



Implicit and Explicit Instruction of Intonation for the Iranian EFL Learners: A Prosodic Inquiry

Naser Janani¹; Aliasghar Ahmadishokouh²; Fatemeh Samadi³

¹Assistant Professor in TEFL, Foreign Languages Faculty, Shahid Sattari Aeronautical University of Science and Technology, Tehran, Iran

²Assistant Professor in TEFL, CASU, Tehran, Iran

³Department of TEFL, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: naser.janani@gmail.com; ahmadishokouhtmu@gmail.com; ghazal.s515@gmail.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v8i4.2637>

Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of implicit and explicit instruction on the learnability of intonation through films. To this end, 40 Iranian EFL learners participated in 4 groups during 20 treatment sessions, i.e. implicit instruction and explicit instruction through giving episodes of TV series, parts of a movie and animated feature. The results indicated that the difference among the mean scores of the two groups was statistically meaningful. The participants with explicit instruction performed better compared to subjects who received implicit instruction. The second purpose was to find out if the gender of the participants of the present study played any crucial role in improving the level of intonation, for which, two of the four classes were male and the other two were female. The results obtained from implicit and explicit groups showed no significant differences between male and female classes. The results will be insightful for both teachers and material developers in designing appropriate materials and activities for teaching intonation.

Keywords: *Explicit Instruction; Implicit Instruction; Intonation; Suprasegmental Features*

1. Introduction and Background

Intonation is important in social interaction. It has been indicated that intonation is used for turn taking and information structure. Rise and fall are used as a signal for when to speak and when not. If the speaker remains at a high pitch, it would mean that he wants to continue talking. A fall shows completion (Brazil, 1994).

Cruttenden (1997) mentions that a speaker could write, and prepare the best presentation ever made, but destroys it in the first 30 seconds if he/she does not use rhythm, intonation and pausing in his presentation. Intonation can mean two things: either how in-tune you are when you sing or, it can refer to how you use your voice pitch to add implied meaning to a word, especially as far as showing your mood.

Moreover, learners and teachers are often so busy dealing with other aspects of language teaching and learning that they tend to forget about intonation. In fact, intonation can be as important as word choice or grammar or any other skills in language, but it is not always realized that how much difference intonation makes (Sabbadini, 2006). She also states that intonation is a largely unconscious mechanism, which makes it a complex aspect of pronunciation. Such belief and experience could also support the implicit teaching of intonation since implicit teaching is a rather subconscious process by definition.

1.2 The Importance of Intonation

Intonation is very important for communication, as it helps the listener interpret the message. There have been a number of different explanations as to how intonation can help communication, some of which are as follows:

1. Intonation enables us to express emotions and attitudes as we speak: the attitudinal function of intonation.
2. Intonation helps to produce the effect of prominence on stressed syllables: the accentual function of intonation.
3. Intonation helps to recognize the grammar and syntactic structure of the utterance: the grammatical function of intonation.
4. Intonation conveys the given-new information, or provides information for turn-taking: the discourse function of intonation (Trujillo, 2006).

Tench (2011) believes that the distinctive “sound” of a genre is its ‘prosodic composition’. He is interested in paralinguistic features. He says intonation is a vital contributor to prosodic compositions by way of length of intonation units, proportions of falls and rises, degree of variety of tones and pretonic patterns. Other ‘paralinguistic’ features include variations in tempo, loudness and pitch; degree of rhythmicity, resonance and tension; and the possibility of vocalizations like whisper, huskiness and creaky voice. All of these ‘paralinguistic’ features typically characterize a whole intonation unit or, indeed, a sequence of them (Tench, 2011).

Bukowski (2011) argues that intonation, based on its linguistic functions, can, to some extent, be responsible for the students’ level of success in communication. He claims that the lack of communicative and discourse based activities seems to ruin the contemporary communicative tendencies in foreign language teaching, which calls for a change in intonation teaching materials and syllabi by introducing and gradually increasing the amount of discourse intonation practice. He believes that primary goal of teaching pronunciation is being understandable (intelligibility) that can be achieved by attending to both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of phonetics.

