English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 18, No. 2 Summer 2012

A Study on Learning to Write English Interrogative Sentences*

Kyunghee Choi
(Hanyang Women's University)

Choi, Kyunghee. (2012). A study on learning to write English interrogative sentences. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 18*(2), 21-44.

This paper aims to discuss the effects of learning how to write English interrogative sentences. 122 students who participated in the study learned basic structural components of English questions and practiced writing questions by inversing the subject and the verb in a given declarative sentence. The participants were divided into two groups: Group 1 which was given a brief explanation of interrogative structures and practices, and Group 2 which was given the same explanation and practices in addition to an assignment for which they had to make one or two comprehension questions based on reading a passage. For the pre-tests and the post-tests, they took a TOEIC reading test with 40 questions and a structure test with 25 questions. The results of the tests show that both groups improved significantly in the two post-tests, benefiting from this learning method. However, the additional treatment for Group 2 did not seem to be highly effective. In the questionnaire survey, the participants think that the method of learning English questions has helped them better understand English grammar as well as interrogative structures. The participants were also divided into three different levels: high, intermediate, and low. The intermediate level group students benefited most from learning writing questions as the results of the post-test of the 25-questions test and the final exam of the course show.

[interrogative/explicit grammar teaching/noticing/wh-questions/inversion]

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze and evaluate effects of learning to write

* This paper was supported by a research grant from Hanyang Women's University in the fall semester, 2011. I would like to thank anonymous readers for their helpful comments.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

English interrogative sentences. It attempts to find out whether the students in Group 1 or Group 2, which was given an additional assignment besides the instruction, benefit more from the method. The study is designed to find out which level group, high, intermediate, or low benefits most from the method. Using the questionnaire survey, it also intends to learn about whether the participants think the method is effective in learning English interrogative sentences.

Learning and teaching English should ultimately aim to enhance the learner's communicative ability in spontaneous situations. Grammar along with other elements including vocabulary and pronunciation is an important resource for ESL/EFL learners to create and convey meaning properly, and to achieve a communication goal successfully. However grammar which had enjoyed its centrality for many years was, if not abandoned, put aside to the periphery with the claim that its effects are only temporary and will never be part of acquired competence (Krashen, 1993). Challenges to the effects of grammar teaching which started in the 1970s have influenced and changed the theories and methodologies of English language teaching (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

As the theories and methodologies of English teaching and learning have progressed, grammar teaching has again been in a focal position. Various studies which include such key words as "formal instruction," "integrating grammar for communicative language teaching," "structural syllabus," "focus-on-form vs. focus-on-forms," and "implicit vs. explicit grammar teaching" have enriched the perspectives of teaching English as a second or foreign language (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Doughty, 2004; Fotos, 1994; Fotos & Ellis, 1999; Ellis, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2006; Hahn, 2006; Kadia, 1987; Kang, 2009; Kim, 2008; Lee, 2008; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Pazaver & Wang, 2009). Fluency and accuracy are the two most essential goals for learners to achieve effective and efficient communication. Accuracy without communicative experiences and ability to perform in spontaneous situations cannot guarantee successful communication. Fluency without accurate use of grammar cannot guarantee improvement to grow out of the stage of interlanguage.

In this respect, grammar cannot be ignored but should rather be given special attention. What part of grammar should be taught and to what extent is an important issue to consider and has been controversial (Celce-Murcia 1991). Ellis (1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2006) argues that classroom activities should help learners notice grammatical features in the input so that they can be used later in their output. The current study focuses on explicit explanation of English question structures to be used later as an important resource for learners to notice them in input and to use them in output. Explicit explanation should not be in the form of traditional grammar translation but be delivered briefly in terms of English sentence patterns and word order.

Then, why does this study focus on interrogative structures among many other

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

grammatical features? There are two major reasons for this. Before defining them, here are some incorrectly composed wh-question sentences by some of the participants in the study before the treatment began. The participants were supposed to write a wh-question using the given declarative sentence. The question should be asked in order to be answered with the underlined word(s).

Example 1: A: *_*What's the got the actors from the studio*_?
B: The actors got a job and a lot of money from the studio.
Example 2: A: *_*How many did manufacturers made diners*_?
B: 12 manufacturers made diners.
Example 3: A: *_*What is called the companies*_?
B: The companies called their new food cars "diners."

One of the two reasons for choosing interrogative structure as a grammatical feature to learn is for a communicative purpose. For communication to take place in any situation, a dialogue usually has to be in the form of interactive progression, in which interlocutors respond to each other with various forms of feedback including questions. Questions have many meaningful functions in dialogic activities. Questions not only help interlocutors obtain information from the others but also prolong dialogues for further new information. Questions also help learners better understand and obtain information from the text they read. For effective reading comprehension strategies, Choi (2003a, 2003b) suggests three socioaffective strategies such as confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks to be used to obtain assistance from others when learners face difficulties while reading. Fotos and Ellis (1999) also analyzed how the participants in their study used such socioaffective strategies as confirmation checks, clarification requests, comprehension checks, repetitions, and requests for repetition while they were conducting a communicative grammar task, in which they had to communicate about grammar. Zaki and Ellis (1999) conducted a study in which they studied the effects of self-questions on students' reading comprehension ability as well as vocabulary acquisition. These studies show positive results of the use of questions whether they are used interpersonally or intrapersonally. Knowing how to ask questions properly is an essential element in communication and further learning.

