountered when using inductive approach

The inductive approach represents a more modern style of teaching where the new grammatical structures or rules are presented to the students in a real language context (Goner, Phillips, and Walters, 1995, 135). The students learn the use of the structure through practice of the language in context, and later realize the rules from the practical examples. For example, if the structure to be presented is the comparative form, the teacher would begin the lesson by drawing a figure on the board and saying, “This is Jim. He is tall.” Then, the teacher would draw another taller figure next to the first saying, “This is Bill. He is taller than Jim.” The teacher would then provide many examples using students and items from the classroom, famous people, or anything within the normal daily life of the students, to create an understanding of the use of the structure. The students repeat after the teacher, after each of the different examples, and eventually practice the structures meaningfully in groups or pairs. (Goner, Phillips, and Walters, 1995, 135-136) With this approach, the teacher’s role is to provide meaningful contexts to encourage demonstration of the rule, while the students evolve the rules from the examples of its use and continued practice (Rivers and Temperley, 1978, 110).

While inductive approach is firmly based in many English teaching in HK schools and enjoys much popularity with English learners, it does not yet seem to have gained widespread acceptance among the majority of frontline English teachers. In important ways it goes directly counter to many traditional educational ideas: it puts more responsibility on learners, posits a less central role for the teachers, and makes no promises about when or whether students will master the content. In a city like HKSAR (part of mainland China), where the education system remains rooted in conservative Confucian beliefs, one would expect to face resistance to inductive teaching in the classrooms.
I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.
attributed to Confucius (551-479?BC)

The above-mentioned criteria for creditable PG rules are particularly relevant to deductive (rule-driven, top-down) teaching, which leads from an explicit presentation of metalinguistic information, the provision of a set of abstractions, isolated language rules at autonomous levels of description subsequently accompanied by model sentences, to their application to concrete L2 representations and practice tasks only after the clarification has been studied and digested (Komorowska 1993:120). This technique simply means providing learners with the ready grammar rule, describing in details how the new structure is formed, what its components are, and in what type of context it can be used. All the information is given in the form of a mini-lecture, during which the teacher usually employs grammatical terminology. After the explanation, the learners are provided with examples illustrating the new structure, which they analyse, and are subsequently asked to apply the rule to new sentences. They are typically expected to memorize the rule (and relevant ‘exceptions’). This form of teaching offers a clear clarification of new language items, which makes the learning task easier and less intimidating and is time-effective, leaving more time for practicing the new structures. Among other advantages, it gets straight to the point, and therefore can be time-saving. It respects the intelligence and maturity of many especially adult students and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition. It confirms many students' expectations about classroom learning. (Thornbury 1999:30) This type of teaching is prevalent in the majority of traditional educational institutions.

In short, adopting the inductive approach to Chinese learners still faces a lot of challenges: 1) For these adult learners, they have already developed their own learning style. Some of them may feel more comfortable with the teacher explaining rules to them instead of discovery totally by themselves. In other words, they feel more secure when they get a lot of support, even a lot of corrections from the teachers. 2) Since their level is not at the beginning level anymore, they have more chances to meet some complicated or difficult structures. An inductive teaching approach may not meet their explicit request of how language works. They may question the teachers’ knowledge and ability of the target language (especially to non-native English teachers) if the teachers do not answer their questions in an explicit way.
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Basically, the changing of the deductive approach to the inductive approach takes quite a long time. It becomes particularly difficult to adopt widely with young learners because of the strictly-controlled national exam-oriented syllabus in China. It works quite well with the adult learners since their purpose is to develop their communicative competence without being under the pressure of exams. Whether the grammar teaching approach is effective for them depends on whether it is really useful for their real-life communication with native English speakers either in their work or studies. However, the problem is still a key one: If language teachers do not start teaching young learners with an appropriate approach and develop their skills and abilities of language learning, how can they become successful language learners as they grow up?

Furthermore, some English teachers may like to use inductive approach, but they may not use it. That’s because this approach takes a lot of time. The number of English class per week in secondary schools has been getting fewer. So, it is difficult to take a lot of time to one lesson.

5. Discussion

A language test is for the teacher researchers to verify the teaching effectiveness of inductive English lessons. After the test, it is found that such a post-lesson test is beneficial to both teachers and students. Teachers can make out how well their students have learnt the topic ‘Asking English Questions Correctly’. Also, they can use testing as a useful tool to boost students’ learning.

Furthermore, it has long been considered that testing can be more beneficial than studying alone. While it may seem that spending more time studying is one of the best ways to maximize learning, research has demonstrated that taking tests actually helps students better remember what they’ve learned, even if it wasn’t covered on the test. The study revealed that students who studied and were then tested had better long-term recall of the materials, even on information that was not covered by the tests. Students who had extra time to study but were not tested had significantly lower recall of the materials. Obviously, the teachers have designed this research very well.
5.1 Word Order

There are 2 main types of questions: Open and closed questions. Closed questions are those for which the answer can be only ‘yes’ or ‘no’. These questions are usually formed by putting the auxiliary or modal verb in front of the subject. For example, ‘Do you like pizza?’ (simple present) ‘Is he going to Paris?’ (present continuous) ‘Will they be at the party?’ (simple future with ‘will’) ‘Did you like the film?’ (simple past).