The author of the paper claims that despite the above mentioned importance and necessity to teach suprasegmental features, one of them, intonation, is given lower credit and priority in pronunciation teaching in comparison with stress and rhythm, which may, therefore, affect negatively the learner’s ability to communicate successfully in English.

Celce-Murcia (2004) indicates that Both the inability to distinguish sounds that carry a high functional load (*list/least*) and an inability to distinguish suprasegmental features (such as intonation and stress differences in yes/no and alternative questions) can have a negative on the oral communication – and the listening comprehension abilities – of nonnative speakers of English (Celce-Murcia ,2004).

Concordantly, intonation must not be understood as a melody in the musical sense, where a singer holds a given pitch for a time before moving to the next one. Underhill (2005) believes that the linguistic sense, the pitch variation extends over single phonemes, sequences of phonemes and whole utterances. It is an aspect of language we are very sensitive to, but mostly at an unconscious level.

Bukowski (2011) also believes that the most noticeable feature of a foreign language is intonation and rhythm. Some languages are described as sounding "like music", other languages as being "flat and without melody". If the pronunciation of individual sounds can be compared with the individual notes in a piece of music, the intonation can be compared with the melody or tune.

2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the implicit teaching of intonation is more effective or the explicit one, if the audio-visual materials are used. This is an important area of study because finding new trends and materials could lead to better understanding and learning of a second language. Considering different forms of skills and in order to have an acceptable level of proficiency in speaking, the input must be suitable and sufficient. Using audio-visual materials as an input may be more authentic and natural, since the native speakers generally acquire their mother tongue by listening to conversations, and here; the same kinds of materials were selected, modified and presented to maximize the authenticity of materials and input. Then the evaluation took place. According to Roach (2009) intonation is important, if the word 'right' is said with the pitch of the voice rising, it is likely to be heard as a question or as an invitation to a speaker to continue, while falling pitch is more likely to be heard as confirmation or agreement.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

1. Is there any significant difference between explicit and implicit teaching of intonation to Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does gender have any significant effect on the learnability of intonation?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study was conducted in two private language schools. Four classes of students ($n = 40$) were involved. The schools classified these classes as advanced, according to scores on a placement or a previous class achievement test. Most of them had spent more than 2 years in English schools. The average of all participants age was about 22 years old. The teaching approach adopted by the school placed emphasis on developing communicative skills in English, therefore, listening and speaking were important. Learners received 1/5 hours of English language instruction every other day for 20 sessions. Each of the 2 classes was assigned to one of the two treatment options (implicit group = 20 students, explicit group = 20 students).

3.2 Instrumentation

The first and foremost instruments in this study were animated features, movies and TV series in particular with different genres suitable for both genders of participants. The materials were audio-visual only, without any help from written papers. The final test was administered by computers, microphones and special software called 'Speak Fluent', to test the level of intonation proficiency. The TV series were more suitable for this study because they gave a free hand to the researchers to expand the realm of

exposure as much as they desired and kept the pace and coherence of the story and materials at the same time. From the researchers' point of view, from TV series **BREAKING BAD**, from movies **12 ANGRY MEN** and from animated features, **UP**, were considered to be more suitable for reaching the objectives. They were all considered to be really well known and popular and also Oscar award winners. One of the important points was the extensive range of variety of different form of sentences that these films presented. The movie, 12 Angry Men alone, had got more than 250 pages of transcription which allowed the researchers to choose the desirable forms freely. The second important point was the genre of these films which were thriller and because of their nature, they were full of interrogations and surprises, therefore; choosing exclamatory and question form sentences from among conversations was considerably easier and the researchers could avoid unnecessary repetitions. The standard test of Nelson was used to homogenize the participants. A voice recorder was also required and used to record the voices of the participants.

