The Effectiveness of Modified Inductive Versus Deductive Teaching

A case study on word order amongst a group of English as a foreign language learners

Linda Eriksson
Abstract

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of modified inductive learning compared with deductive learning of English grammar among foreign language students. In order to achieve this purpose, two classes in Year Nine in a secondary school in Sweden were taught using the two different methods. An initial grammar test determined that the students struggled with word order, which as a result was chosen as the area to teach. A pre-test/post-test-design was used to examine the effect of the two methods, and compared with a control group. The results reveal that the inductive method should be favoured overall, but suggests that the deductive method may produce significantly better results among weaker students.

Keywords: Modified inductive and deductive instruction, EFL grammar instruction, English language teaching, Word order.
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1 Introduction

This thesis will study modified inductive versus deductive teaching of word order, with the aim to discover which method is more effective. As an English major who is studying to become a translator, I have long been interested in what errors are commonly made by Swedish learners when they write and speak English, and why they make them. As a student, but also as a substitute teacher, I have found that the common methods used to teach grammar appear to be largely ineffective. Additionally, but perhaps most importantly, I have found that most students find grammar tiring and uninteresting, which I believe is partially caused by the fact that grammar phenomena are typically not taught in an engaging way that enables the students to understand why a particular phenomenon works the way it does - they are simply told what they should do and expected to repeat it enough times to know it by heart. By investigating the more student-centred inductive method in comparison with the teacher-centred deductive method, I hope to not only discover a method that appeals more to the students but – if it is proven to be effective - also a tool that teachers will see a reason to use.

The deductive approach is described by Shaffer (1989) as a method where foreign language teachers offer rules first and then examples when presenting new grammatical structures. It is usually described as a “more traditional”\(^1\) and “teacher-centred”\(^2\) method of teaching, and it is in my experience by far the most common method in Sweden. The modified inductive method, meanwhile, is in many ways the deductive method’s exact opposite, as it typically expects the students to actively participate in the lessons, and try to figure out what the rules are themselves (as described by Gollin [1998]). Shaffer argues that the deductive approach leads students to believe that they understand a rule, when their attempts at using them often show a superficial understanding at best. In her study, she found that students of all ability levels respond better to the inductive method. In a more recent study, however, AbuSeileek (2009) concludes that deductive teaching should be favoured as the students involved in his study made more progress using the deductive method.

\(^1\)http://www.teflcertificatecourses.com/tefl-articles/tesol-inductive-deductive-approaches.php, 23 May 2014
\(^2\)http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/inductive deductive.html, 23 May 2014
While AbuSeileek (2009) chose to test a version of the inductive method where he did not tell his students the rules, nor at any point ask them to formulate the rules, Shaffer’s (1989) students were required to verbalize the underlying patterns. In this study, I will take a third approach where induction is defined as a process in which the learner is exposed to language samples from which patterns and generalizations should appear, with the students attempting to verbalize the rule before it is ultimately explained by the teacher. By using this approach, which Gollin (1998) refers to as a ‘modified inductive’ approach, the odds of the learners being led to make false assumptions should be drastically reduced. It is for that reason that it is my hypothesis that the students in my study will more easily understand grammar if they are taught using the modified inductive method. I would however like to stress that in today’s society where the students are primarily (if not only) familiar with the deductive method as it is far more common, the inductive method may prove to be difficult for some or all students to grasp in such a small amount of time, resulting in superior improvements among the students who are taught deductively.

In my research, I have found many studies on grammar that have compared induction and deduction, for example Shaffer (1989) and Vogel (2010), but none that have specifically contrasted a modified inductive approach with a deductive approach. Additionally, few studies in English have dealt with the English language. As most have been written in English-speaking countries, they have instead compared the different teaching methods in groups of students who are learning other languages. One exception is AbuSeileek (2009) who studied Arabic learners of English, but as Swedish is a Germanic language that is related to English, whereas Arabic is not, my study may produce different results.

This study was conducted by initially finding a phenomenon that the specific group of Swedish students selected for the study were struggling with. By devising a grammatical test that included many common errors, I discovered that word order was one of the issues that a large proportion of them found difficult. As it is a language aspect that is not only crucial to anyone’s ability to make themselves understood, but also one of the most telling signs that one is not fluent
in English, I opted to work on this issue. Considering that it is a relatively simple feature to learn as there are few exceptions to the subject-verb-object order in English, it is also a good phenomenon to work on when taking into account the age of the students and their level of knowledge, as well as the time constraints. By working with the students and applying the two methods in two different classes, it is my hope to find indications of whether or not the modified inductive method shows signs of being a better learning tool than the deductive method.
2 Aim and research questions

This study aims at evaluating the effect of modified inductive teaching of word order, in comparison to the more traditional, deductive method, as well as in comparison to a control group. The questions that were addressed by this study were:

(1) How does the overall improvement of the experimental groups from the pre-test to the post-test differ from the improvement of the control group?
(2) Is modified inductive teaching an effective way of improving grammar? If yes, what evidence is there to support this conclusion?
(3) Do learners who are taught using a modified inductive approach perform significantly better than those who are taught deductively on word order?
(4) Do the improvements from pre-test to post-test differ between the inductive and deductive groups at different ability levels? If yes, have the two methods resulted in different types of improvements?
3 Theoretical framework

Over the past few decades, many researchers have argued for and against the usefulness of various teaching methods. Rod Ellis claimed that it is counter-intuitive to deny that instruction can help learners to acquire a second language as it is contrary to the personal experience of countless teachers and students (as cited in Green & Hecht, 1992, p. 168). The same year, Herron and Tomasello (1992) wrote that researchers were confirming what a majority of language teachers had believed for many years - that formal instruction is beneficial when trying to learn certain grammatical structures. Green and Hecht (1992), as well as Shaffer (1989), on other hand also mention Krashen (1982, 1980), Dulay and Burt (1982, 1973) who all claimed that direct teaching has little impact on the learner’s built-in syllabus. Sascha W. Felix (1987), as referenced and translated by Green and Hecht (1992, p. 168), even went as far as to argue that “‘Sprachen kann man zwar lernen, aber sie können im strikten Sinne nicht gelehrt werden’ (Languages can certainly be learnt, but they cannot, strictly speaking, be taught).