Open questions ask for more information and are started with an interrogative word or phrase such as ‘What’, ‘How’, ‘Who’, ‘When’, ‘Which’ (film). This word or phrase goes in front of the auxiliary or modal verb. ‘When are you going to Paris?’ ‘How can I help you?’ ‘Which film (interrogative phrase) did you see?’

The only exception to this rule is the verb ‘to be’ which does not take an auxiliary in the present and past simple tenses. Here we just invert the subject and verb in open and closed questions. ‘Are you tired?’, ‘Were you late for your appointment?’, and ‘How are you?’

However, we do not add an auxiliary for subject questions. In questions where the question word or phrase is the subject there is no added auxiliary in the present or past simple or any inversion. ‘Who plays football in this class?’, ‘Which car will arrive first?’, And ‘Who loves you?’

Many students have difficulty with word order but there are few materials which deal with this. The problem is often specifically related to their L1.

Regarding this, some practice and discovery activities are generated from some successful lessons conducted by the research teachers.

1. Ask students to look at a series of sentences with the correct word order patterns and to complete a sheet with rules written on them.

2. Cut up each word in target sentences illustrating different patterns and ask students to put them in the right order. Students do this before or after looking at the rules.
Ask students to write out the correct sentences at the end of the correction phase so that students have a written record.

3. If you can’t cut up sentences just jumble up the word order of the questions from the course book. Again, students can do this before or after looking at the rules. Ask students to write out the correct sentences at the end of the correction phase so that students have a written record.

4. Write out questions with the incorrect word order and ask students to correct them. Correction exercises can also take the form of any of a large number of games.

5. On the board, OHT or a handout, write down some of the word order mistakes in homework and writing and speaking activities without naming the students and ask students to correct them as a group. Correction exercises can take the form of any of a large number of games. In the games books teachers can adapt any game that will lend itself to word order and they will then have a huge repertoire. They can write grammar auctions, write correct and incorrect word order on snakes and ladders boards, card games, dominoes, and so on.

6. When teachers set longer pieces of writing, give students models of genres and ask students to identify features of the model. In the model include many important features of word order of English questions, especially the kind that challenges the English speakers in the class, and get them to notice these features. Then ask students to write the questions exactly as the models do. Some students need to be encouraged to copy, as they think it is cheating. It provides a chance for them to think only in English and not to start from the word order of their own language.

7. Provide controlled speaking and writing tasks so that they can make all the ideas with English prompts.

8. Give the students ample and attainable practice.
9. Students often want, and need to, write about what they want to and this free writing, which must encompass some open questions mainly in present tense, can give them the chance to try out all kinds of expressions and get feedback on their use or get the correct form from their teacher or peers. In inductive and communicative teaching this phase is also necessary and important and mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning. Individual feedback on problems with word order and L1 transference is usually valuable. In task-based learning, if you play CDs of native or fluent speakers doing tasks then draw students’ attention to the particular word order areas on the CDs, especially if they are problems for the learners to formulate correct open questions.

Honestly speaking, word order has been established in the research as a real challenge for most learners of English. Nevertheless, by focusing on word order in everyday English lessons, students will have more practice with and understanding of word order which will leave them feeling more convinced of their English speaking abilities.

5.2 is/am/are do / does

Students find it easy to mix up the use of verb-to-be i.e. is / am / are and auxiliary verbs i.e. do / does when asking questions in present tense. The following elucidation helps much for students’ understanding and clarification of this grammar point.

5.3 Encouragement

‘Nine-tenths of education is encouragement.’ (Anatole France, 1844-1924) This depicts the significance of encouragement in students’ learning process. The English research teachers are always encouraging their students when they think of the following sayings.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1 Examples of Encouragement Fostering Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never give up on anybody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hubert H. Humphrey</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All kids are gifted: some just open their packages earlier than others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Michael Carr</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One who makes no mistakes never makes anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source Unknown</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not only strike when the iron is hot, but make it hot by striking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oliver Cromwell</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep not standing fixed and rooted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briskly venture, briskly roam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goethe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My liveliest delight was in having conquered myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rosseau</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future depends on what we do in the present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mahatma Gandhi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moliere</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world is all gates, all opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source Unknown</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are helped to feel secure and confident to tackle new challenges by building on what they already know and can do. On top of this, they can learn best through their interactions with people who know and relate to them well. Consequently, teachers always praise and encourage the students from the bottom of their hearts. They are constantly cheering up the English learners in their inductive English sessions by praising both students' talent and efforts. Examples are shown in the following table.
Teachers offer specific feedback rather than general comments. For example, instead of saying, “Terrific job,” teachers can comment on specific behaviors that they wish to acknowledge. They give out encouragement which is teacher-initiated and private. Privacy increases the potential for an honest exchange of ideas and an opportunity for the student to talk about his or her work. Teachers’ encouragement focuses on learners’ improvement and efforts rather than evaluation of their finished products. Teachers often use sincere, direct comments delivered with a natural voice. They do not set students up for failure. Labels such as “nice” or “terrific” may set students up for failure because they cannot always be “nice” or “terrific”. They help students develop an appreciation of their behaviors and achievements. When commenting on students’ performance, they avoid competition or comparisons with others. In other words, they work toward self-satisfaction from a task or product.