3.3 Procedure

The following steps were taken in order to implement this research:

1. For each method of teaching, the researchers chose 2 groups of FCE students as participants with the characteristics mentioned earlier in the participant section.
2. A Nelson test was given to make sure the groups are at the same level of proficiency.
3. A pre-test was taken to make sure the equality of their intonation level and pronunciation proficiency. Computer software "Speak Fluent" was used to take the pre-test.
4. In the very first session prior to start of the course the students in both groups were informed about the procedure and experiment. Then the Nelson test was given to them.
5. During the experiment, two of the classes were taught implicitly and two of the classes were taught explicitly. There are more than 10 tips for teaching pronunciation and intonation in "*How to teach pronunciation like a pro*" book. The instructor (only one male instructor was used to enhance the level of credibility and reduce the level of subjectivity) was supposed to use them in each class as he saw fit. Some of them are as follows; the teachers are expected to a) Model it, b) Encourage Authentic Listening, c) Teach the Most Common Patterns d) Use Visuals e) Use Dialogues and Emotion f) Teach it g) Explain it h) Question it i) Guess at it j) Use it k) Listen to it l) and finally Have fun with it.
6. Four types of sentences were subject to teaching simultaneously during 20 sessions in a semester. The sentences and conversations and dialogues were extracted from among different episodes and parts accordingly.
7. In implicit classes the selected episodes were used and played for a few minutes and then the differences between 4 types were pointed out to draw their attention to the form and sound of the sentences. But since it is implicit teaching, any additional explanation that could result to making the procedure explicit was avoided. The students were to recognize the difference in these 4 forms for themselves and try to internalize it. The role of conscious raising was also crucial in implicit classes so they paid extra attention to the materials. At the very beginning of the class, and according to the tips and pointers mentioned before, the participants were informed about the role of intonation and the hardships and obstacles they may face if they fail to have proper and correct intonation. They were also informed about having different rising and falling of pitch in different forms and type of sentences. The participants were fully aware of the role of intonation in different form of sentences. It was their assignment from that point to find out the differences.
8. On the other hand, in explicit classes, the different forms of sentences and the difference between them overtly and explicitly were explained. Although the materials were the same, but in second classes the differences were discussed at length explicitly with writing on the board with diagrams showing the rising and falling of the voice in different parts of the sentence. They were also informed about having different rising and falling of pitch in different forms and type of

sentences. But here the sentences were written on the board and categorized according to the forms and types of intonation. The instructor also used to draw intonation arrows both on board and using his hands while repeating the sentences.

9. Since the students were not familiar with intonation teaching through movies or TV series, a transcription of every session episode dialogues were given to the participants so they did not have to focus on listening comprehension and only try to realize the intonation patterns of sentences.
10. Materials were presented explicitly in both classes and the participants could use the gestures and postures and face mimics to recognize different forms. In explicit classes, the sentences were introduced with names and types but the differences were shown in the clearest way. The implicit classes had more time to listen to the sentences and repeatedly watch the episodes because of the absence of overt explanations. The explicit classes had less time to repeat but the explicit teaching and describing was supposed to compensate for the lack of time.
11. After a few introductory sessions, the participants were asked to use the written sentences and draw the intonational characteristics and changes in patterns of sentence. Pair and group works was used to have peer correction and get the correct form.
12. They also practiced with software like American Accent Training and were tested by the software named 'SPEAK FLUENT'.
13. The participants were asked about their opinion about the movie and TV series during the semester to have their feedback and feelings about the materials so the instructor could avoid any negative effect of boredom. The participants' feedback helped to use better materials in order to enhance the teaching procedure.
14. During the process of teaching, the participants in implicit group asked repeatedly to have the lessons explicitly.
15. All the materials were presented explicitly and they could have paper and pen to write down the sentences and draw the intonation and pitch changes in paper to distinguish different forms even better. Then, they repeated the sentences with the same intonation and in case of any problem or mistake, the instructor corrected them by repeating the correct form. In implicit classes, however, the correction feedback was only implicit and just by repeating the correct form but in explicit classes the correct forms were shown on the board with the differences and the same conducted in teaching the materials.

3.4 Data Analysis

This research enjoyed a quasi-experimental design. Therefore, after taking standard test of Nelson, pre-test and post test were administered right at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Based on the software programs, more than 80 different sentences were in testing section from which 30 sentences with different intonation forms were chosen and the students pronounced them at each test. The software scored the participant in both pre-test and post test. The results were analyzed in SPSS software.