The inductive and deductive methods have been increasingly popular topics of discussion between researchers for a number of years. Fischer (1979) said that many claim that deduction, where the grammatical structure is explained before it is applied, is more logical and leads to a higher degree of certainty of grammatical knowledge, while others maintain that induction, where the students are allowed to discover the grammatical structures for themselves, is more effective and leads to better long-term knowledge. Gollin (1998) wrote that the term inductive “most obviously applies when a child learns its first language by inducing the rules from exposure to the language in use”, while language learning is most clearly deductive when the teacher explicitly states the rule before the students apply it. Simply put, deduction is a method where the rule is explained before it is applied whereas induction is an approach that presents structures and rules through context, and not explicit rules.

Fischer and Hammerly both insisted that the inductive approach should only be used when teaching relatively simple grammatical structures because the method
is simply too difficult (as cited in Shaffer, 1989, p. 395-396). AbuSeileek (2009) concluded in a more recent study that neither technique was found to be more practical with simple grammar structures, but that the deductive method was more effective when teaching more complicated structures. Shaffer (1989), meanwhile, argued against the deductive method in her comparative study between the inductive and deductive methods. She wrote that the deductive approach tends to emphasize grammar at the expense of meaning, and promotes passive rather than active participation of the students. Shaffer also claims that there is an indication that many students have difficulty applying the various grammatical rules because they may not fully understand the concepts involved when foreign language teachers offer rules first and then examples when presenting new grammatical structures. In alignment with her beliefs, Shaffer did find in her study that the inductive approach was the most useful when teaching grammar that is commonly considered to be difficult not only to students at a higher ability level, but to students of all ability levels.

While there is a consensus on how to apply the deductive method, the inductive approach has been implemented in several ways. AbuSeileek (2009) chose to essentially disregard the rules entirely when he taught students inductively and never asked them to formulate a rule. To explain the varying results between his inductive and deductive groups, he referenced Hall (1998) who claimed that it is difficult for learners to learn grammar implicitly because it may lead them to make false assumptions. This approach could have put his students at a disadvantage compared with students in other studies who have in some way formulated the rules, however. Shaffer (1989), who concluded that induction is the preferred technique, for example relied on her students to discover the rules for themselves but also asked them to formulate and verbalize the underlying patterns, while Adair-Hauck, Donato and Cumo-Johanssen developed a model that they chose to call PACE. The PACE model has four stages as described by Vogel (2010, p. 7-8), and begins with a presentation of the target form through a story where the structure appears repeatedly. Next, the student’s attention is focused on a particular pattern of the language in a practise session. This is followed by co-construction, a phase in which the teacher asks a number of
guiding questions to engage the students, after which the session is concluded with an *extension* exercise where the learners are allowed to practise the discussed structure on their own.

Vogel (2010) opted to create her own method by combining the PACE model with the ‘Guided Inductive’ approach. The Guided Inductive method is an approach which is applied by focusing on a grammatical structure through an oral practise session, which is then followed by a task to complete sentences in which the target structure has been deleted. The method was created by Herron and Tomasello (1992) who agreed that while a majority of research suggests that deduction is slightly more effective, the only difference that most studies has made between deduction and induction, in their opinion, has been *when* the rule has been explained. They say the learners have consistently played a passive role in their learning no matter which method has been applied, and emphasize that this is contrary to findings of cognitive psychologists and researchers who have stressed that language learners must be actively engaged.

Another method that is focused on activating the learners is the modified inductive approach which differs from a purely inductive approach as the rule is not left implicit. The method is described by Gollin (1998) who writes that the modified inductive method is an approach where the rule is explicitly formulated, either by the teacher or the learners themselves, but not until after the students have been guided to work it out through practise. Gollin continues to explain that the modified method is believed to not only be more motivating for the students, but that it also leads to more thorough learning as the students are actively engaged mentally while being taught using the modified approach.

To summarize, the work done by researchers over the past few decades regarding induction versus deduction has to this date been inconclusive. In addition, while the deductive approach is clearly formulated, the inductive method has consistently been adapted and applied in different ways by researchers. Cognitive psychologists stress that learners must be actively engaged, however, which speaks in favour of a modified approach rather than a purely inductive approach.
4 Method

This study was performed in a school with the help of students aged 15-16 years old. All of the students were given a letter for their parents with information about the study, and a permission slip for them to sign. Prior to the study, all of the students answered a basic grammatical test which revealed that almost two-thirds struggled with word order. Following the decision to work on that issue, all of the students completed a pre-test on word order, after which the inductive and deductive groups were taught on the issue by the researcher. Shortly thereafter, all of the groups (including the control group) completed the post-test, which was identical to the pre-test. The students in the inductive and deductive groups were also asked to answer a survey.

4.1 Procedures

The study was conducted with the following five steps:

1) Basic grammar testing in all groups.
2) Pre-test on word order in all groups.
3) Lessons on word order in the inductive and deductive groups.
4) Survey on the participants’ perception of the lessons and test difficulty in the inductive and deductive groups.
5) Post-test on word order in all groups.

4.2 Pre-study

Before beginning this study, all participants answered a basic grammatical test created by the researcher, partially with the help of a pre-existing test\(^3\), to determine what issues they were struggling with. The test included a range of issues such as inflection, irregular verbs and prepositions. The results revealed that more than half of the students struggled with not only word order, but also the genitive case, tense and uncountable nouns. The three participating groups were found to be homogeneous as each group made the same or similar errors, but a detailed analysis was not performed.

