
Parlez-vous français? Effectiveness of the AIM method on L2 French oral and written proficiency after three years.

Audrey Rousse-Malpat*¹

¹University of Groningen [Groningen] – Pays-Bas

Résumé

Explicit methods of instruction are very common in foreign language teaching, and there is still a strong belief that explicit grammar instruction is a prerequisite for successful second language learning. In the Netherlands, a great deal of time is spent on grammar explanations in the L1, and the L2 is rarely used, as in the case of French (Oosterhof, Jansma & Tammenga-Helmantel, 2014). Since 2007, many teachers have opted for the AIM method (Maxwell, 2001) from Canada to solve those issues.

The current study explores the effects of this implicit method compared to a communicative method with explicit grammar instruction (Grandes Lignes) for L2 French in the Netherlands. 229 junior high school students were followed during their first three years of French instruction on the development of their oral and written skills (from age 12 to 15). They wrote 16 narratives and took three oral tests over the course of three years. The oral tests were scored using the protocol and grid from the SOPA method developed by CAL (Thompson, Kenyon & Rhodes, 2002) and the narratives were scored on a similar grid developed for this particular study.

Results showed that, overall, the implicit method with high L2 exposure was much more effective on both written and oral skills, already after 6 months of instruction. A detailed analysis of oral output revealed that the implicit group significantly outperformed the explicit group not only on grammatical accuracy but also on analytical measures such as speech rate, sentence complexity and the limited use of L1.

Oosterhof, J., Jansma, J., & Tammenga-Helmantel, M. (2014). Et si on parlait français? onderzoek naar doeltaal= voertaalgebruik van docenten frans in de onderbouw. *Levende Talen Tijdschrift*, 15(3), 15-27.

Maxwell, W. (2001). *Evaluating the effectiveness of the accelerative integrated method for teaching french as a second language*. (Unpublished Master). University of London Institute in Paris, .

Thompson, L. E., Kenyon, D. M., & Rhodes, N. C. (2002). *A validation study of the student oral proficiency assessment (SOPA)*. Washington, DC: ERIC.

*Intervenant