3.5 Reliability Statistics

To estimate the reliability of Nelson Homogeneity Test that was used in the present study, was piloted with 28 advanced EFL learners who have the same features with the main sample of this study to assess its reliability value. The results as appeared in Table 1 revealed that the reliability of Nelson Test was assessed 0.90 using KR-21, which are good indicators of internal consistency.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of Nelson Homogeneity Test

Test	No. of Students	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Nelson Homogeneity Test	28	50	0.90

3.6 Nelson Test Results

Nelson Test was administered to both implicit ($N = 20$) and explicit groups ($N = 20$) proved the homogeneity of participants in the two groups. Table 2 below displays the descriptive statistics of the participant's scores on Nelson Homogeneity Test. The table shows that the mean and standard deviation of the two implicit ($M = 40.55$, $SD = 3.10$) and explicit ($M = 39.40$, $SD = 2.89$) groups are not far from each other.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Nelson Homogeneity Test Scores in the Two Implicit and Explicit Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nelson	Implicit	20	40.55	3.103
	Explicit	20	39.40	2.891

The results of Independent Sample Test to find the homogeneity of two groups are provided in Table 3. The table shows that the hypothesis of equal of variances was met since p value of Levene's Test (.85) exceeded .05.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test to Compare Two Groups' Nelson Homogeneity Test Scores

Levene's Test for Variances			T-test for Means			
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	Mean Diff.
Equal variance assumed	.035	.853	1.213	38	.233	1.150

Independent Samples Test results as appeared in Table 4.3 indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in means between the two groups on the homogeneity test, $t_{(38)} = 1.21$, $p = .23$, $p > .05$, in which the t -observed, 1.21 was less the t critical, 2.00, and the p value, .23 was more than the selected significant level for this study, .05. So we could conclude that the two groups were homogeneous regarding homogeneity test before experiencing any treatment. Figure 4.1 below is a box plot that graphically illustrates the results. A quick look at the figure reveals that the two groups have performed almost similarly regarding homogeneity test.

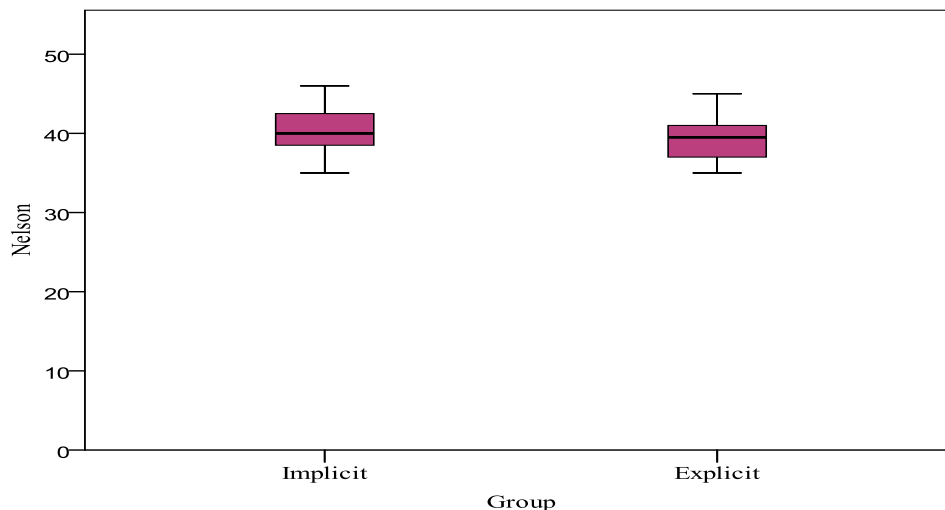


Figure 1 Nelson homogeneity test scores in the two implicit and explicit groups

3.7 Testing Assumptions

3.7.1 Normality

The normality assumption of Nelson Test and intonation scores, which is checked through the ratios of skewness and kurtosis. As shown in Table 4 below, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors for Nelson scores in the two implicit and explicit groups are within the ranges of +/- 1.96, and that means they are normally distributed.