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\(^3\) http://www.esl.se/se/info/test-i-engelska.htm, 23 May 2014
All of the participating students’ parents were informed about the study. As some of the students are only 15 years old, all parents were also given a permission slip to sign, as suggested by the Swedish Research Council (2002). No parent or student objected to the study. However, some failed to return the permission slips despite repeated reminders. After careful consideration, the results produced by all of the students were included in the study despite this fact. The reason behind this decision is the fact that the study does not involve any questions of a private or ethically sensitive nature, and as such permission is technically only necessary from the teacher and/or the school management in cases where the study is performed within the frame of the everyday working hours. In this case, the student’s teacher as well as the school’s principal gave their permission to conduct the study.

4.3 Setting

This study was conducted at a primary and secondary school in a large city in Sweden. The school is located in a middle class area, and educate close to 900 children between the ages of 6-16 from preschool to Year Nine. The school employs around 100 educationalists and its students consistently perform above average in the city. The students selected for this study all have English lessons two times per week with the same teacher. The study was conducted during their lessons with the teacher in question in attendance, in their usual respective classrooms.

4.4 Participants

A total of 68 students in Year Nine initially participated in this study. In order to keep the data as homogeneous as possible, data for students who due to illness or for other reasons did not participate in all aspects of the study were eliminated. Consequently, the number of students whose results are included in the study is 53. All groups included both males and females, but while two of the groups were predominantly male, the inductive group included roughly the same number of participants of both sexes (one more male student than female students). In total, 32 participants were male and 21 female. At the beginning of the study, all of the

groups were similar in size, but (presumably) due to viruses, the inductive group in particular was drastically reduced in size as a large group of students who had participated in the pre-test and lesson were absent at the time of the post-test. This resulted in the inductive group being considerably smaller than expected.

Table 1 Number of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participating students in the study</th>
<th>Inductive</th>
<th>Deductive</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants included in the study</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Design

A between-group design with a pre-test and a post-test was used to investigate the effect of the inductive method of learning word order, compared to the deductive method of learning the same aspect of the English language. The students were divided into three groups based on their already existing classes of 24-26 students, with the method selected for each group at random:

(1) was taught about word order using the inductive method
(2) was taught about word order using the deductive method
(3) acted as a control group and received no instruction on word order

The two experimental groups were taught during the same amount of time (45 minutes). First of all all the groups were taught about the subject-verb-object order and how to identify the three components, to ensure that every student was familiar with the basics. Both groups then worked on adverb placement, specifically adverbs of time, place, manner and frequency, with an emphasis on frequency. Towards the end of the lessons, both groups looked at two common related errors among Swedish pupils caused by a change in word order in Swedish, but not in English. One of the two issues that were brought up was the fact that when a sentence begins with an adverbial in Swedish, the subject and the verb change places, while in English they do not. The second related error that was brought up was that the adverbial changes its place depending on whether it
is found in a main clause or a subordinate clause in Swedish, while it once again remains in the same place in English.

In addition to the lesson and the tests, the students in the inductive and deductive groups were asked to answer a survey at the end of the study, at which point the method used during their lesson was briefly explained to them. The survey asked the students if they felt the method used had been helpful to them, and on a scale of 1-10 how well they felt they understood word order at the end of the lesson in comparison to at the start of the lesson. The survey also asked, on a scale of 1-10, how difficult they found the test the first time they were asked to take it, and how difficult they found it the second time. The students were asked to answer the first three questions prior to the post-test, and the final question after the post-test.

### 4.6 Material

The inductive and deductive groups were taught using the same material to the largest extent possible. Due to the inductive group requiring more time for discussion as the rules involved were not explained until after they had a chance to work on it and attempt to solve and verbalize it themselves, the deductive group naturally required more material and spent more time practising how to implement the rules with the help of various exercises. The researcher produced multiple exercises for the lessons, as well as a digital presentation about the placement of adverbs. Inspiration was gathered from *Gleerups Engelska Basgrammatik* by Christer Johansson, which is a grammar book that was written with the intention of being used by students of the same age as the participants. Many useful exercises were also found on a German website for English learners. The following activities made up the deductive lesson:

Activity 1: Two similar sentences were written on a screen: one correct with the subject-verb-object order, and the other incorrect with a subject-object-verb order. After explaining why one was correct and the other not, we looked at an additional two similar sentences that both used the subject-verb-object order, but where only one would normally be used (‘The children ate cakes and biscuits’ and

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‘Cakes and biscuits ate the children’ [obviously unusual but could for example be correct if found in a children’s book about cake monsters]). The students were then allowed to individually practise identifying words as subjects, verbs or objects (Appendix 4), after which we went through the answers, and the researcher explained why some of their answers were correct, and others incorrect.

Activity 2: PowerPoint presentation of adverbs of time, place, manner and frequency (Appendix 5) involving example words, placement and example sentences. Followed by two individual exercises on adverb placement, one of which focused entirely on adverbs of frequency.

Activity 3: Introduction and examples of the “adverbial first” difference between Swedish and English, where Swedish alters the word order when a sentence begins with an adverb or a subordinate clause, where English does not. Followed by an individual exercise with the first half of the sentences found in Appendix 6.

Activity 4: Introduction and examples of how the placement of the adverbial changes between main clauses and subordinate clauses in Swedish, but not in English. Followed by an individual exercise with the second half of the sentences found in Appendix 6.

The following activities made up the inductive lesson:

Activity 1: With students placed in groups of four, one correct and one incorrect sentence was typed on a screen. The students were asked to tell the class their observations. Once they had established that only one sentence was correct, the researcher asked them to try to figure out why. Next, two more sentences were typed up, and the procedure was repeated. This was followed by a group exercise where the students were asked to identify various words as subjects, verbs or objects (Appendix 4), after which the researcher went through the answers and used the sentences to show what is a subject, a verb and an object.
Activity 2: A digital file with a number of correct sentences with adverbs in bold were put up on a screen, and the students were asked to discuss in groups what the words in bold were, and why they were placed where they are. After each group had a chance to tell the class about their observations and they had correctly named the different adverbials, the researcher went through a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 5) of adverb placement with examples and rules.

