The Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS)
6 (1), Spring 2014, Ser. 74/4
ISSN: 2008-8191. pp. 73-92

The Impact of Deductive, Inductive, and L1-Based Consciousness-Raising Tasks on EFL Learners' Acquisition of the Request Speech Act

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Abstract

The necessity and importance of teaching pragmatics has been highlighted by many researchers (e.g. Rose & Kasper, 2001). Due to the consensus over the need to teach pragmatic competence, the main issue now centers on the question of how we should teach this competence in the most effective way. Consistent with this line of research, the present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of deductive, inductive, and L1-based consciousness-raising instructional tasks on EFL learners' acquisition of the request speech act during a seven-week instruction period. The results obtained through a written DCT administered to 140 EFL learners indicated that instruction had a significantly positive effect on learners' acquisition of the request speech act. The comparison of the task types demonstrated that, all in all, the deductive task was the most effective one. Furthermore, the results showed that the learners were generally receptive to L1-based awareness-raising tasks and that these tasks were more effective than inductive tasks. This study suggests that consciousness-raising instructional tasks could be utilized in raising students' sociopragmatic awareness and be applied in helping them develop their interlanguage pragmatics.

Keywords: consciousness-raising (C-R), deductive C-R task, inductive C-R task, L1-based C-R task, request speech act

Received: 07/05/2013 Accepted: 01/13/2014

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1. Introduction

A cursory look at the literature on communicative competence indicates that pragmatic competence has been explored less than the other components of communicative language ability. This is apparent in both the research conducted and the materials developed (Salazar, 2007). Previous studies have shown that second language learners' pragmatic and grammatical competence do not develop hand in hand and that some language learners who have mastered grammar and word meanings lack the necessary pragmatic or functional information to convey their intended messages appropriately in communicative contexts (e.g. Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh & Fatahi, 2004; Keshavarz, Eslami-Rasekh & Ghahraman, 2006; Yu, 2008). This provides the most compelling evidence that instruction in pragmatics is necessary.

The role of instruction in pragmatics becomes even more significant in the foreign language setting compared with the second language environment, because classroom instruction is the major opportunity by which English as a foreign language (EFL) learners can acquire the target language. Contrary to English as a second language (ESL) learners, EFL learners have little exposure to the target language and have little chance to have interaction with native speakers out of the class context. As a result, learners in EFL contexts tend to regard grammatical knowledge as more useful and important than pragmatic knowledge and to rate grammatical errors more severely than pragmatic errors. However, learners in ESL settings usually consider pragmatic errors as more severe than grammatical errors (Niezgoda & Rover, 2001). Hence, instruction of the appropriate use of language in different contexts can redress the balance.

There is, now, a general consensus that the issue is not whether we should teach pragmatics (Ishihara, 2010; Martínez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2010; Takahashi, 2010). Rather, the issue centers on the question of how we should approach teaching appropriate use of language in the most effective way. Therefore, several lines of research have recently emerged that are exploring ways to integrate instruction on problematic pragmatic features within a communicative framework. The deductive/inductive consciousness-raising (C-R) approach to the teaching of pragmatic competence is one of these innovations.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Deductive and inductive consciousness-raising tasks

The C-R approach and activities to the instruction of formal language properties is compatible with current second language (L2) acquisition theories. As Ellis (2003) puts it, the C-R approach is in line with the concept

of education as a process of discovery through problem-solving tasks. C-R activities provide learners with information about how a certain formal language feature works and help them work out the rules for themselves. These activities function as an opportunity for learners to communicate using formal language features, and in this process they can discover how grammar of the target language works. Here, C-R tasks make language itself the content. Ellis (2002) contends that C-R tasks are designed to lead to explicit learning and knowledge which subsequently pave the way for learners to acquire implicit knowledge.