However, as the three examples above show, many L2 learners find asking questions in English difficult, with errors of ill-composed structures, which in turn may hinder proper communication. Producing incorrect forms of structures constantly and making the same errors repeatedly, they may be frustrated with their ill-structured sentences, losing confidence in their communicative as well as linguistic ability. It may cause students to lose confidence in what they speak and write. Thus the second reason for

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

choosing English interrogative structures is to help students better understand essential English sentence structures through interrogative structures. This understanding may help students notice interrogative sentence features in input, and to improve and gain confidence in producing English questions and communicating with others in English. With a brief explanation of basic components of interrogative sentences, inversion of subject and verb, and movement of auxiliary, this study is designed to assist students learn how to make English interrogative sentences with the given declarative structures of answers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Fotos and Ellis (1999) support the view that language acquisition takes place when learners are given both sufficient comprehensible input and chances for pushed output. They designed an experiment in which learners were given grammar tasks that they had to solve interactively with others. The tasks were entitled "grammar tasks" because they were designed to promote communication about grammar. Fotos and Ellis (1999) write that the grammar tasks have two aims: first, to develop explicit knowledge of English grammatical features, and second, to provide chances for interaction to exchange information. The underlying rationale for this is that by raising learners' consciousness about linguistic features the tasks may directly promote implicit knowledge of the target grammar and indirectly develop explicit knowledge. The result of their study shows that, even though the Japanese EFL learners did not perform significantly better in long-term learning than they did in the traditional, teacher-fronted grammar learning, they improved their knowledge of certain linguistic features as they participated in communication to exchange meaning and information. Fotos and Ellis (1999) argue that raising consciousness through grammar tasks is a more effective way to acquire grammatical features than mere practices of linguistic features.

In line with this interactive mode and regretting the lack of research based on collaborative interaction for grammar discussion, Han (2006, 2008) investigates how adult ESL students in Auckland, New Zealand perform in grammar tasks. Han's study (2006) aims to find out the effects of a grammar-discovery task as the participants focus on form and carry out interactive dialogues to solve problems in the given task, and to suggest to what extent they are engaged in discussing the target linguistic features. In her similar study (2008), Han focuses on how much attention learners pay to linguistic forms in the dictogloss task and its effects. The results of both studies suggest that these grammar tasks help learners engage in collaborative interaction but there is no strong relationship between the attention paid to the linguistic features while exchanging

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

interaction and the improvement in learning. Han (2006, 2008) concludes that the attention to the form during the peer scaffolding did not guarantee the acquisition of linguistic forms because they were not explicitly dealt with in the class. Quoting from Ellis (2003), Han (2006, 2008) suggests two stages of teaching: the explicit explanation and presentation stage of linguistic features, and then the interaction stage through communicative tasks for grammar discussion.

Ellis (2006) discusses some major issues in the teaching of grammar, emphasizing its significance. Arguing for replacing the traditional approach to grammar teaching depending solely on drill-like practice and explicit explanation with a new one, Ellis concludes with his own belief about grammar teaching. He suggests that teachers focus on certain grammatical structures rather than deal with the entire English grammatical system. The best level of proficiency for grammar learning, according to him, is intermediate level since the learners of this level already know how to use the language. Ellis (2006) places stress on incorporating a focus-on-forms approach into communicative tasks, encompassing more forms and explicit grammar teaching for the acquisition of implicit knowledge. According to him, "teaching explicit knowledge can be incorporated into both a focus-on-forms and a focus-on-form approach. In the case of a focus-on-forms approach, a differentiated approach involving sometimes deductive and sometimes inductive instruction may work best" (p. 102). Thus he concludes that grammar instruction should be conducted in two different modes: they are separate lessons with a focus-on-forms approach and communicative activities with a focus-on-form approach.

Pazaver and Wang (2009) conducted research on how students perceived grammar teaching. The participants were 16 Asian ESL students from 7 different countries studying in a Canadian university. The results of their study suggest that although most of the students regard grammar instruction as important and beneficial, their perception of grammar teaching is varied depending on their previous language experience, language proficiency, and both academic and career needs.

Hahn (2006) conducted similar research but with Korean EFL university students. The result of the questionnaire research reports that the 52 Korean students highly value explicit and conscious knowledge of the grammatical systems. Thus they regard practice of English grammatical structures as an essential element in learning and acquiring the language. Hahn concludes that prior to giving chances for communicative practices based on a focus-on-form approach intensive formal instruction should be given to learners.

Shin (2011) also administered a questionnaire survey to find out whether the students in her university still wanted to take English grammar classes which were cancelled due to a school policy. The result of the study reveals that both freshmen and sophomores

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

who took the grammar lesson when they were freshmen want grammar instruction to improve accuracy in language production. However, Shin (2011) adds that sophomore students who want to take grammar classes are not satisfied with the way the previous grammar classes were conducted, and thus hope for improved grammar instruction.

Kang (2009) focuses on one specific feature of English structure, 'verb+NP+to infinitive' construction, and investigates effects of form-focused instruction for the learning of this feature. Kang divided 150 college students into three groups: two experimental groups and one control group. Each experimental group was given a different treatment: one group with negative feedback plus explicit rule presentation and the other group with input enhancement plus meaning-oriented rule search. The two experimental groups outperformed the control group in both a grammaticality judgment task and a picture description task. The students in both experimental groups benefited from each of their treatments as they outperformed the control group in acquiring not only receptive knowledge but also productive knowledge. Kang states that the seven target verbs for the verb+NP+to infinitive structure are included in high school English textbooks. Kang emphasizes that even though students learn the target features if they do not pay enough attention and are not given enough implicit and explicit instructional treatments, they are not able to acquire the target feature.