Activity 3: Example sentences (Appendix 6, first half) in Swedish and English of the “adverbial first” difference between Swedish and English, where Swedish alters the word order when a sentence begins with an adverbial or a subordinate clause, where English does not were put up on the screen and the students were asked to try to find the differences. After they had realised that the subject and the verb in each of the sentences changed positions depending on whether it was in Swedish or English, the researcher explained the rule and the difference between the two languages.

Activity 4: Following the same structure as above (Activity 3), the students analysed and discussed example sentences (Appendix 6, second half) of how the placement of the adverb changes between main clauses and subordinate clauses in Swedish, but not in English, after which the researcher explained the rule.

4.7 Test

In order to be able to answer the questions of the study, a test on word order was created. The test consisted of 36 questions that were divided into four sections. Each correct answer resulted in one point, making the highest possible score 36. Section A asked the students to place a number of words that had been scrambled in the correct order (see Example 1). Section B asked the students to rewrite ten sentences using adverbials found in brackets (Example 2). In Section C, the students were asked to translate ten sentences from Swedish to English (Example 3), and finally in Section D, they were asked to choose whether one, two or both sentences were correct (Example 4). Sections A, B and D were found in a pre-existing test\(^6\), while Section C was created by the researcher.

Example 1: Form statements using the following words/phrases.
   1) she / writes / letters / often
   3) play / they / handball / in the evening / always

Example 2: Rewrite the sentences/questions using the words/phrases in brackets.
   1) Have you been to Canada? (ever)
   8) They are flying. (to Rome / on Tuesday)

Example 3: Translate the following sentences to English.
   1) Vi tittar alltid på kvällsnyheterna.
   3) “Kan du hjälpa mig”, frågade den lille pojken.

Example 4: Which sentence is correct?
   1) They play hockey in the stadium every Friday.
   2) Every Friday they play hockey in the stadium.
   3) Both sentences are correct.

In order to ensure that there were no obvious mistakes with the test, a person at the same level of English education as the participants was asked to take the test ahead of time. A time limit was set to twelve minutes after consulting the participating students’ English teacher. This was done in order to ensure that all of the students in the three groups had the same amount of time to spend on the test. In addition, a time limit was set to ensure that the participants spent the same amount of time on the pre-test as well as the post-test to minimize the outside effects on the results. The students were told that the test was on word order as the pre-test begun. They were not told that there would be a post-test. Due to circumstances beyond the researcher’s control, the post-tests were not carried out after the exact same amount of time. The inductive group was tested again after seven days, the control group after six days, and the deductive group after only four days.
4.8 Data analysis

This study used a between-group design with a pre-test and a post-test that was used to investigate the effect of the inductive method of learning word order, compared to the deductive method of learning the same aspect of the English language. To determine the differences between the two groups, as well as between them and a control group, mean scores and standard deviations of the results were calculated using Microsoft Excel. The participating students’ answers to the survey as well as a t-Test were similarly calculated using Microsoft Excel. In addition, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed using SPSS.
5 Results and analysis

The first research question asked How does the overall improvement of the experimental groups from the pre-test to the post-test differ from the improvement of the control group? Table 2 shows the three groups’ mean scores on the pre-test as well as the post-test in word order. According to the findings in the table below, all three groups had almost identical results on the post-test, achieving a mean of more than 27 out of a possible 36 correct answers. A ‘mixed between-within subjects ANOVA’ (see “Results of the mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance”, p. 19) also shows that while there is a significant improvement between the pre-test and the post-test (p<.00005), the interaction between the experimental groups, as well as between the experimental groups and the control group, is not significant enough to rule out the impact of chance (p=.058). However, the improvements of the experimental groups compared to the control group from pre-test to post-test appear to be substantial. Whilst the control group’s mean improvement from pre-test to post-test was 4.7 points, the experimental groups together had a considerably larger mean improvement of 6.93 points. By looking at the individual results as seen in Table 3, the improvements appear to be further more obvious as multiple students in the control group did not improve at all, with some even scoring fewer points on the post-test than they did on the pre-test. This was most certainly not the case for the students in experimental groups bar one single exception; one student in the deductive group had the same score on both tests. As a result of this, I believe that the overall improvement of the experimental groups, and in particular the inductive group which alone had a mean improvement of 8.63 points, is notable enough to conclude that their results differed from those of the control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (Out of 36)</td>
<td>SD*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>22.63</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* SD = Standard Deviation
The second research question asked if modified inductive teaching is an effective way of improving grammar. As already mentioned, the control group’s mean improvement from pre-test to post-test was 4.7 points. Meanwhile the deductive group had a 5.94 point improvement, and the inductive group a nearly twice as large improvement of 8.63 points. Considering the large improvements that the inductive group achieved between the pre-test and the post-test, primarily in comparison with the results of the control group, but also in comparison with the results of the deductive group, I consider it safe to say that modified inductive teaching is effective. Additionally, the students in the inductive group answered that they felt they understood word order better at the end of the lesson than the deductive group did, but the differences were too marginal to count (6.73/10 compared with 6.69/10). This conclusion is supported by a t-Test (p = .93) that confirms that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, which means that the difference between the two groups is too small to be significant. Similarly, the inductive group’s own notion of how difficult the test was decreased more between the pre-test and the post-test than it did amongst the students in the deductive group, but once again the scores were marginal (0.59 point decrease in the inductive group compared with a 0.37 decrease in the deductive group).