Ellis (2002) suggests that C-R contributes to the acquisition of implicit knowledge in two major ways. First, it primarily contributes to the processes of noticing and comparing and, therefore, paves the grounds for the integration of a new linguistic feature. However, it will not result in integration. Learners control this process, and when they are developmentally ready, the integration of the new feature will take place. Second, C-R activities are designed to cater to explicit knowledge. Thus, even if learners fail to integrate the new linguistic feature as implicit knowledge, they can form an alternative explicit representation which can be stored separately and subsequently accessed when learners are developmentally ready to handle it. Therefore, explicit knowledge serves as a facilitator for the subsequent acquisition of implicit knowledge. C-R, then, makes no promises about the immediate acquisition of the instructed language features. Delayed effect sounds more logical. Ellis (2003) states that C-R tasks have the following characteristics:

1. There is an attempt to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention.
2. The learners are provided with data that illustrate the targeted feature and they may also be provided with an explicit rule describing or explaining the feature.
3. The learners are expected to utilize intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature.
4. Learners may be optionally required to verbalize a rule describing the grammatical structure (p. 163).

C-R tasks can be either inductive or deductive. Both approaches offer useful and effective means for the instruction of formal linguistic features. In the inductive approach, learners are provided with examples and exercises and are invited to work out an explicit rule from those data on their own. In the case of the deductive approach, learners are presented with an explicit language rule or structure and, then, are asked to use that rule or structure to carry out some tasks or activities.

The effectiveness of C-R tasks in L2 grammar teaching has been investigated by some researchers. Fotos and Ellis (1991) compared two groups of college students in the Japanese EFL context. One group was presented with direct C-R instruction (teacher-fronted grammar explanations) and the other group received indirect C-R instruction (consciousness-raising tasks only). The results revealed that both groups made significant progress on a grammaticality judgment test. Fotos (1994) investigated the effects of direct C-R instruction with the indirect C-R instruction in the Japanese EFL context again. The results did not indicate any significant difference between the two groups.

A number of studies have investigated the effect of C-R tasks on the acquisition of request. In a study, Alcon Soler (2005) assessed the effects of explicit and implicit C-R tasks for teaching English request forms to 132 Spanish learners of English. The two instructional groups and a control group were exposed to examples of requests in the scripts taken from episodes of the TV series *Stargate*. The results of the study illustrated that both instructional groups performed better than the control group. However, the explicit C-R instruction gained better results over the implicit one. Takimoto (2006) compared the effects of C-R instruction (the C-R task only) and C-R instruction with feedback (the C-R task + reactive explicit feedback) on teaching English polite requestive forms. The results of data analysis revealed that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group. Alcon Soler's (2007) study once again was set up to compare the effectiveness of explicit and implicit C-R tasks on Spanish EFL learners' acquisition of request forms in English. The scripts taken from TV series *Stargate* were used as the treatment material. The results of the posttest showed that both instructional tasks were useful and both experimental groups outperformed the control group. However, no significant differences were found between the two instructional groups. In another study, Takimoto (2009) evaluated the effectiveness of three types of input-based tasks to teach English request forms to Japanese learners of English: comprehension-based tasks, structured-input tasks, and C-R tasks. The results indicated that the treatment groups performed significantly better than the control group on a discourse completion task, a listening test, and an acceptability judgment test. However, the effect of treatment did not sustain for comprehension-based instruction between the post-test and the follow-up test in the listening test. Ahmadi, Ghafar Samar and Yazdanimoghaddam (2011) investigated the effectiveness of the dictogloss as an output-based task and the C-R as an input-based task in teaching English requestive downgraders to Iranian EFL learners. The results demonstrated that participants in both tasks preformed significantly better in

the immediate and delayed posttests than in the pretest. Also, participants in both instructional groups maintained the positive effects of the treatment in the delayed posttest on the production and perception measures. Recently, Barekat and Mehri (2013) examined the effectiveness of C-R instruction and C-R with feedback instruction for teaching English requestive downgrades forms to EFL learners. The results of the data analysis showed that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group and that C-R instruction with feedback group performed better than the C-R group. Based on the results of these studies, it could be concluded that C-R tasks are useful means to integrate formal instruction within a communicative framework and these tasks are a useful way to promote noticing and proficiency gains.