Kim (2008) incorporates attention-drawing devices into a business English class and discusses their effects on learning the English restrictive relative clause structure. The students who received the treatment of pattern explanation along with input enhancement, translation, output practice, and corrective feedback showed a more significant improvement in accurate production of the target structure than those who received the same treatment but with traditional explanation instead of pattern explanation. The pattern explanation presents relative clause structures based on word order. Kim (2008) argues that the learners benefit more from brief explicit explanation than traditional explanation which heavily focuses on grammar explanation with conceptual terminology. The main difference between the two is that the former draws students' attention to the word order knowledge of the structures while the latter treats the relative clause structures with the notion of combining two different sentences.

Lee (2008) uses a color-coding method to raise students' grammatical consciousness and examines its effects on learning the key elements of an English structure: subject and verb. The major difference between Korean and English is the word order especially the order of the verb and its complements. Lee assumes that too many grammatical details and too much explanation are not necessary and are sometimes harmful to the understanding of English sentences. Since the subject and verb are the most important elements to grasp the meaning of an English structure, Lee trained the participants to notice subject and verb in every sentence with different colored tags. Lee concludes that

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

even though the students did not concentrate on grammatical details they were able to understand the text better just by paying attention to the subject and verb of each sentence structure and how a sentence is constructed.

Cook (2001) points out that movement of an auxiliary or a question word is a key element in making an interrogative sentence. Based on the processability model which explains language acquisition in terms of movement of elements, Cook (2001) suggests that learners begin constructing a sentence without movement in the beginning stage of their interlanguage. By learning how and where to move the elements properly, learners learn how to construct sentences first starting with words, and then with phrases, sentences, and subordinate clauses.

Lightbown and Pienemann (1993) quote the research findings of Lightbown and Spada (1990) and White, Spada, Lightbown, and Ranta (1991) that form-focused instruction is effective for learning interrogative structures. They argue that, in both controlled and spontaneous communication situations, the participants in their studies show improvement in using interrogative sentences. Pienemann (1988, 1989) earlier released the results of his studies that reported the students who reached a right level of interlanguage for a certain linguistic feature can learn it through formal instruction. Lightbown and Pienemann (1993) argue that the readiness for students to learn a certain linguistic feature is essential in language learning.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

1. Research Questions

This study analyzes the effects of learning how to write English interrogative sentences by inversing subject and verb in a given declarative sentence, focusing on the four research questions listed below. First, it aims to find out whether this learning method is effective for learners to understand English interrogative structures, gain some knowledge about the structure, and produce questions in English. Second, the study asks which one of the two groups benefits more from the teaching method: Group 1 or Group 2. Both groups were given a brief explanation of interrogative structures and practices. The only difference between them was that Group 2 was given an additional assignment for which they had to make their own comprehension questions after reading the text. Third, a questionnaire survey was conducted to ascertain whether the participants thought this method was effective in learning English interrogative sentences and furthermore basic English structures. Finally, it investigates which level group benefits most from the method: the high group, the intermediate group, or the low group.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

According to Han (2006, 2008), the learners with lower-level English proficiency may benefit more from the collaborative dialogic activities for linguistic features than those with higher-level proficiency. However, on the other hand, Ellis (2006) suggests that the best level of proficiency for grammar learning is the intermediate level since the learners of this level already have some knowledge of using the language.

1) Is this learning method effective in acquiring knowledge of English interrogative structures and producing English questions?
2) Which group benefits more from the method: Group 1 or Group 2?
3) Do the participants think that the method is effective in learning English interrogative sentences?
4) Which level group benefits most from the method: high, intermediate, or low?

2. Participants

The participants took "English Reading & Writing (1)" in the first semester of 2011 when this study was conducted. The course was an elective course offered by the Department of International Tourism in a women's university located in Seoul. As Table 1 shows, a total of 122 female sophomore students majoring in tourism were divided into two groups. Among the four classes that the researcher taught, two classes were randomly chosen for each group. The number of students decreased to 117 since five students did not take either or both of the TOEIC reading test and the 25-questions test. The English proficiency level of the students can be considered as intermediate level since the average score of the TOEIC reading test is 57.7 out of 100 indicated in Table 1. The average score of the 58 students in Group 1 is 55.2 in the pre-test of TOEIC while that of the 59 students in Group 2 is 60.1. The mean difference of the pre-TOEIC test between the two groups is statistically significant at the *p-value* of .05 when they are run by the independent samples t-test. The mean difference of the pre-25-questions test is also significant at the *p-value* of .05.

TABLE 1

Number of Participants and Average Scores in Pre-tests

	Questionnaire	Pre-TOEIC		Pre-25-questions	
	Number	Number	Mean score	Number	Mean score
Group 1	62	58	55.21%	58	10.90%
Group 2	60	59	60.10%	59	16.07%
Total	122	117	57.68%	117	13.50%

The 117 students who took all the tests during the course were also divided into three

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

different level groups. Table 2 shows that each group has 39 students with its mean score of 71.3, 58.9, and 42.9 respectively in the pre-TOEIC test. When conducted by the one-way ANOVA test, the three groups are significantly different from each other in the pre-TOEIC test. However, in the pre-25-questions test, the difference between the intermediate group and the low group is not significant while that of the high group and the intermediate group is significant at the *p-value* of .05.