Results of the mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance

A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of three different interventions (Induction, Deduction, Control group) on the participants’ scores, across two time periods (pre-test, post-test). There was no significant interaction between method and time, Wilks’ Lambda = .89, F (2, 50) = 3.01, p = .06, partial eta squared = .11. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilks’ Lambda = .33, F (1, 50) = 102.32, p < .00005, partial eta squared = .67, with all of the groups showing an increase in test scores across the two time periods (see Table 2). The main effect comparing the three types of intervention was not significant, F (2, 50) = .396, p = .68, partial eta squared = .016, suggesting no difference in the effectiveness of the teaching approaches.
The third research question asked if learners who are taught using a modified inductive approach perform significantly better than those who are taught deductively on word order. As already established, the inductive approach resulted in larger mean improvements between the two tests. With that being said, the varying results from the students in the inductive group must be considered, as they recorded the largest post-test Standard Deviation. As seen in both Figure 1 and 2, the inductive group displayed the lowest mean on the pre-test, as well as the lowest pre-test scores with the Standard Deviation score added and subtracted from the mean. When looking at the post-test scores, the results vary in comparison with those of the deductive and control groups, however. Although accomplishing a post-test mean that is as high as those of the other two groups, the inductive group’s Standard Deviation is large enough to not only result in the highest score of all with the Standard Deviation added to the mean, but also the lowest score when the Standard Deviation is removed from the mean. Although further studies would need to be conducted, this may hint at that the inductive method is only significantly more helpful than the deductive method for some learners.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1** Mean with minimum and maximum Standard Deviation scores on the pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test mean</th>
<th>Pre-test + SD</th>
<th>Pre-test - SD</th>
<th>Post-test mean</th>
<th>Post-test + SD</th>
<th>Post-test - SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>19.64</td>
<td>24.98</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>36.82</td>
<td>18.72</td>
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<td>Deductive</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>27.81</td>
<td>15.53</td>
<td>27.61</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>22.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>22.63</td>
<td>30.09</td>
<td>15.17</td>
<td>27.33</td>
<td>33.77</td>
<td>20.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another aspect that must be considered is the fact that while the inductive group did achieve a considerably larger mean improvement, only looking at the mean results on the post-test actually speaks in favor of the deductive method as a whole. Whilst the deductive group accomplished a mean of 27.61 points out of a possible 36 points, the inductive group scored a smaller average of 27.27 of 36 points, which is also slightly lower than what the control group achieved without being taught about word order. Finally, in addition to the varying results, it must be remembered that the deductive group wrote the post-test after a shorter amount of time compared with the other groups, which may have had an effect on their performances (the deductive group wrote the post-test four days after the lesson on word order, the control group after six days and the inductive group after seven days).

The fourth and final research question asked if the improvements from pre-test to post-test in the inductive and deductive groups differed between different ability levels. By dividing the students into three ability levels, with the weak having no more than 33 per cent correct answers on the pre-test, the average students scoring somewhere in between 33 and 66 percent, and the strong performing above 66 per cent, it was quickly clear how large the differences were between the inductive and deductive techniques.
As the maximum test score was 36, the weak are the students who scored 12 points or less on the pre-test, and the strong those who scored 24 points or above. As seen in Figure 3, where mean scores amongst all of the groups at the different ability levels have been calculated and rounded off, the students in the inductive group improved dramatically at the strong (7.3 point improvement compared with a 4.3 point improvement) and average (11.2 point improvement compared with a 5.8 point improvement) levels in comparison with the deductive students. Surprisingly, the weaker students instead showed an exceptional level of improvement after being taught using the deductive method, while the students in the inductive group only accomplished a minor improvement (12.5 point improvement compared with a 2.5 point improvement). In fact, the weaker students in the deductive group showed such a tremendous difference between the two tests that they caught up and were almost at the same level as the average students on the post-test, while the weaker participants in the inductive group slipped further behind their classmates and went from having half the amount of points compared with the average students, to having only 39 per cent of the amount of points that the average group achieved on the post-test.

The test results become more complex when one looks at the individual results (Table 3). The weaker students in the inductive group all made very little progress on the post-test, with none improving five points or more. Meanwhile, all of the average and strong students improved by at least five points, with two thirds accomplishing large improvements (greater-than 10 points) in the average group, and one third in the strong group. This is in stark contrast with the deductive group where none of the weak students had an improvement that was smaller than eight points, but where more than half of the average students and close to half of the strong students improved less than five points. Additionally, multiple students in the average deductive group achieved lower post-test scores than the individuals in the weak deductive group. Considering the strong students in the deductive group had high scores already on the pre-test, this is perhaps not surprising, but the fact is that all but one student could have improved more than they did and achieved a better score on the post-test.
The fourth research question also asked if the two methods have resulted in different types of improvements between the pre-test and the post-test. To better be able to evaluate why the weaker students especially in the two groups produced such markedly different improvements, I looked at the individual tests in question to see if the deductive method had resulted in any particular improvements. The comparisons revealed that the deductive students did not improve on a specific aspect in comparison with the inductive students, but rather appeared to simply gain a better understanding as a whole. However, the analysis also showed that the students in the deductive group developed ways to more quickly be able to answer the simpler questions (such as rearranging the sentences with numbers instead of copying the full sentences), allowing themselves more time for the more difficult questions, which the students in the inductive group did not. It should also be noted that one of the students in the deductive group has dyslexia, and may very well have underperformed on the pre-test as a result of the reading disorder.