Table 4. Normality Tests for Nelson Scores in the Implicit and Explicit Groups

Group	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Implicit	20	40.55	.094	.512	-.209	.992
Explicit	20	39.40	.136	.512	-.620	.992

Table 5 below indicates that the intonation scores in the two implicit and explicit groups have normal distribution since the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors for do not exceed the ranges of +/- 1.96. Therefore, parametric Independent Samples Test rather than Mann Whitney U Test was utilized to compare the homogeneity scores in the two groups.

Table 5. Normality Tests Intonation Scores in the Two Implicit and Explicit Groups

Time	Group	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-test	Implicit	20	110.90	.197	.512	-.984	.992
	Explicit	20	118.65	.145	.512	-.666	.992
Post-test	Implicit	20	123.80	.936	.512	.903	.992
	Explicit	20	140.15	-.515	.512	-.495	.992

3.7.2 Homogeneity of the Variance

According to Table 6, the homogeneity of variance in intonation scores was met since the Sig. of Levene's test, .39 was more than .05.

Table 6. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances of Intonation Scores

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.028	3	36	.392

3.7.3 Linearity

In order to assess the linearity assumption, the general distribution of scores was checked for each of groups. The distribution of intonation scores in Figure 2 indicates that there seem to be a linear (straight-line) relationship for the implicit and explicit groups. So we have not violated the assumption of a linear relationship for intonation.

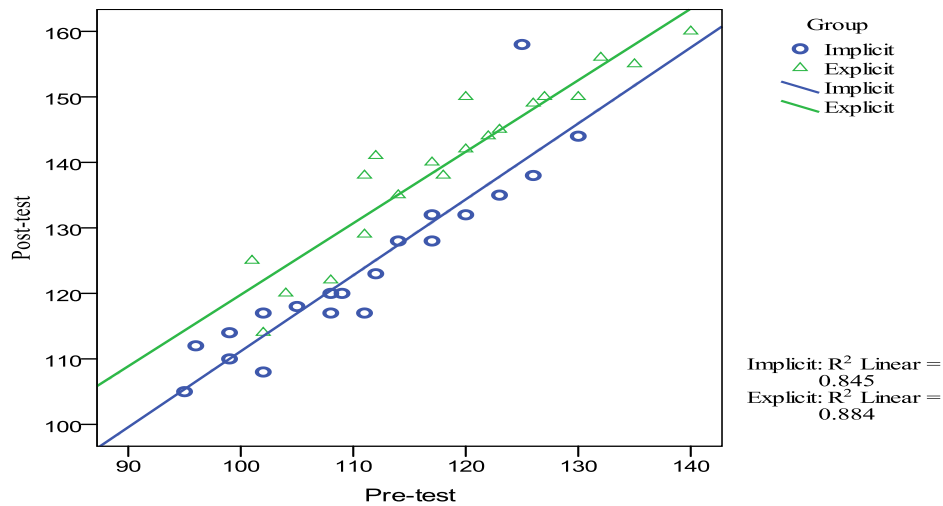


Figure 2 Linearity of scores on the pre-test and post-test of intonation

3.7.4 Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

Table 7 shows that the Sig. level of the interaction between group and the pre-test of intonation was not statistically significant ($p = .65, p > .05$), indicating that we have not violated the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes for intonation and group.

Also, Table 7 indicates that the Sig. level of the interaction between gender and the pre-test of intonation was not statistically significant ($p = .52, p > .05$), showing that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes for intonation and gender has been met, too.

Table 7. Homogeneity of Regression Slopes for the Interaction of Group-Covariate and Gender-Covariate

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group * Pre-test	5.000	1	5.000	.207	.652
Gender * Pre-test	15.328	1	15.328	.409	.526
Total	705761.000	40			
Corrected Total	9064.975	39			

4. Investigation of the First and Second Research Questions

The first research question of the current study asked whether the explicit teaching of intonation has better improvement in EFL students' intonation than implicit teaching. And the second research question inquired if gender influences the effectiveness of two implicit and explicit teaching of intonation.

In order to answer these research questions, a 2 by 2 between-groups analysis of covariance (Two-way ANCOVA) was used. Table 8 displays the descriptive statistics of intonation scores on the pre-test and post-test. A quick look at the table reveals that the mean of explicit group on the pre-test of intonation ($M = 118.65, SD = 10.98$) was greater than the mean in implicit group ($M = 110.90, SD = 10.45$) with the mean difference of 7.45. In addition, the mean score of female group ($M = 116.86, SD = 12.35$) was partly more than the mean score of male group ($M = 112.22, SD = 9.54$) on the pre-test of intonation.

Table 8. Group Statistics of Intonation Scores on the pre-test in the Two Groups and Genders

Group	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Implicit	Female	111.45	11.665	11
	Male	110.22	9.418	9
	Total	110.90	10.457	20
Explicit	Female	123.00	9.602	11
	Male	113.33	10.642	9
	Total	118.65	10.980	20
Total	Female	116.86	12.357	22
	Male	112.22	9.546	18
	Total	114.54	15.246	40

A quick look at the Table 9 reveals that the mean of explicit group on the post-test of intonation ($M = 140.15$, $SD = 12.74$) exceeded the mean in implicit group ($M = 123.80$, $SD = 13.18$) with the mean difference of 16.35, which is radically larger than the mean difference observed between the two groups on the pre-test (7.45). Furthermore, the mean score of female group ($M = 133.86$, $SD = 17.02$) was slightly greater than the mean score of male group ($M = 129.67$, $SD = 12.83$) on the post-test of intonation.

Table 9. Group Statistics of Intonation Scores on the Post-test in the Two Groups and Genders

Group	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Implicit	Female	125.00	15.710	11
	Male	122.33	10.012	9
	Total	123.80	13.189	20
Explicit	Female	142.73	13.756	11
	Male	137.00	11.358	9
	Total	140.15	12.746	20
Total	Female	133.86	17.027	22
	Male	129.67	12.838	18
	Total	131.97	15.246	40

A 2 by 2 between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of two types of teaching intonation for female and male participants. The independent variables were the type of teaching intonation, i.e. implicit and explicit (Group) and gender. The dependent variable was intonation scores. Participants' scores on the pre-test of intonation were used as the covariate in this analysis.

Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate. After adjusting for the intonation scores on the pre-test, there was a significant difference between the two implicit and explicit groups on the post-intonation scores, $F(1, 35) = 22.04$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$, partial eta squared = .38 (Table 10); hence, the first null hypothesis of the present study was as "The explicit teaching of intonation does not have better improvement in EFL

students' intonation than implicit teaching" was rejected. ANCOVA supported our claim that the explicit teaching of intonation has better improvement in EFL students' intonation than implicit teaching. In fact, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (pre-intonation) and the dependent variable (post-intonation), $.86$, while controlling for the independent variables (group and gender). Also the results showed that the Sig. value of the pre-test of intonation ($.000$) was less than $.05$, therefore our covariate was significant.

Table 10. Two-way ANCOVA: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on the Post-test of Intonation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	8255.496 ^a	4	2063.874	89.237	.000	.911
Intercept	.068	1	.068	.003	.957	.000
Pre-test	5384.703	1	5384.703	232.822	.000	.869
Group	509.779	1	509.779	22.042	.000	.386
Gender	12.686	1	12.686	.549	.464	.015
Group * Gender	55.697	1	55.697	2.408	.130	.064
Error	809.479	35	23.128			
Total	705761.000	40				
Corrected Total	9064.975	39				

a. R Squared = $.911$ (Adjusted R Squared = $.900$)

Besides, after controlling for the pre-intonation scores, ANCOVA (Table 10 above) failed to find any significant difference between the female and male groups on the post-intonation scores, $F(1, 35) = .54$, $p = .46$, $p > .05$, partial eta squared = $.01$; as a result, the first null hypothesis of the current study that reads "Gender does not influence the effectiveness of two explicit and implicit teaching of intonation" was rejected. This result suggests that females and males performed almost the same on the two types of teaching intonation, i.e., explicit and that gender does not affect the effectiveness of two implicit and explicit teaching of intonation.

After adjusting for intonation scores on pre-test, there was not a significant interaction effect, Group * Gender, i.e. that are interaction between the type of teaching intonation and gender, $F(1, 35) = 2.40$, $p = .06$;

Table 11 and table 12 provide us with the adjusted means on the depended variable, intonation scores, for each of our groups, and genders split according to each of our independent variables separately and then jointly. 'Adjust refers to the fact that the effect of covariate has been statistically removed. As displayed in Table 4.11, the adjusted mean for explicit group ($M = 135.79$) was much larger than the adjusted mean for implicit group ($M = 128.15$).

Table 11. Adjusted Means on the Intonation Scores for the Two Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Implicit	128.154 ^a	1.125	125.875	130.433
Explicit	135.796 ^a	1.125	133.517	138.075

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretetst = 114.78 .

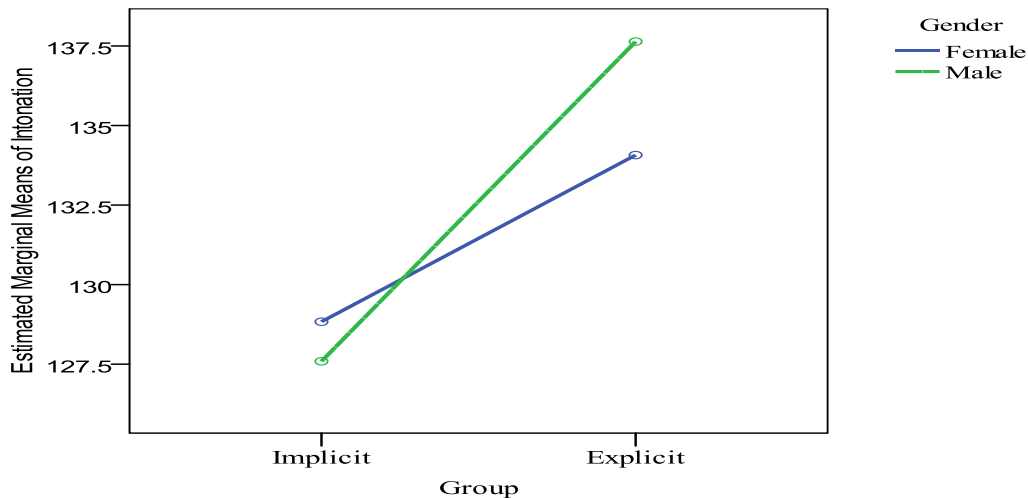
Table 12 depicts that the adjusted mean for male students ($M = 132.61$) was slightly greater than the adjusted mean for female group ($M = 131.45$), but this difference is not significant.

Table 12. Adjusted Means on the Intonation Scores for Female and Male Students

Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Female	131.452 ^a	1.037	129.346	133.558
Male	132.614 ^a	1.150	130.279	134.948

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pre-test = 114.78.

The graphical demonstration of the estimate marginal means of intonation, as presented in Table 11 and Table 12, is shown in Figure 3 below. As the figure displays the participants in the explicit group surpassed those in the implicit group, however the female and male students acted not so differently on the intonation test.



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pre-tests = 114.78

Figure 3 Estimated marginal means on the pre-test and post-test of intonation

5. Discussion

This study addressed the special features like implicit teaching, explicit teaching, adult learners and audio-visual materials. There are a number of studies concerning these features. Pincus (2013) suggests that long term exposure to intonation patterns may not be crucial to achieving proficiency in the comprehension of their corresponding meanings. She believes that it is unknown whether long term exposure would establish long-term proficiency; thus, she suggests that future work needs to involve testing the same participants on this material on multiple different occasions to determine whether the effects would be long-lasting. Moreover, she is concerned that if at this point the proficiency in the laboratory setting on this material would extend to the real world. However, her study, on explicit teaching of intonation with audio-visual materials, shows that an instruction technique involving audio-visual and explicit instruction in intonation may be a very effective tool for improving L2 speakers' comprehension of intonation (Pincus, 2013).

The above mentioned paragraph was an indication of the effectiveness of explicit teaching regarding intonation and audio-visual materials. However, not all of the studies point to an advantage for

explicit form. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) point out several studies that found no difference between the group that received extensive explicit feedback and the group that received limited explicit feedback. Nevertheless, Ellis et.al believes that those studies indicated that when individual different factors, such as the learners' proficiency and language aptitude, were taken into account, the more explicit feedback was of greater benefit to the more able learners. It is important to note that the task of explicit form is designed to ensure that the attention of the whole class was focused as much as possible on the speaker at these times. They also argue that from a pedagogical perspective, it is important to examine the activities within the classroom context. They do not believe that it is easy to generalize the results obtained from laboratory studies that involve one-on-one interactions to classrooms in which the teacher interacts with the whole class. In their view, ecological validity can only be achieved through classroom-based research (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006).

Based on the points and results which were discussed earlier, it can be safe to come to the same conclusion, to some extent that based on the theories and practices before, the researcher can expect the same outcome from the present study that the explicit teaching of intonation is more effective. It is the direct and clear explanation of scholars like Rod Ellis, Shawn Loewen, and Rosemary Erlam which justifies the outcome. Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, (2006): "It is because adult learners are more rule-governed and metalinguistic explanations are so useful."

6. Conclusion

To have a more comprehensive discussion, it is reasonable to restate the null hypothesis of the study here and then discuss the results.

H₀: There is no significant difference between explicit and implicit teaching of intonation to Iranian EFL learners.

The data and scores from the two implicit and explicit groups were previously analyzed. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. The two groups, implicit and explicit, scored differently in the post test and the difference was statistically meaningful and significant.

By rejecting the null hypothesis, the researchers can claim that the *explicit teaching* is more effective than *implicit teaching* in improving the intonation level of Iranian EFL students.

However, the second hypothesis was about the impact and influence of gender on learning intonation. The second hypothesis is as follows:

H₁: Gender does not have any significant effect on explicit and implicit learning of intonation.

The researchers strived to find out if one gender outperforms the other in case of intonation learning. Based on the analysis of obtained scores of two groups, the second hypothesis was approved. There was no significant or meaningful statistical difference between the two groups. Therefore, the researchers can indicate that based on the findings of this study, there is no difference between males and females regarding the intonation learning. Moreover, as far as teaching methods are concerned, both implicit and explicit teaching should be used to enhance the learning and teaching of intonation.

The instructors, too, can take advantages of the findings of this study. They can check/recheck their current level of intonation, methods of movie teaching, techniques, and evaluate the introduced materials from the participants' point of view and feedback. In addition, audio-visual materials can be selected and evaluated to meet both students and instructors needs.



Reference

- Brazil, D. (1994) *Pronunciation for Advanced Learners of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bukowski, D. (2011) *Intonation in Teaching Pronunciation: In Search of a New Perspective*.
- Celce-Murcia, M (2004) *Teaching Pronunciation: A reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruttenden, A. (1997) *intonation*, 2nd Edition: Cambridge University press.
- Ellis, R, Loewen, S, & Erlam, R (2006) *Implicit and Explicit Corrective Feedback and the Acquisition of L2 Grammar*, University of Auckland.
- Pincus, N. (2013) *Teaching Intonation with Explicit Instruction and Audio-Visual Techniques*, University of Delaware.
- Roach, P. (2009) *English Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical Course*, 4th ed. Cambridge University Press.
- Sabbadini, M. J. (2006) *Teaching English intonation*, British Council.
- Tench, P. (2011) *Intonation, Meaning and Grammar*, Centre for Language and Communication Research, Cardiff University, Wales, UK.
- Trujillo, F. (2006), *English Phonetics and Phonology*, www.ugr.es.
- Underhill, A. (2005) *Sound Foundations: Learning and Teaching Pronunciation* 2nd Edition, Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).