TABLE 2

Number of Participants by Proficiency Level and Average Scores in Pre-tests

	Questionnaire	Pre-TOEIC		Pre-25-questions	
	Number	Number	Mean score	Number	Mean score
High	39	39	71.28%	39	19.08%
Intermediate	39	39	58.90%	39	12.72%
Low	39	39	42.85%	39	8.72%
Total	117	117	57.68%	117	13.50%

3. Procedure

This study focuses on teaching the participants how to write English interrogative sentences and by doing so helps them understand English sentence structures. This method of teaching begins with a declarative. A yes-no question can be made by inversing the subject and the verb in the given declarative sentence as shown in Example 4.

Example 4: A: *Is Tom in the office*?
B: Tom is in the office.

Just by moving the verb to the front of the sentence, a question can be produced. However, when the participants in the study were asked to make a wh-question with the following declarative sentence, there were various incorrect questions written by some of the participants as shown in Example 5. Drawing learners' attention to the inversion pattern and having them notice the rule is indispensible in order for them to gain an understanding of this rule, which may be acquired later on.

Example 5: A:**Where is the him*?
A: **He is where are you*?
A: **Where are he*?
A: **Where he is*?
B: He's in the laundry room.

The researcher of the study as well as the instructor of the course "English Reading & Writing (1)" did not intend to explain grammatical features of English interrogative

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

sentences excessively. She tried to have the participants notice the patterns of English questions by moving the subject, the verb / auxiliary verb, and the wh-question word to a certain part of the sentence. It is justifiable to assume that the participants are ready to understand a brief explanation of interrogative structures since they have been learning English for over 10 years and the English textbooks they have studied must have included interrogative structures. The researcher included brief explicit instruction of interrogative structures in the syllabus and allocated time for pattern-drill practices.

The 2-credit course ran for 16 weeks. During the course, the students used one main reading textbook in which various reading passages were included and one supplementary course pack which included 10 small chapters for pattern-drill practices. In the 16-week-course, 10 weeks were allowed for pattern-drill practices after discussing the main reading material in the main textbook each week. As Table 3 shows each chapter deals with basic English structures.

TABLE 3
10 Basic English Structures in the Pattern-drill Practice Book

	Titles of each chapter
1	Present tense: to be
2	There is ~; There are~
3	Present continuous tense: be ~ing
4	Simple present tense: to do
5	Present perfect: have (has) + pp
6	Present perfect continuous tense: have (has) + been + ~ing
7	Future tense: will
8	Future continuous tense: will +be +~ing
9	Past tense: to be; regular verbs; irregular verbs
10	Past continuous tense: was (were) + ~ ing

In each chapter, an example dialogue is presented to help the participants produce a wh-question and a yes-no question in order to make a short dialogue. Example 6 is the example dialogue in Chapter 1 in the pattern-drill practice book. Like this example, the students are supposed to write a wh-question in the first line with the given sentence in the second line. The declarative sentence in the second line includes answer words to be asked with wh-question words in the first line. In the third line, they have to write a yes-no question to make sure they understand how a question is composed.

Example 6: A: *Where are you*?
B: I'm in the travel agency.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

A: *Are you in the travel agency*?
B: Yes, I am.

Both Group 1 and Group 2 were given the same treatment. However, Group 2 had an additional assignment for which each student had to make one or two comprehension questions based on the reading material they were assigned. They were assigned one or two paragraphs to explain and discuss the meaning of in front of their classmates during the semester. Therefore the number of questions they were required to make was not so many for them to feel burdened.

4. Tests and Questionnaire

Table 4 shows all the tests and the questionnaire used for the study. To measure the participants' general English ability as well as reading ability, the pre-TOEIC test was conducted on the 1st week of the course. This TOEIC reading comprehension test with 40 questions excerpted from Part 7 of Practice Test One of Longman New TOEIC (Loughheed, 2006) was also used to divide the 117 students into three different level groups. In the second week, a 25-questions test (see Appendix A) was administered to evaluate the participants' ability to write English questions before the treatment began. The same test was conducted on the 14th week to find out how much they had improved in writing English interrogative sentences. On the same day, a questionnaire survey (see Appendix B) was conducted on the participants to analyze what they thought about the learning method they received. The same TOEIC test was given on the 15th week for the measurement of improvement of the participants' English reading ability. On the 16th week, the final exam with 25 questions was administered to all the participants. The final exam included 5 questions (see Appendix C) that asked the participants to write questions with the declarative sentences excerpted from the reading text they were given.

TABLE 4
Tests and Questionnaire

When	Tests & questionnaire	Number of questions (score)
1st week	Pre-TOEIC reading test	40 (100)
2nd week	Pre-25-questions test	25 (100)
14th week	Post-25-questions test	25 (100)
14th week	Questionnaire	10 (Likert scale)
15th week	Post-TOEIC reading test	40 (100)
16th week	Final exam	20 (100)
16th week	5-Questions test included in the final exam	5 (25)

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Questions 1: Is the Method Effective?

The first research question is to find out whether this learning method is effective in gaining some knowledge of English interrogative structures and producing English questions in a written exam. Table 5 shows that Group 1 improved its average score of 55.2 in the pre-TOEIC test to 63.7 in the post test. There were 14 weeks' time difference between the pre- and post-tests. It can be assumed that it was difficult for the participants to remember the details of the TOEIC test after 14 weeks even though the improvement may be due to maturation effect, which might be a limitation of the study. The difference between the pre- and post-tests of Group 1 is statistically significant since its *p-value* is .000. Group 2 also significantly improved in the same post-TOEIC test achieving 6.7% more in the average score of the post-test than that of the pre-test. In the 25-questions tests, both groups also show a significant improvement. The post-test was conducted 12 weeks after the pre-test. Group 1 achieved 37.5 more and Group 2 gained 38.6 more in the post test, both of which show significance at the *p-value* of .01. Therefore this result suggests that the method has a positive effect on learning English interrogative sentences, and more so on solving TOEIC reading comprehension problems by helping the participants gain some knowledge about general English sentence structures. Giving a brief explanation and chances for practices must have helped them notice interrogative structures and rules to write questions by inversing subject and verb, which the participants might have otherwise ignored or paid little attention to.