To the English teachers, it is widely known that children have an intrinsic desire to learn. Regular and effective praise and encouragement from teachers will stop stifling students’ natural curiosity and desire to learn. (Brophy, 1981). With constant and conspicuous appreciation from their teachers, students can get rid of a desire to learn with blind conformity, a mechanical work style, or even open defiance. On the other hand, teachers who encourage students create an environment in which students do not have to fear continuous evaluation, where they can make mistakes and learn from them, and where they do not always need to strive to meet someone else’s standard of excellence. Most students thrive in encouraging environments where they receive specific feedback and have the opportunity to evaluate their own behavior and work. Encouragement fosters autonomy, positive self-esteem, a willingness to explore, and acceptance of self and others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praising talent</th>
<th>Praising efforts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are the best presenter!</td>
<td>You have put in lots of sweating hours to improve your presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well Played!</td>
<td>You act out the role play with the right speaking tones at the right time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent!</td>
<td>Almost right! Try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're great writer!</td>
<td>My God! You seem to have worked really hard for your group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When conducting inductive English lessons, teachers have their most readiness to give plenty of praise and encouragement to students who are well behaved. For example, give out tasks to students who are being good, thank them for being well behaved or for doing something seriously in their own groups.

Rewarding students is all part of the process. English teachers always confer responsibility or distinction on the pupil such as: verbal or written praise, a positive note to take home to parents, a star on the work, displaying a particular student’s work on the wall, being given a seat of honour, being named the student of the day or week, being given a special responsibility such as running an errand for the teacher, doing the role-call, helping the teacher with a class activity, collecting or giving out materials, leading a group activity or tutoring another student.

6. Conclusion

The teacher researchers personally feel that English teachers need in the first place to facilitate learning. That is why we prefer to provide students with inductive learning exercises. However, there are certainly moments when the teacher needs to explain grammar concepts to the class. Therefore, generally we recommend the following class structure when teaching grammar skills:

- Begin with an exercise, game, listening, etc. that introduces the grammar concept.
- Ask students questions that will help them identify the grammar concept to be discussed.
- Follow with another exercise that more specifically focuses on the grammar concept, but takes an inductive approach. This could be a reading exercise with questions and responses in the structure that is being taught.
- Check responses, ask students to explain the grammar concept that has been introduced.
- At this point introduce teaching explanations as a way of clearing up misunderstandings.
Provide an exercise which focuses on the correct construction of the grammar point. This could be an exercise such as a fill the gap, cloze or tense conjugation activity.

Ask students to once again explain the concept.

As you can see, the teacher is facilitating students to do their own learning rather than using the ‘top down’ approach of dictating rules to the class.

With the inductive approach, students can learn to do well only what they practice doing. After discovering the word order and the use of is / am / are / do / does, then they practice applying them in novel situations. Similarly, students cannot learn to think critically, analyze information, communicate grammar ideas, make logical arguments, work as part of a team in a group, and acquire other desirable skills unless they are arranged and encouraged to do those things over and over in many contexts in their own groups. Meanwhile, teachers should make sure that students have some sense of success in learning how to ask right English questions. They should deemphasize getting all the right answers as being the main criterion of success. After all, language accuracy itself is never quite right. Understanding anything is never absolute, and it takes many forms. Accordingly, teachers should strive to make all students particularly the less-confident ones aware of their progress, foster their self-appreciation and encourage them to continue studying.

Our school has all along adopted a step-by-step and multi-pronged inductive approach comprising an array of relevant and effective teaching strategies notably pair work group work project making, role play, online forum, group discussion with a view to reducing classroom monotony, enhancing peer interaction, further upgrading learning effectiveness, as well as boosting students’ English learning motivation, kindling learners’ zest and initiative as well as to prevent youngsters from lazing away their limited but valuable English learning time in school, which is, however, an indispensable leap forward into their lifelong language learning.

It is expected that, through our action research, reflection and sharing of findings and insights, our English teachers, as well as other English teachers in Hong Kong, can believe in and adopt an inductive approach to teaching grammar so as to increase students’ learning effectiveness.

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Examining the Effectiveness of Adopting an Inductive Approach to the Teaching of English Grammar
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