2.2 L1-based consciousness-raising tasks

The use of learners' first language and the opportunities that it can provide for the instruction of the second or foreign language is a rich area that requires more attention. Some researchers have investigated the effectiveness of employing learners' L1 for the instruction of the target language. For instance, Levine (2003) targeted the use of learners' L1 in the classroom and concluded that using the L1 in the classroom may facilitate L2 acquisition. Scutt and Fueute (2008) examined the role of L1 in L2 learning. The results of their study suggested that the use of the L1 was beneficial for consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks, and reduced cognitive overload and led to sustained collaborative interaction. Concerning interlanguage pragmatic instruction, most of the interventional studies have focused on explicit/deductive and implicit/inductive approaches, so the use of learners' first language in pragmatics teaching seems to be missing. Eslami-Rasekh (2005) gives support to L1-based pragmatic instruction, contending that the whole point of using L1 and L2 pragmatic awareness-raising activities is to expose learners to the pragmatic aspects of both L1 and L2. In this way, learners can consciously compare and contrast the appropriate and accurate realization of pragmatic aspects in their own L1 and the target L2. Through this process, learners are provided with the required analytic tools to have their own generalizations concerning contextually appropriate language use. It is believed that some differences between native and target language speech acts are often ignored by learners and go unnoticed unless they are directly and consciously addressed (Schmidt, 1995). Through the L1-based approach, learners have the opportunity to move from known to unknown and to compare and contrast their own pragmatic production with that of native English speakers in order to notice the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic gap.

2.3 Request speech act

Requests are considered one of the most face-threatening acts since they express the speaker's intention to get the hearer to perform some action and put imposition on the hearer. Both the requester and requestee's faces are threatened in the performance of requests (Uso-Juan, 2010). As Uso-Juan put it, due to the face-threatening nature of requests and their high frequency in our daily interactions and the importance of this speech act for language learners, requests have received a great deal of attention in the field of interlanguage pragmatics by researchers and practitioners. An overview of the interventional studies on requests and their mitigating devices reveals that instruction is both necessary and effective in learning requests and their modifying devices (Martinez-Flor, 2008; Safont Jordą, 2003, 2004). Several studies have shown that high levels of attention-drawing activities are more helpful for pragmatic learning than exposure to positive evidence (Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004; Fukuya & Hill, 2006; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002). However, concerning the effect of different teaching methods on pragmatics, the results have been inconclusive. Some studies have indicated that explicit and deductive instruction is more effective than implicit and inductive teaching (e.g. Alcón, 2005; Takahashi, 2001). Some other researchers have found that implicit intervention is as effective as explicit intervention (e.g. Takimoto, 2006, 2007, 2008).

3. Purpose of the Study

Decoo (1996) elaborated on five modalities on the deduction-induction continuum. Actual deduction and conscious induction as guided discovery are the first two modalities, modalities A and B, in his continuum that are commonly used for instructional purposes. In actual deduction, as Decoo (1996) noted, the grammatical rules, patterns, or even metalinguistic information are explicitly presented at the beginning of the instruction and learning process and then learners set up to apply these rules when they use the language. In the second modality, conscious induction as guided discovery, the students first encounter various examples in different forms, and they are not presented with grammatical or other types of rules explicitly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language. The rationale behind this approach is that learners who manage to discover the rule on their own will profit from this. As Takimoto (2008) and De Graaff and Housen (2009) put it, few studies on interlanguage pragmatics have investigated the effectiveness of C-R tasks in line with Decoo's (1996) deduction-induction continuum. As a result, the following research questions were investigated in this study:

1. Do deductive C-R, inductive C-R, and L1-based C-R instructional tasks affect EFL learners' acquisition of the request speech act?
2. Which instructional task (deductive C-R, inductive C-R, or L1-based C-R) is more effective for EFL learners' acquisition of the request speech act?