TABLE 5
Paired Samples T-test between TOEIC Reading Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean score of TOEIC		Paired differences		Sig.(2-tailed)
	Pre	Post	Mean	Std deviation	
G1	55.21	63.66	-8.448	11.865	.000**
G2	60.10	66.80	-6.695	9.181	.000**

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

TABLE 6
Paired Samples T-test between 25-questions Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean score of 25-questions		Paired differences		Sig.(2-tailed)
	Pre	Post	Mean	Std deviation	
G1	10.90	48.41	-37.517	18.982	.000**
G2	16.07	54.71	-38.644	19.917	.000**

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

2. Question 2: Which Group Benefits More from the Method?

The second research question aims to learn which group benefits more from the method. An independent samples t-test was run to find out the difference between Group 1 and Group 2 in the pre- and post-tests of both the TOEIC exam and 25-questions test. Interestingly enough, in both tests, there was a meaningful difference in the pre-tests but not in the post-tests at the *p-value* of .05. Even though the classes for the two groups were randomly chosen, Group 2 outperformed Group 1 in the pre-test of the TOEIC test as Table 7 shows. This means that the improvement achieved by Group 1, whose average scores were much lower in the pre-test, was greater than that of Group 2 in the TOEIC test. Group 2 received additional treatment, which was the assignment to write one or two reading comprehension questions based on the reading passage they were supposed to present. The reason for not having an effect may be attributed to the fact that having them write one or two comprehension questions was not sufficient for the participants to practice writing questions. A meager treatment for Group 2 did not produce successful results. This result may also be influenced by the fact that the participants were tired of doing additional assignment and their unmotivated attitude towards working on the assignments might have caused ineffectiveness.

However, Table 8 shows that the mean difference between the two groups is greater in the post-test of the 25-questions test than in the pre-test even though the difference in the post-test is not statistically significant while that of the pre-test is. What is noteworthy about the data in Table 8 is the standard error mean which is greater in the post-test than the pre-test. This may indicate that because of the greater standard error mean the difference between the two groups did not turn out to be significant in the post-test. Therefore in this initial stage of the research, it is hard to conclude which group benefits more from the method. This is an area where further research may be needed in the future.

TABLE 7
Independent Samples T-test between G1 and G2 of TOEIC Reading Tests

	Mean score of TOEIC		Mean difference	Std. error mean	Sig.(2-tailed)
	G1	G2			
Pre	55.21	60.10	4.895	2.398	.044*
Post	63.66	66.80	3.141	2.225	.161

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

TABLE 8
Independent Samples T-test between G1 and G2 of 25-questions Tests

	Mean score of 25-questions		Mean difference	Std. error mean	Sig.(2-tailed)
	G1	G2			
Pre	10.90	16.07	5.171	2.447	.037*
Post	48.41	54.71	6.298	4.400	.155

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

3. Question 3: Do the Participants Think That the Method is Effective?

The third question intends to find out whether the participants think that this method is effective in learning English interrogative sentences. From Statement 1 through Statement 10, none of the mean differences between the two groups is significant as Table 9 shows. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) measured by internal consistency method is 0.45 (Cronbach's Alpha). In a 4-point Likert scale, the score of 3 is represented as agreeable. This study regards 2.5 or above as an indication of agreement. According to the results of Statements 1 and 2, the participants in the study do not think their reading and writing ability is good. As the result of Statement 3 shows, they were not comfortable writing English questions before taking the course "English Reading & Writing (1)." They think this method of learning has helped them understand English interrogative structures and furthermore English grammar and sentence structures as they think they improved their general English ability as the results of Statements 4, 5, and 6 indicate. However, they have not gained a great deal of confidence in asking questions in English yet as shown in the results of Statement 7. They want to spend more time on learning how to write English questions next semester. They do not find making questions with given declarative sentences too difficult. They also show a very positive response to Statement 10, agreeing that they realize the gap between knowing about English grammar and writing English sentences. They find writing English sentences difficult even though they are familiar with the grammar.

TABLE 9
Mean Scores of 10 Statements in the Questionnaire

	G1	G2	Mean difference	Mean of both groups
S1	2.32	2.25	0.07	2.29
S2	1.85	1.85	0.00	1.85
S3	2.26	2.22	0.04	2.24
S4	3.03	3.12	0.09	3.07
S5	2.89	3.07	0.18	2.98

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

S6	2.66	2.67	0.01	2.66
S7	2.39	2.43	0.04	2.41
S8	2.73	2.90	0.17	2.81
S9	2.27	2.17	0.10	2.22
S10	3.05	3.13	0.08	3.09

Some of the ten statements are positively or negatively correlated with each other. Among them, a few related statements are discussed here. First, Statements 1 and 2 are positively related with Statement 7. Those students who think their reading and writing ability is good seem to have gained more confidence in writing English interrogative sentences. Statements 1 and 2 are negatively related with Statements 9 and 10. In other words, the better they think their English ability is the less they think writing English sentences is difficult. The students with higher self-esteem may also have more confidence and fewer difficulties in learning English interrogative sentences, and in other areas of learning. Statements 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are positively related with each other. This result indicates that the students who have found learning English interrogative structures helpful also think this method is effective in learning English grammar, improving their general English ability, and gaining confidence in asking interrogative questions. Thus they want to spend more time learning to write English interrogative sentences.