Figure 3: Ability level mean scores on the pre-test and post-test

![Figure 3](image-url)

Legend:
- Inductive
- Deductive
Table 3  *Raw Data, Mean, Standard Deviation and Standard Error on the pre-test and post-test in word order in the inductive group, deductive group and control group with test results in corresponding order to allow direct comparisons (i.e. the first inductive result listed on the pre-test (17) and the first inductive result listed on the post-test (24) are the results of the same individual).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<th>18</th>
<th>24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>22.63</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>27.18</td>
<td>27.33</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>6.35</th>
<th>6.14</th>
<th>7.47</th>
<th>8.55</th>
<th>5.45</th>
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<tr>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Discussion

After establishing that the inductive and deductive groups both showed superior improvements compared with the control group in this study, the most important question was whether or not the inductive method resulted in greater improvements than the deductive method, and if the findings were consistent at all ability levels. As previously explained, the inductive method did as expected result in a larger mean improvement, but the results were also found to be inconsistent.

Shaffer (1989) argued against the deductive method as her study showed that students at all ability levels performed better when they were taught grammar that is considered to be difficult inductively, while Fischer and Hammerly insisted that the inductive approach should only be used when teaching relatively simple grammatical structures because they felt the method is simply too difficult (as cited in Shaffer, 1989, p. 395-396). This study clearly shows that the average to strong students excel after being taught about word order using the inductive method, but that the weaker students struggled to keep up with the rest of their class. Meanwhile, the weaker students who were taught deductively improved to the point where they were only marginally behind the average students in their group. It should be noted that the amount of weaker students in this study was far too small to make it possible to draw any real conclusions, but in some ways in line with Fischer and Hammerly’s reasoning, it would appear that structures such as word order are not suitable to be taught to weaker students using the inductive method because the method is too difficult. However, considering the advantages of using the method when teaching students who are at an average level or above, it should not be disregarded.

By looking at the students at the different ability levels, both as groups and as individuals, it was quickly clear how large the differences between the two methods were. While no student who was taught inductively at the average or strong level recorded a smaller improvement than those in the weak group, the student who improved the least in the deductive group was found amongst the strong students. In general, all of the students at the strong level who were taught deductively under-performed, and this was also the case for a majority of the
students at the average level. In fact, multiple students at the average level scored a total of fewer post-test points than the students at the weak level, with their post-test means as groups ultimately being almost the same. These results are complicated by the fact that the amount of weak students were so few, but also by the fact that one of the weak students in the deductive group was dyslectic. It is not unlikely that the diagnosis could have resulted in a pre-test score that was lower than what the student was capable of, and that the identical post-test revealed a result that was more in line with the student’s true abilities. With that being said, excluding this student’s result would still speak in favour of using the deductive method when teaching weaker students.

One possibility that may explain the lack of improvement among the weaker students who were taught inductively is that some students may simply require more time for individual practise, and could potentially perform equally as well using both techniques as long as a relatively large amount of time is allotted to individual practise and exercises. As the inductive and deductive lessons in this study were the exact same length of time despite the fact that the inductive method is arguably more time-consuming because the learners must be given time to figure out the structure at hand on their own, in comparison with the deductive method where the rules are explained immediately, the inductive group quite naturally had less time for individual exercises. The approaches that were used also differed as the deductive group primarily practised individually, while the students in the inductive group were encouraged to discuss and to work together to a greater extent. As an example, the students were given an exercise at the beginning of the lesson where they were asked to identify subjects, verbs and objects. In the deductive group, each student completed their own exercise (but were allowed to discuss and help each other), while in the inductive group the students were placed in groups of 4-5 students and only received one copy of the task that they were to work on together.

The fact that the inductive students achieved the lowest post-test mean despite having the largest pre-test to post-test improvement must also be considered as it speaks in favor of the deductive method as a whole. This may potentially suggest that a fair amount of the improvement that the inductive group accomplished is
caused by a lack of previous knowledge compared with the other groups, and that the mean improvements are skewed as the students in the inductive group were clearly behind the students in the other groups. The facts are, however, that all three groups have been taught by the same teacher. As such, it seems unlikely – even if it is of course a possibility – that the students in the inductive group had not been taught the same things on word order prior to this study.

The circumstances surrounding the tests must also be mentioned as they may have had an effect on the test results produced. The deductive group took the pre-test as well as the post-test at 12.40 pm, while the inductive group took both tests at 1.50 pm. As both groups took the tests in the early afternoon and in their normal classroom environment, stress or low blood sugar content should, for example, not be factors in their results. However, the inductive group could potentially have suffered a slight lack of general concentration as they took the test later in the day, but the only obvious lack of concentration that I witnessed was during the deductive group’s post-test on a Friday afternoon. It is not impossible that this resulted in slightly lower post-test scores, and that the deductive students may have improved even more than they did should they have been more focused. Another aspect that must not be forgotten and that instead suggests that the deductive students may have improved more than they might have had the circumstances been identical, is the fact that the they wrote the post-test closer to their lesson than the inductive group. As such, the deductive students may have had less time to forget important issues that were taught during the lesson.

One of the reasons behind the decision to conduct this study was a general feeling that the traditional ways of teaching grammar are not engaging enough for students to find grammar interesting. To put it bluntly, most would probably agree that the average student finds grammar boring. This is particularly the case amongst young learners, such as those who participated in this study. Their lack of interest in grammar is evident in the many studies that have compared Swedish learner’s abilities in English with the abilities of students in other countries. One example of this is a report from the Swedish National Agency for Education (2004) that shows that Swedish students are very competent at reading and writing, but weaker when it comes to linguistic correctness. While teaching the
lessons using the two different methods, I found that during the inductive lesson
the students became increasingly involved as they began to grasp the method,
which they did surprisingly quickly, and a large group appeared to be genuinely
engaged in the lesson. This was the case until the final few minutes when it
became clear that one full lesson of grammar taught in a new way with increased
difficulty was probably a little too much for the students to handle. The deductive
group, meanwhile, tired at the same rate if not quicker, but did not at any point
appear to be as engaged in the lesson. Although they were more interested than I
had expected going into the lesson, there was in my opinion a clear difference
between the two groups that could quite easily be explained by the fact that the
learners who were taught inductively were consistently encouraged to discuss,
work together and tell the class about their findings and observations. Although it
may be possible, the same level of engagement seems to be very difficult to
achieve while teaching deductively as the students are simply not forced to think
or truly understand the structure at hand in the same way as they are almost
automatically obliged to when the rule is not immediately explained to them.
Possibly, the level of engagement is also a result of the learner’s interests being
peaked by having to ‘investigate’ and use their brains to figure something out in a
way that they are not often required to.