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

As many as 140 participants from six intact classes were selected to participate in this study. They consisted of 67 male and 73 female undergraduate students majoring in English language and literature. The participants were mainly in their third or fourth semester of college-level English and their ages ranged from 19 to 28 years. They had received between 7 to 12 years of formal English-language classroom instruction in secondary school and different English language institutes. None of them had been to English-speaking countries. Furthermore, the majority of the participants declared that they occasionally or rarely spoke English with native speakers.

4.2 Instrument and treatment materials

A written Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used as the pretest and posttest to assess the participants' ability to produce appropriate request expressions for the target situations. The written DCT used in the pretest of this study contained 15 scenarios, 10 of which were the target request situations and the remaining were non-target situations. The request scenarios, taken from Takahashi (2001), Jalilifar (2009), and Taguchi (2006), varied according to social status and imposition. In the posttest, non-target situations were excluded and participants were just presented with the same 10 target request situations, but the order of the situations was altered.

As to treatment, deductive C-R, inductive C-R, and L1-based C-R pragmatic tasks were employed as treatment materials for seven sessions. Instructional materials contained activities about imperatives as the most direct forms of requests and interactions between higher status and lower status interlocutors, formal and polite requests to a higher-status hearer, high-imposition and low-imposition requests, the least direct category of request utterances or hints, and internal and external request modification devices. All the instructional materials were in line with the purpose of the research in that they were used to call the participants' attention to target forms and were an attempt to raise their consciousness of the concepts of social status and imposition in making requests.

4.3 Data collection procedure

Due to institutional constraints, it was not possible to assign students randomly to different groups, thus making it necessary to work with intact groups. Two intact classes were randomly labeled as deductive C-R group, two intact classes as inductive C-R group, and another two intact classes as L1-based awareness raising group. The three groups were homogeneous in terms of their production of the request speech act prior to the study. During the seven-week span of this study, the participants met once a week for 100 minutes to attend their university courses. It was planned that the real instruction would be conducted at the end of the participants' regular class so as not to affect their regular learning. About 30-40 minutes in every session was dedicated to the instructional treatment.

The pretest was administered in the second week of the semester. Before the administration of the pretest, the participants were given an outline of what would be done in classroom regarding the teaching of the target speech act. After the preparatory movement, the written DCT was administered to the participants. A brief instruction was given to them to make them familiar with this type of test task and the procedures for completing the DCT. After the written DCT, the instruction began by the second researcher of the present study and lasted seven weeks. Seven deductive C-R tasks centered on different aspects of making requests were designed and presented in the course of seven sessions. As Ellis (2003) put it, C-R tasks, contrary to other task types, are designed to cater primarily to explicit learning. Whereas other task types usually build around real-life contents such as pictures of objects, opinions about the characters you like, or stories, C-R tasks tend to make language itself the content of instruction. In all deductive tasks, learners were first provided with explicit metapragmatic information about making requests in English. Afterwards, they were presented with some appropriate and inappropriate requests illustrating the same metapragmatic information. Going through these appropriate and inappropriate requests made the target features salient for the learners and helped them notice the target forms. Then, the participants were asked to do some exercises on the presented information. Finally, by using the metapragmatic information, they were asked to make an appropriate request of their own. The request scenarios or situations used to design deductive C-R tasks were mainly borrowed from two other studies (Jalilifar, 2009; Schauer, 2009).

In the inductive C-R group, seven tasks targeting the same features presented in the deductive C-R task section were designed and taught in seven sessions. Contrary to the deductive C-R tasks which were designed to be performed individually, inductive C-R tasks were developed to be

performed in pairs. In the case of the inductive approach, the learners were not presented with any explicit language rule or structure. Rather, they were asked to work with a partner on different acceptable/unacceptable, appropriate/inappropriate, or polite/impolite sentences illustrated through various activities such as DCTs and dialogs. These activities intended to make the target features salient enough to be noticed by the participants. All the activities in each task concentrated on a specific feature of making a request. Then, learners were required to make up a rule to explain why some requests were acceptable and some unacceptable. Next, they were asked to do some exercises that focused on the target feature. Finally, considering the target features, they made an appropriate request of their own.