TABLE 10
Pearson Coefficient of Correlation of the 10 Statements in the Questionnaire

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
S1	1	.631**	.244**	.009	.040	.172	.332**	-.038	-.371**	-.330**
S2	.631**	1	.388**	.081	.038	.158	.370**	-.097	-.353**	-.419**
S3	.244**	.388**	1	.093	.113	.133	.097	.044	-.288**	-.257**
S4	.009	.081	,093	1	.642**	.430**	.419**	.338**	-.211*	-.020
S5	.040	.038	.113	.642**	1	.425**	.369**	.266**	-.238**	-.042
S6	.172	.158	.133	.430**	.425**	1	.615**	.270**	-.085	-.147
S7	.332**	.370**	.097	.419**	.369**	.615**	1	.279**	-.334**	-.223*
S8	-.038	-.097	.044	.338**	.266**	.270**	.279**	1	.017	.074
S9	-.371**	-.353**	-.288**	-.211*	-.238**	-.085	-.334**	.017	1	,296**
S10	-.330**	-.419**	-.257**	-.020	-.042	-.147	-.223*	.074	.296**	1

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

4. Which Level Group Benefits Most from the Method?

The fourth question aims to find out which level group benefits most from the method: high, intermediate, or low. Table 11 shows that in the TOEIC tests, both the intermediate group and the low group significantly improved in the post-test while the improvement shown by the high group was not statistically significant. However, in the 25-questions test, all the groups improved significantly in the post-test as Table 12 indicates.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

TABLE 11
Paired Samples T-test between TOEIC Pre- and Post-tests of High, Intermediate, and Low Groups

	Mean score of TOEIC		Paired differences		Sig.(2-tailed)
	Pre	Post	Mean	Std. deviation	
High	71.28	72.62	-1.333	8.377	.327
Intermediate	58.90	67.23	-8.333	7.872	.000**
Low	42.85	55.87	-13.026	11.789	.000**

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

TABLE 12
Paired Samples T-test between 25-questions Pre- and Post-tests of High, Intermediate, and Low Groups

	Mean score of 25-questions		Paired differences		Sig.(2-tailed)
	Pre	Post	Mean	Std. deviation	
High	19.08	61.44	-42.359	17.905	.000**
Intermediate	12.72	53.64	-40.923	18.203	.000**
Low	8.72	39.69	-30.974	18.890	.000**

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

Table 13 shows the scores of all the tests listed in terms of the three different levels. What is noteworthy about the results of the ANOVA of the three groups is that there is no statistical difference between the intermediate group and the low group in the pre-test of the 25-questions test while there are differences between the high and the intermediate, and the high and the low as indicated in Table 14. However, as Table 15 shows, in the post-test of the 25-questions test, the intermediate group improved significantly so that its difference with the high group is narrowed while the difference becomes greater between the intermediate group and the low group. Thus this study suggests that the method used here is more effective for the intermediate group than the other groups. This is supported by the results of the final exam and the 5-questions in the test. The intermediate group shows no statistical difference with the high group in the final exam ($p = .442$) and the 5-questions test included in the final exam ($p = .371$) while there are significant differences with the low group in both areas. This finding coincides with Ellis' (2006) suggestion that intermediate level learners benefit more from grammar learning than complete beginners. This may be due to the fact that they already have some basic knowledge of linguistic features with which they can move forward and accelerate their learning.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

TABLE 13
Mean Scores of High, Intermediate, and Low Groups of All Tests

	TOEIC			25-questions			Final exam	5-Questions
	Pre	Post	Gain	Pre	Post	Gain		
High	71.28	72.62	1.33	19.08	61.44	42.36	84.47	16.54
Intermediate	58.80	67.23	8.69	12.72	53.64	40.92	82.05	15.13
Low	42.85	55.87	13.28	8.72	39.69	30.97	69.10	10.90
Total	57.68	65.24	7.77	13.50	51.59	38.09	78.68	14.19

TABLE 14
ANOVA of Pre-test of 25-questions

	Group	Group	Mean difference	Std. error mean	Significance
LSD	H	I	6.359	2.907	.031*
	H	L	10.359	2.907	.001**
	I	H	-6.359	2.907	.031*
	I	L	4.000	2.907	.172
	L	H	-20.359	2.907	.001**
	L	I	-4.000	2.907	.172

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

TABLE 15
ANOVA of Post-test of 25-questions

	Group	Group	Mean difference	Std. error mean	Significance
LSD	H	I	7.795	5.056	.126
	H	L	21.744	5.056	.000**
	I	H	-7.795	5.056	.126
	I	L	13.949	5.056	.007**
	L	H	-21.744	5.056	.000**
	L	I	-13.949	5.056	.007**

*$P < .05$, **$P<.01$

V. CONCLUSION

Korean college students who have been studying English for over 10 years must have encountered English interrogative sentences in many forms. Even with enough time and opportunities, if they still have difficulties in producing English questions and have poor knowledge of the interrogative structures, it is reasonable to assume that they have not paid enough attention to these grammatical features. To draw students' attention to them, the study intended to provide a proper amount of explicit instruction followed by practices in order for the grammatical features to be learned. The explanation focused on interrogative sentence patterns and word order construction, especially by inversing subject and verb.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

