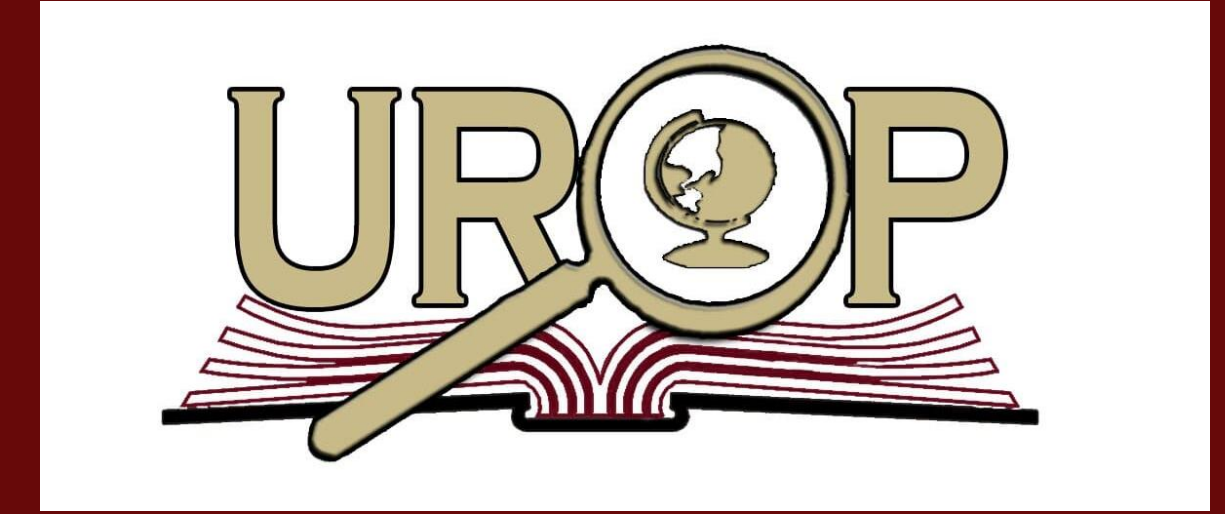# Verb Ventures: Conquering Grammar Gaps in Spanish English MLs – A Comparative Study on Implicit and Explicit Intervention Approaches

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Abstract

The Verb Ventures project was built around the observation that many multilingual, Spanish and English students struggle to understand and apply the past and present verb tenses when learning the English language. This study specifically focuses on the use of explicit and implicit methods during speech intervention with students in third through fifth grade. When attempting to teach participants how to use the different forms of each tense in order to figure out which method was most effective when teaching the verb tenses, multiple intervention sessions were conducted in which each method was used with a different verb tense and practiced through different activities. The explicit method uses a shape coding chart that helps students to identify the subject and verb of the sentence, encouraging students to reframe their outlook and apply the correct verb tense without as much interventionist interaction. Comparatively, the implicit method requires more involvement by the interventionist, having them provide only two options and giving the students a forced choice between their own answer and the alternative correct answer. It was predicted, and confirmed through the data tracked over time, that the explicit method proved to have the most impact on the language and speaking skills of the student participants. The research conducted will have a large impact on the field of education and speech therapy when finding ways to accommodate ML(multilingual) students in the classroom and in speech interventions, assisting in higher levels of student success.

Methods and Materials

- Participants: Students ranging from third to fifth grade that speak Spanish as their first language or use it prominently in the home.
- Methods:
  - Implicit: Prompts students with two different endings before then providing a forced choice between their answer and the correct one, modeling what the correct ending is.
  - Explicit: Uses shape coding to help students visualize which word uses the applied ending and demonstrate which ending belongs.
- Verb tense targets were randomized across participants to gauge the effectiveness of each method no matter the material.
- Students were alerted of the different methods and targets during the session through direct verbal cue that they were changing targets and were or were not using the shape coding chart for their sentences.