Participants in the L1-based C-R group were also required to work on seven tasks targeting the same features presented in the deductive and inductive C-R tasks. These tasks were designed to be performed in pairs. In all L1-based tasks, two or three scenarios, mainly adopted from Jalilifar (2009) and Schauer (2009) and translated into the participants' L1, were presented. Participants were supposed to read each situation with a partner and provide an appropriate answer (make a request) in L1. Then, they were asked to translate their L1 request into English. Afterwards, the same scenarios in English which had been answered by two native speakers of English were given to the learners. In this phase, learners compared and contrasted their own requests with those of the two native speakers. This comparison and contrast aimed to lead to the saliency of the target features. This phase was followed by the discussion stage where the instructor elaborated on some sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic problems of the learners' requests. In the end, the participants were asked to do some exercises related to the target feature.

The contents of materials for deductive, inductive, and L1-based C-R groups were mainly the same, and the three groups were taught by the same teacher. All the instruction was performed in English, but learners in the L1-based C-R group were required to write their responses in L1 so that upon subsequent translation back to English they could see the possible similarities and differences of the way the request speech act was realized both sociopragmatically and pragmalinguistically. Care was taken to remove the instructor from the process so that the students would have the opportunity to discover how the pragmatic rules worked on their own. Apart from some preliminary explanations, the instructor stayed in a corner and watched the whole process. Such tasks made the students less dependent on the instructor. However, whenever the participants faced any ambiguous point or raised questions regarding the linguistic means required to accomplish pragmatic ends or concerns about social status and request

imposition that could be useful for other students, the instructor called the whole class's attention to that point and elaborated on it. This elaboration was regularly practiced during the discussion phase with the L1-based C-R group. All the instructional materials through acceptable/unacceptable, appropriate/inappropriate, or polite/impolite sentences and other activities involved in the tasks were aimed to make the target forms salient and draw the participants' attention to the intended pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic features. However, the process of rule induction heuristically or rule confirmation deductively or even L1 use was intended to raise the learners' awareness of the target features. One week after the treatment, the participants in the three groups were presented with the same written DCT, but this time consisting of just 10 target situations.

4.4 Data analysis

Taguchi's (2006) rating scale of pragmatic competence was used by the researchers of the present study to rate the participants' performance on the pretest and posttest on a 6-point rating scale ranging from "no performance" (0) to "excellent" (5) in each situation. The scale evaluated the learners on the basis of appropriate and correct production of the speech act according to the specified situations. The descriptions that specified appropriate performance of the speech act according to situations and accurate use of linguistic means to accomplish pragmatic end were incorporated into all six rating descriptors. The reliability of the interraters was measured by using the Pearson correlation, and the result yielded an acceptable level of agreement for interrater reliability (r = .90). The reliability of the written DCT had already been confirmed by Takahashi (2001) and Jalilifar (2009). The final scores of the DCTs were the average scores of the two raters. Moreover, ANOVA and t-test were used to shed light on between-group and within-group differences.

5. Results

The analysis of the data resulted in the following findings. As Table 1 illustrates, the result of one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 137) = .157$, $p = .85$) indicated no significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups on the pretest of the DCT. Thus, it was concluded that the three groups were homogeneous in terms of their production of the request speech act prior to the study.

Table 1. One-Way ANOVA for the pretest DCT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.07	2	.04	.15	.85
Within Groups	34.56	137	.25		
Total	34.64	139			

Table 2 illustrates the effectiveness of the three instructional tasks on the request speech act. A look at Table 2 reveals that instruction was beneficial for all groups and their pragmatic production of the request speech act improved after treatment. As the table illustrates, the first group, the deductive C-R group, showed a higher mean on the posttest DCT (M = 4.32) than the pretest (M = 3.03). The second group, the inductive C-R group, also had a better performance on the posttest DCT (M = 3.70) than the pretest (M = 3.03). This trend is observed for the L1-based C-R group, which yielded a higher mean on the posttest DCT (M = 3.80) than the pretest (M = 2.98). However, the differential gain scores of the three groups show that the deductive group made the biggest gains from the pretest to the posttest (+1.29).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the three groups' performance on the DCT

	Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
DEDUCTIVE	PreDCT	3.03	46	.51	.07
	PostDCT	4.32	46	.53	.07
INDUCTIVE	PreDCT	3.03	47	.51	.07
	PostDCT	3.70	47	.65	.09
L1-BASED	PreDCT	2.98	47	.47	.07
	PostDCT	3.80	47	.57	.08

The result of the paired-samples t-test (Table 3) indicates significant differences between the two means in the deductive C-R group (t (45) 14.01, p = .001), the inductive C-R group (t (46) 12.66, p = .001), and the L1-based C-R group (t (46) 18.73, p = .001). After instruction, it came to light that the participants' pragmatic production of the request speech act considerably improved in all groups in comparison with the pretest scores.

Table 3. The three groups' paired samples t-tests for DCT

Group			Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower	Upper			
DEDUCTIVE	Pair 1	PreDCT - PostDCT	1.28	.62	.09	1.10	1.47	14.01	45	.00
INDUCTIVE	Pair 1	PreDCT - PostDCT	.67	.36	.05	.56	.78	12.66	46	.00
L1-BASED	Pair 1	PreDCT - PostDCT	.81	.30	.04	.73	.90	18.73	46	.00

To address the second research question, which was focused on the comparison of the effectiveness of the three instructional tasks on EFL learners' acquisition of the request speech act, the three groups' performance on the pretest DCT was analyzed. As Table 1 demonstrated, the three groups were homogeneous prior to the instruction. The next step was the investigation of the between-group differences on the posttest DCT. As it was presented in Table 2, the deductive C-R (M = 4.32) and L1-based C-R (M = 3.80) groups showed higher means than the inductive C-R group (M = 3.70). A one-way ANOVA (Table 4) was run to see whether there were any significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups. The results of the one-way ANOVA (F (2, 137) = 14.60, p = .001) indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups on the posttest DCT.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA for the posttest DCT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.23	2	5.11	14.60	.00
Within Groups	48.00	137	.35		
Total	58.23	139			

As it was not exactly clear where the differences lie, comparisons were made between the three groups on a post hoc basis. The post-hoc Scheffe's tests had to be run to compare the groups two by two. Based on the results displayed in Table 5, it came to light that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the deductive C-R (M = 4.32) and inductive C-R (M = 3.70) groups on the posttest DCT (MD = .612, p = .001). The post-hoc test results also showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the deductive C-R (M = 4.32) and L1-based C-R (M = 3.80) groups on the posttest DCT (MD = .522, p = .001). However, the results

revealed no significant difference between the mean scores of the L1-based C-R (M = 3.80) and inductive C-R (M = 3.70) groups on the posttest DCT (MD = .096, p = .736). Therefore, results demonstrate that the deductive C-R group outperformed the inductive C-R and the L1-based C-R groups and that the differences between the deductive C-R group and the other groups were significant. Moreover, although the L1-based C-R group manifested better performance than the inductive C-R group on the posttest DCT, the difference between these two groups was not significant.

Table 5. Post-Hoc scheffe test for the posttest DCT

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
DEDUCTIVE	INDUCTIVE	.61*	.12	.00	.31	.92
	L1-BASED	.52*	.12	.00	.22	.83
INDUCTIVE	DEDUCTIVE	-.61*	.12	.00	-.92	-.31
	L1-BASED	-.09	.12	.73	-.40	.21
L1-BASED	DEDUCTIVE	-.52*	.12	.00	-.83	-.22
	INDUCTIVE	.096	.12	.73	-.21	.40

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

6. Discussion

This study was designed to probe the impact of various instructional tasks on EFL learners' acquisition of the request speech act. C-R instructional tasks draw learners' attention to features of the target language and advocate a task-based approach that emphasizes discovery learning. It has been argued that C-R tasks contribute indirectly to second language acquisition by enabling learners to develop explicit knowledge of second language rules, which will later facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2002).