The results of the study show that this learning method is effective in gaining knowledge of interrogative structures and producing English questions. It has a positive effect not only on learning English interrogative sentences but also on solving TOEIC reading comprehension problems by helping the participants notice English sentence structures and gain some knowledge about general English structures. However, the attempt to give an additional treatment for Group 2 did not seem to produce a positive result. Even though Group 2 received more treatment, which was the assignment to write one or two reading comprehension questions, the students in this group did not outperform the students in Group 1. The mean difference between the two groups became rather narrower in the post-test of the TOEIC test as the students in Group 1 improved more in the post-test. Having them write one or two comprehension questions might have been too meager to induce any fruitful results. However, since the mean difference between the two groups is greater in the post-test of the 25-Questions test and its standard error mean (4.4) is also greater than that (2.4) of the pre-test, it is hard to conclude that the additional assignment was definitely ineffective. A further study on how much assignment and practice are needed to produce positive results would perhaps be interesting and should be in order for later research.

The participants in the study generally think that this method is effective in learning English interrogative sentences. The better they think their English reading and writing ability is the more they feel confident in learning English interrogative sentences. Most of the participants think that this method of learning has helped them understand English interrogative structures, and furthermore English grammar and sentence structures. Thus they think their general English ability has improved. They want to spend more time on learning how to write English questions next semester. They do not find writing questions with given declarative sentences too difficult. They have found out that there is a gap between understanding English grammar and writing English sentences. Even though they think that they know the grammar they find it difficult to write English sentences. The participants seem to understand knowing it and producing it are two very different matters.

The intermediate group seems to have benefited most from this learning method. As Ellis (2006) suggests, the intermediate level students with some knowledge of using the language may benefit more from the explicit teaching of grammatical features. However, this study is limited in explaining why it is not effective for the high and low group students. A further research is required to find out to what extent and in what ways English interrogative sentences should be taught for higher and lower level learners.

There was and has been a claim that teaching grammar should be abandoned. However, many of the recent studies suggest proper input comes first followed by output. Ellis (1995) argues that interlanguage can be developed by manipulating input rather

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

than output. According to Canale and Swain (1980), there are four communicative competences: sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, and strategic competence. Linguistic competence may not be the most important competence. However, a reasonable degree of accuracy must be secured for successful communication.

Students also feel that grammar teaching is necessary. They realize there is a certain role for grammar instruction. Explicit knowledge must not be regarded the same as metalinguisic knowledge. Teachers must be careful when they design and execute their grammar syllabus so that they should avoid focusing on metalinguistic knowledge. Grammar teaching should be integrated into communicative tasks. However, in large classes, form-focused instruction has valuable effects. Some linguistic features may require intensive practices before they are acquired in EFL classroom situations. Since our primary and secondary English classes have focused on communicative activities, English classes at college level now have to draw students' attention to the forms. Instructors at college level must find out what grammatical features students find difficult, and focus on one feature at a time rather than the entire grammar with difficult terminology. It might be a last chance for college students to attempt to obtain accuracy as well as fluency.

The limitation of the study is that it did not deal with the question of whether this learning promoted implicit knowledge. The study was conducted in a very controlled situation, excluding the students' oral performances in naturalistic, communicative settings. Therefore, a focus on output for communicative purposes should be considered for the next research. In addition to the instruction of explicit knowledge of English interrogative sentences, opportunities to use the knowledge in real communicative situations should be provided for the students to help their explicit knowledge to be acquired as implicit knowledge. Having students ask questions based on the text they have read to each other, for example, can be a way to use the knowledge they have learned.

REFERENCES

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approach to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Grammar pedagogy in second and foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 459-480.

Choi, K. (2003a). An analysis of the theories and a case study for teaching EFL reading with the use of socioaffective strategies. *English Language & Literature*

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Teaching, 9, 185-208.

Choi, K. (2003b). *A Study on effective strategies for reading English: A focus on socioaffective strategies*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Korea University.

Cook, V. (2001). *Second language learning and language teaching* (3rd ed.). London: Arnold.

Doughty, C. (2004). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. (1993). The structural syllabus and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly, 27*, 91-113.

Ellis, R. (1995). Interpretation tasks for grammar teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*, 87-105

Ellis, R. (1998). Teaching and research: Options in grammar teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*, 39-60.

Ellis, R. (1999). *Learning a second language through interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*, 83-107.

Fotos, S. (1994). Integrating grammar instruction and communicative language use through grammar consciousness-raising tasks. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*, 323-351.

Fotos, S., & Ellis, R. (1999). Communicating about grammar. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Learning a second language through interaction* (pp. 190-208). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Han, Y. (2006). Interactive pair work in grammar-discovery tasks: Focus on form and mutual scaffolding. *English Teaching, 61*, 45-69.

Han, Y. (2008). Focus-on-form in a collaborative output task: Exploring a dictogloss. *English Teaching, 63*, 29-49.

Hahn, J. (2006). Exploring Korean EFL university students' perceptions of grammar instruction. *English Teaching, 61*,29-43.

Kadia, K. (1987). The effect of formal instruction on monitored and spontaneous naturalistic interlanguage performance. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*, 509-515.

Kang, N. (2009). Effects of form-focused instructions on the learning of English verb complementation by Korean EFL learners. *English Teaching,* 64, 3-25.