Fischer (1979) said in his article that many claim that deduction leads to a higher
degree of certainty of grammatical knowledge because it is more logical. I feel
that the idea that weaker students could more easily understand a certain structure
by being taught about it using the deductive technique is possible, but the level of
improvement among the average students in this study especially, but also the
strong students, suggests that is not true for everyone. In addition, while weaker
students may more quickly grasp the structure and answer correctly on a test if
they are taught deductively, that does not mean that they are able to show
anything more than a very basic understanding of the structure. As previously
mentioned, Shaffer (1989) argued that the deductive approach leads students to
believe that they understand a rule, when their attempts at using them often show
a superficial understanding at best, and I tend to agree. Unfortunately, this study
has not tested this theory in any way, but I still feel that this is an important aspect
to consider, and an aspect that will hopefully be tested by others in the future.
In relation to these results in comparison with Shaffer’s (1989) findings, I also wonder if there is a possibility that weaker students benefit from being taught simpler structures deductively, but later on can benefit more from being taught more difficult structures inductively. Is there a possibility that Fischer and Hammerly’s (as cited by Shaffer [1989]) reasoning is in fact entirely incorrect in that the inductive method should only be used when teaching simpler structures? As seen in this study, induction does not appear to be appropriate for use even when teaching simpler structures such as word order to weak students, but in Shaffer’s study students at all levels benefitted from being taught difficult structures using the inductive method. Perhaps it is the case that a certain amount of core knowledge is necessary for the inductive method to quickly be effective. Again, this is not something that the I have tested, but it would most definitely be interesting to conduct a study that investigates when and in which instances the inductive method is the most effective when it is being taught to weak students.

In conclusion, with all of this taken into account, I feel that a combination of both methods should produce the best results when teaching word order to students who are learning English as a foreign language as the weaker students clearly struggled with the inductive method. However, it should be remembered that the learners in this study were only taught during a limited amount of time. By giving weaker students more time to adapt to the technique, and a chance to practise more individually, there is a possibility that they too will benefit greatly from being taught using the inductive method. I also wish to emphasize that the inductive method should not be disregarded because it may not be suitable for all learners, as all students have the right to develop as far as they possibly can within and beyond the aims of the education as stated by the current Education Act of Sweden.7

7 http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800/#K3, 26 May 2014
References


Appendix

Appendix 1 – Pre-study grammar test

Select the best word to complete the following sentences:

I come _____ Sweden
☐ to
☐ from
☐ at
☐ in

The cost _____ the coat is £60.
☐ for
☐ from
☐ of
☐ in

He is interested _____ learning French.
☐ on
☐ to
☐ in
☐ for

_____ to school today?
☐ Do you walk
☐ Did you walked
☐ Did you walk
☐ Have you walked

_____ everywhere.
☐ He walk
☐ He walks
☐ He have walk
☐ He walking

The general opinion _____ the people is that they should be allowed to vote.
☐ by
☐ of
This is my ____ house.

☐ parent’s
☐ parents
☐ parents’

That is ____ book.

☐ Emmas
☐ Emma’s
☐ Emmas’

I ____ unusually well last night.

☐ sleep
☐ slept
☐ have slept
☐ did sleep

The baby ____ because her pacifier was missing.

☐ were upset
☐ was upset

The toy was beyond repair because a dog ____ it.

☐ bit
☐ had bitten
☐ have bitten
☐ had bit

How do I find my way ____ Piccadilly Circus ____ Buckingham Palace?

☐ from, to
☐ between, to
☐ from, for
☐ between, and

This is ____ unique event.

☐ a
☐ an
An apple fell from the tree.

Write the following sentences in English:

Jag är född i mars. _______________________________________________________________

Jag behöver en sax. ______________________________________________________________

Var är pengarna? ________________________________________________________________

Jenny besöker ofta sin mormor. _____________________________________________________

Han köper mjölk på ICA. _____________________________________________________________________________

Kyrkan är byggd 1860. ___________________________________________________________

Du har uppenbarligen/tydligen aldrig spelat piano förut. _________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Nyheterna är tråkiga. _____________________________________________________________

Det kom många elever på dansen. __________________________________________________

Min mamma jobbar på en bank. _____________________________________________________

Hon hoppade upp och ned för att hon var så glad. ______________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Igår gick jag till skolan. __________________________________________________________

Johan skulle aldrig ha gjort så. _____________________________________________________
Appendix 2 – Pre/post-test

A – Form statements using the following words/phrases.

1) she / writes / letters / often _______________________________________
2) to music / Hannah / is listening / now _______________________________________
3) play / they / handball / in the evening / always _______________________________________
4) did / I / do / my homework / in my room / not _______________________________________
5) often / it / in Scotland / rains _______________________________________
6) lunch / we / not / yesterday / have / did / at school _______________________________________
7) he / speaks / well / French _______________________________________
8) Alex / under the shower / the song / sang / loudly _______________________________________
9) in Berlin / can / his uncle / he / visit _______________________________________
10) Victoria station / leaves / the bus / at 7 o’clock _______________________________________

B – Rewrite the sentences/questions using the words/phrases in brackets.

1) Have you been to Canada? (ever) _______________________________________
2) We watched the film. (last weekend) _______________________________________
3) The cat is playing. (in the garden) _______________________________________
4) The boy ran out of the room. (quickly) _______________________________________
5) Rita speaks English. (fluently) _______________________________________
6) We have met him. (before) _______________________________________
7) Did you see Mr Fisher? (yesterday morning) _______________________________________
8) They are flying. (to Rome / on Tuesday) _______________________________________
9) She goes to school by bus. (always) _______________________________________
10) He is late. (never) _______________________________________

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C – Translate the following sentences to English.