In line with the facilitative role of pedagogical intervention in the learning of pragmatic knowledge, the positive effect of explicit instruction of sociopragmatic aspects, as well as the merits of implicit instruction of pragmalinguistic features (Takahashi, 2010), it might be argued that pragmatic competence cannot be acquired without proper instruction. Concerning the tasks employed in this study, the results revealed that manipulating input by using instructional C-R tasks is effective in promoting learners' pragmatic proficiency. This finding confirms the previous research conducted on learners' pragmatic development employing C-R instructional tasks (Takimoto, 2006, 2009).The results of this study revealed that instruction was beneficial for all groups and the participants' production of the request speech act considerably improved after instruction. Such results

can be justified by Schmidt's (1995) noticing hypothesis. As Alcon Soler and Martinez-Flor (2008) note, many experimental studies on pragmatic instruction take the noticing hypothesis as a theoretical framework. Schmidt (1995) claims that noticing the L2 features of input is necessary for language development. He contends that in order for input to become intake and thus be available for further processing, it has to be noticed or detected under awareness conditions. The whole point of the C-R tasks employed in the present study was to make the target features salient enough to be noticed by the participants. Therefore, the participants' progress in request production could be justified by Schmidt's noticing hypothesis. As Ellis (2003) points out, making the target features salient enough to be noticed by the participants and raising their awareness and consciousness are two inherent characteristics of C-R tasks. Therefore, through C-R tasks, the target forms were made salient and the participants' awareness was raised, leading to better pragmatic production.

Many researchers (e.g. Gass & Selinker, 2008) believe that being simply exposed to input is not sufficient for noticing some linguistic features. These researchers advocate input enhancement and manipulation and argue that regardless of the amount of exposure to the input, some linguistic features go unnoticed in the input unless they are attended formally and consciously. The results of the present study confirm these researchers' claim and provide further support for this contention that input manipulation (in the case of this study, C-R tasks) paves the way for the saliency and noticing, and subsequently acquisition, of the target features. By focusing the learners' attention on the relevant features of the input, they were guided to notice the information they needed in order to develop their pragmatic competence in English request production. These findings are in line with previous research on the positive effects of instruction on second and foreign language learning in general, and the benefits of instruction on the development of learners' pragmatic competence in requests in particular (Doughty, 2003; Norris & Ortega, 2000).

The comparison of the three tasks demonstrated that they had different effects on the development of the participants' pragmatic proficiency. According to Ellis (2003), C-R tasks could be viewed on a continuum ranging from the intensive promotion of conscious awareness through the presentation of pedagogical rules to simply exposing the learner to special grammatical feature. The intended purpose of employing C-R tasks was to cater primarily to explicit learning. In other words, such tasks were intended to develop awareness at the level of understanding (Ellis, 2003). All of the three instructional C-R tasks used in this study can be assumed to have provided the participants with some explicit knowledge, but the instructional

tasks differed in how this knowledge was presented. In the case of deductive C-R tasks, participants were provided with explicit metapragmatic information about making requests, so they did not have to discover the rules for themselves. In the other two instructional tasks, participants had to discover the rules for themselves.

As the results on the written DCT indicated, the deductive C-R group outperformed the other groups after receiving instructions. It comes as no surprise that the positive effects of the explicit instruction are consistent with earlier findings (Alcon Soler, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Uso-Juan, 2010). The results also shed light on the efficacy of the L1-based C-R instructional tasks. These tasks were more effective than inductive C-R tasks; however, the observed difference was not statistically significant.

Any answers to the relative effectiveness of deductive C-R instructional tasks must be speculative as no information about the psycholinguistic processing involved in either the treatments or the test is available. However, the greater effectiveness of deductive C-R instructional tasks in the pragmatic improvement can be justified by Alcon Soler and Guzman's (2010) triple concepts that underlie pedagogical intervention. These are the concepts of intention, attention and awareness. Intention deals with the aim of the instruction. The dimension of attention includes the detection of pragmalinguistic, sociolinguistic, and linguistic features in the course of instruction. This dimension has got to do with drawing learners' attention to target feature, which leads to the noticing of that target form. Awareness refers to participants' explanations of their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, which indicates that explicit learning is taking place.

In the deductive C-R approach, participants were provided with explicit metapragmatic information, whereas in the inductive C-R treatment, they had to discover the underlying rules themselves. It appears that the explicit metapragmatic information presented to the participants in the deductive C-R group was more adequate for the learners to notice the salient features of the target knowledge. The lower scores of the inductive C-R group may also indicate that the pragmalinguistic structures were not salient enough to be perceived by the participants. In other words, as pointed out by Takahashi (2005), higher levels of awareness correlate with higher levels of intake of target language forms. Therefore, it seems that the participants in the deductive C-R group manifested more awareness, in Alcon Soler and Guzman's (2010) term, compared with their counterparts in the other groups.

The L1-based C-R approach proved to be potentially an appropriate option for awareness raising. Translation of the requests in the present study demanded focus on sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features of both languages. When the participants felt they lacked the knowledge or their

knowledge was imperfect, they turned to their peers or the instructor. In other words, they had the chance to discuss the pragmatic problems with their peers and the instructor. This discussion phase led to a deeper understanding of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of request. Therefore, better performance of the participants in the L1-based C-R group in comparison with their counterparts in the inductive C-R group can be attributed to the learners' reflection on the forms discussed collaboratively in the discussion phase.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This research was set up to further probe whether instruction could be facilitative for the L2 pragmatic development, and if so, whether the type of instruction (deductive C-R, inductive C-R, and L1-based C-R) given in a foreign language context significantly affects learners' abilities to produce the request speech act in English. The results of this study indicated that instruction enhances L2 pragmatic development and that explicit/deductive instruction of pragmatic knowledge yields more beneficial cognitive effect than implicit/inductive instruction.

The use of learners' first language and the opportunities that it can provide for the instruction of the pragmatic features of language was another concern of this investigation. The results indicated that the learners were generally receptive to L1-based instructional tasks and that these tasks were more effective than inductive C-R tasks. The general reception of the L1-based instructional C-R tasks by the participants of this study implies that we can add one more instructional procedure to our toolbox and can consider how this procedure would affect learners' pragmatic performance in the EFL setting. Through this approach, learners had the opportunity to move from known to unknown and compare and contrast their own pragmatic production to that of native English speakers and notice the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic gap. On the whole, we can conclude that this new instructional approach has been successful with the EFL learners in this study.

In light of the results of this study, some preliminary pedagogical implications can be suggested. One significant implication of the findings is that, learners especially in EFL context should be made aware of the rules and conventions of the language. Like many of the interventional studies in pragmatics teaching, the results of this study also suggest a general trend in support of explicit/deductive instruction. In our opinion, pragmatic competence, especially in EFL context, should be presented in more teachable and explicit terms with explicit metapragmatic information and C-R activities. That is to say, teachers should provide learners with

opportunities to develop their awareness of appropriate language use, and then propose structural practice to transform pragmatic awareness into pragmatic performance.

The employment of the L1-based instructional task, as a less explored approach to pragmatic instruction, in this study proved beneficial. It seems advisable, on the basis of the findings of this study, to consider the use of this approach in the instruction of the speech acts. Concerning L1-based instructional task, language teachers can rely upon the learners' native language as the starting point for their instruction. The use of what is familiar to the learners is supported both pedagogically and psychologically. Moreover, materials developers and syllabus designers can enrich ELT materials by including these tasks in their lesson plans.

The last pedagogical implication concerns the use of appropriate instructional tasks. Tasks hold a central position in current second language acquisition research and pedagogy (Ellis, 2003). Instructional tasks provide a useful opportunity for processing both the form and meaning of target features. Thus, teachers, material developers, and researchers can welcome this opportunity to design tasks that can help learners process both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic resources in depth.

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