Results

- Graphs demonstrate difference between student's performance in basic testing versus use of methods in intervention sessions

- Note: The yellow dashed lines and diamond datapoints correspond with the explicit approach. The purple solid line and orange datapoints correspond with the implicit approach. Gaps in the data points represent student absences.
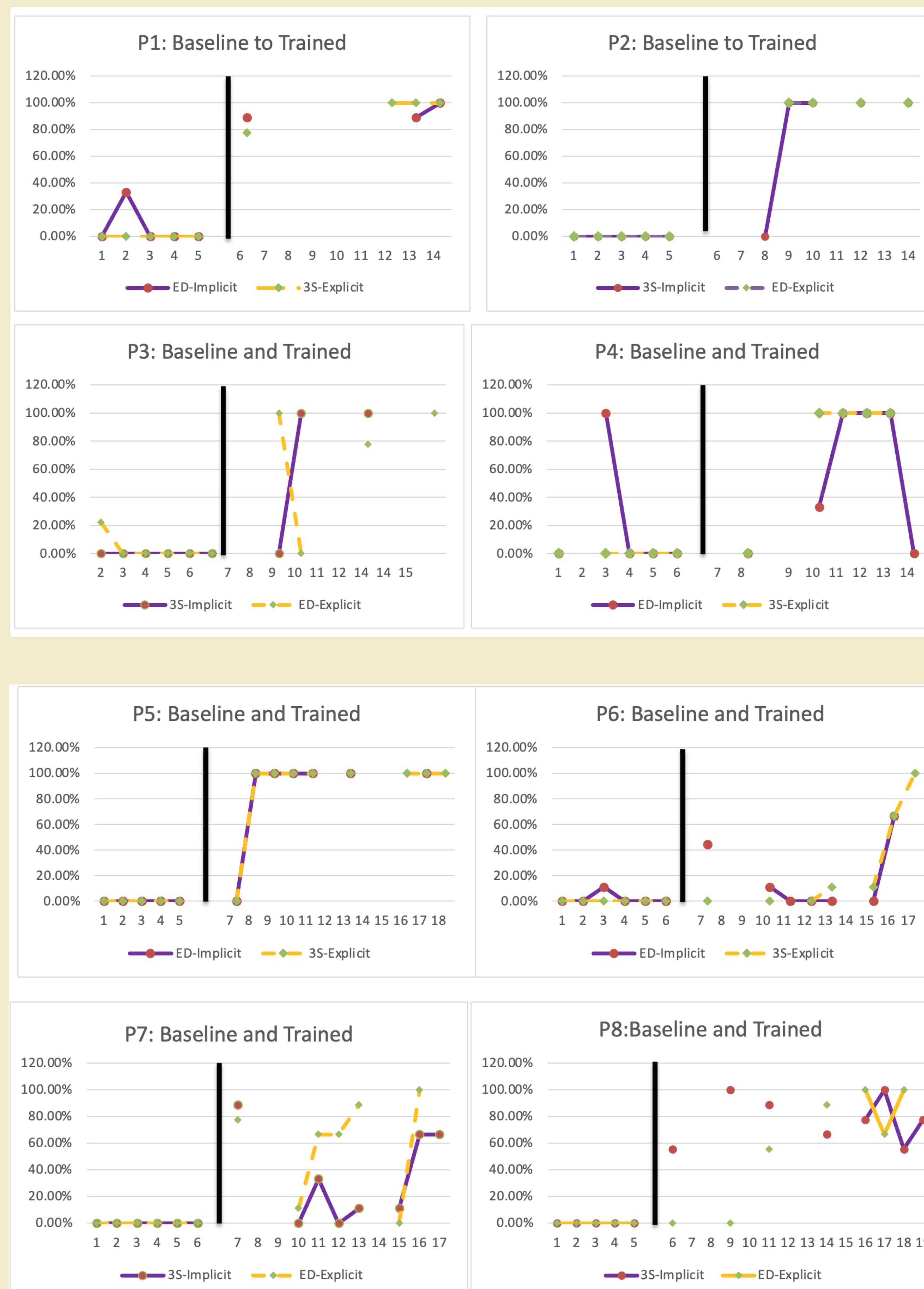
Conclusion

- Original purpose: Compare the effectiveness and efficiency of implicit and explicit approaches in verb interventions when teaching inflectional morphemes to Spanish English Multilingual Learners (MLs) in order to help bridge the communication gap.

- The results demonstrated that **five out of the eight** participants demonstrated success in intervention using the explicit method.
  - It appears that participants performance aligned with the original hypothesis.

- This left three out of the eight students having been most effectively taught using the implicit method

- There was conflict present with participants and their school schedules, sometimes leaving them without the desire to focus or unable to be present for intervention sessions, skewing some data.

- This will add to the knowledge about grammar interventions for the speech-language pathology field and develop a better understanding of how to treat MLs in intervention while also developing the speech field as a whole.

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