1) Vi tittar alltid på kvällsnyheterna. _______________________________________
2) Imorgon bitti tänker jag gå upp tidigt. _______________________________________
3) "Kan du hjälpa mig?" frågade den lilla pojken. _______________________________________
4) År 2010 vann Spanien VM i fotboll. _______________________________________
5) När är du tillbaka? _______________________________________
6) Igår köpte jag godis. _______________________________________
7) Gillar du klassisk musik? _______________________________________
8) Jag och mina vänner träffas nästan aldrig. _______________________________________
9) När Johan dök upp, såg Lisa besviken ut. _______________________________________
10) Hon började plötsligt skratta. _______________________________________

D – Which sentence is correct?

1) She always arrives late in the morning. 1) Judy reads often magazines.
2) She arrives always late in the morning. 2) Judy often reads magazines.
3) Both sentences are correct. 3) Both sentences are correct.

1) In the evening I watch TV. 1) They play hockey in the stadium every Friday.
2) I watch TV in the evening. 2) Every Friday they play hockey in the stadium.
3) Both sentences are correct. 3) Both sentences are correct.

1) Who are you waiting for? 1) We saw last Wednesday a film.
2) For who are you waiting? 2) Last Wednesday we saw a film.
3) Both sentences are correct. 3) Both sentences are correct.
Appendix 3 – Survey

Name: _________________________________________________ Class: ___________

Please answer these questions before the test:

1) During the lesson on word order, did you feel that the method used was helpful?
   Yes  No

2) On a scale of 1-10, did you feel that you understood word order better than you did before at the end of the lesson?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Much worse Same Much better

3) On a scale of 1-10, how difficult did you find the word order test the first time?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Very easy Very difficult

Please answer this question after the test:

4) On a scale of 1-10, how difficult did you find the word order test the second time?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Very easy Very difficult
Appendix 4 – Exercise: Practice in Identifying Subjects, Verbs, and Objects

For each of the following sentences, identify the word in **bold** as a subject, a verb, or an object.

1. Mr. Buck **donated** a wishbone to the Museum of Natural History.
   Answer:

2. After the final song, the **drummer** hurled his sticks at the crowd.
   Answer:

3. Gus smashed the electric **guitar** with a sledge hammer.
   Answer:

4. Felix stunned the **giraffe** with a radar gun.
   Answer:

5. Very slowly, **Pandora** opened the box.
   Answer:

6. Very slowly, **Pandora opened** the box.
   Answer:

7. Very slowly, **Pandora opened the box**.
   Answer:

8. Thomas **gave** his moonpie to Bengie.
   Answer:

9. After breakfast, **Vera** drove to the mission with Ted.
   Answer:

10. Even though it rarely rains here, Professor Legree **carries** his umbrella wherever he goes.
    Answer:

---

Source: http://grammar.about.com/od/basicsentencegrammar/a/sentenceunit.htm, 26 May 2014
Appendix 5 – PowerPoint presentation on adverb placement

Adverbs of Manner
- E.g. fast, slowly, well, carefully.
- These adverbs are placed behind the direct object (or behind the verb if there is no direct object).
- She (S) plays (V) the piano (DO) beautifully (Adv).
- Jennifer (S) screamed (V) loudly (Adv).

Adverbs of Place
- E.g. here, there, behind, above.
- Like adverbs of manner, these adverbs are placed behind the direct object (or behind the verb if there is no direct object).
- I (S) looked (V) for my book (DO) everywhere (Adv).
- I’m (S) going (V) home (Adv).

Adverbs of Time
- E.g. recently, yesterday, in the fall, at 6 o’clock.
- Adverbs of time are usually placed at the end of a sentence. If you don’t want to put emphasis on the time, you can also place the adverb at the start of the sentence.
- They (S) take (V) photos (DO) every Monday (Adv).
- I (S) am (Aux) leaving (V) now (Adv).

Adverbs of Frequency
- E.g. always, never, usually, often.
- Adverbs of frequency (‘how often’) are placed directly before the main verb.
- Expressions used to say ‘how often’ (once in a while, from time to time…) are always placed at the beginning or the end of the sentence.
- Adam (S) never (Adv) gets (V) angry (DO).
- From time to time (Adv), he (S), gets (V), angry (DO).

Adverbs of Frequency
- If ‘be’ is the main verb and there is no auxiliary verb, adverbs of frequency are put behind ‘be’ (subject + to be + adverb).
- If there is an auxiliary verb, adverbs of frequency are put before ‘be’ (subject + auxiliary + adverb + main verb).
- He (S) is (V) always (Adv) hungry (DO).
- She (S) can (Aux) occasionally (Adv) be (V) unhappy (DO).
Appendix 6 – Exercise: Adverbial changes

Yesterday I woke up early.
Igår vaknade jag tidigt.

Last month Charlotte Kalla won three medals.
Förra månaden vann Charlotte kalla tre medaljer.

’Will she help me’ the girl wondered.
“Kommer hon att hjälpa mig” undrade flickan.

Next week I am going to move to Malmö.
Nästa vecka ska jag flytta till Malmö.

I have never seen him so happy. She claimed that she had never seen him so happy.
Jag har aldrig sett honom så glad. Hon påstod att hon aldrig hade sett honom så glad.

Tom is not the right man for the job. I thought that Tom was not the right man for the job.
Tom är inte rätt man för jobbet. Jag tyckte att Tom inte var rätt man för jobbet.

She always dances in the afternoon. She said that she always dances in the afternoon.
Hon dansar alltid på eftermiddagen. Hon sade att hon alltid dansar på eftermiddagen.