Kim, B. (2008). Is a brief explicit grammar explanation needed in business English courses? *English Language & Literature Teaching, 14*, 69-94.

Krashen, S. (1993). The effect of grammar teaching: Still peripheral. *TESOL Quarterly, 27*, 722-725.

Lee, K. (2008). Raising grammatical consciousness by color-coding to improve English

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

reading performance. *English Teaching,* 63, 159-178.

Lightbown, P., & Pienemann, M. (1993). Comments on Stephen D. Krashen's "Teaching issues: Formal grammar instruction." *TESOL Quarterly, 27*, 717-722.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1990). Focus-on-form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching: Effects on second language learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 6*, 186-214.

Loughheed, L. (2006). *Longman new TOEIC: Introductory course*. New York: Longman.

Pazaver, A., & Wang, H. (2009). Asian students' perceptions of grammar teaching in the ESL classroom. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture, 29*, 27-35.

Pienemann, M. (1988). Determining the influence of instruction on L2 speech processing. *AILA Review, 5*, 40-72.

Pienemann, M. (1989). Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and hypotheses. *Applied Linguistics, 10*, 52-79.

Shin, H. J. (2011). The need of English grammar instruction in general English programs: On the basis of learners' perceptions. *Modern English Education, 12*, 157-176.

White, L., Spada, N., Lightbown, P., & Ranta, L. (1991). Input enhancement and question formation. *Applied Linguistics, 12*, 416-432.

Zaki, H., & Ellis, R. (1999). Learning vocabulary through interacting with a written text. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Learning a second language through interaction* (pp. 151-169). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

APPENDIX A

The 25 Questions Test

Class: _____ Student No.: _____ Name: _____

* Using the given declarative sentence, write an interrogative sentence to be answered with the underlined word(s).

Ex) A: Where are you?
B: I am in the travel agency.

1. A: _____
B: He's in the laundry room.
2. A: _____
B: There are two flights to New York this evening.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

3. A: _____
   B: She's answering her client's questions.
4. A: _____
   B: I catch the subway at 7:45.
5. A: _____
   B: We have reserved two double rooms and three single rooms.
6. A: _____
   B: The bath tub has been leaking.
7. A: _____
   B: You will have to stay here for 2 days.
8. A: _____
   B: He will be working until 9 p.m.
9. A: _____
   B: The head waiter advised us to order á la carte.
10. A: _____
    B: I was visiting my grandparents on the New Year's day.
11. A: _____
    B: He (Edward Hopper) painted everyday things such as a diner.
12. A: _____
    B: I'm trying to paint myself.
13. A: _____
    B:12 manufacturers made diners.
14. A: _____
    B: The companies called their new food cars "diners."
15. A: _____
    B: Mickey's sits in the center of St. Paul, Minnesota.
16. A: _____
    B:Tall, modern office buildings surround Mickey's.
17. A: _____
    B: Lombard's real name was Jane Alice Peters.
18. A: _____
    B: Lombard was married to actor William Powell for only 23 months.
19. A: _____
    B: The Indian film industry makes more than 800 films every year.
20. A: _____
    B: The actors got a job and a lot of money from the studio.
21. A: _____
    B: Haida artists carved the faces and bodies of special animals on the big logs.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

22. A: _____
    B: Carr's paintings are important because these wood totem poles only last about 100 years.
23. A: _____
    B: The totem poles are meant to protect the village and keep bad luck away.
24. A: _____
    B: One can sleep while the other watches the road for strangers.
25. A: _____
    B: A carving of a whale may represent a very exciting or dangerous hunt for whales.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Direction: This questionnaire aims to find out what thoughts you have had on the learning of English interrogative structures for the last one semester. The results of the survey will be used for the course "English Reading and Writing (2)" next semester to help you better understand English sentence structures. Circle the number that best corresponds with your opinion.

1. My English reading ability is very good.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
2. My English writing ability is very good.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
3. I had good knowledge of forming English interrogative structures before I took the course "English Reading & Writing (1)" this semester.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
4. The method of learning how to make English questions has helped me understand English interrogative structures.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
5. The method of learning how to make English questions has helped me understand English grammar, especially basic sentence structures.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
6. My general English ability has improved after taking the course.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
7. I have gained confidence in asking questions in English after taking the course.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
8. More time should be given to learning and practicing how to make English questions in the course "English Reading & Writing (2)."
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

9. Making interrogative sentences with the given declarative sentences is very difficult.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree
10. I have come to understand the gap between knowing about English grammar and writing English sentences. In other words, it is difficult to write English sentences even though you know the grammar.
   (1) I strongly disagree (2) I disagree (3) I agree (4) I strongly agree

APPENDIX C

5-questions in Final Exam

* Using the given declarative sentence, write an interrogative sentence to be answered with the underlined word(s).

16. A: _____
   B: I have known Mina <u>for 20 years</u>.
17. A: _____
   B: There is <u>a lot of meat</u> in the refrigerator.
18. A: _____
   B: There is <u>only one bottle of beer left</u> in the storage.
19. A: _____
   B: She's trying to paint <u>herself</u>.
20. A: _____
   B: Some people want to save <u>diners</u>.

Examples in: English
Applicable Language: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

Kyunghee Choi
Hanyang Women's University
Department of International Tourism
200 Salgoji-gil, Seongdong-gu
Seoul, Korea, 133-817
Tel: (02) 2290-2260
Email: khchoi@hywoman.ac.kr

Received in March, 2012
Reviewed in May, 2012
Revised version received in June, 2012

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre