> **Some studies have provided empirical evidence for the claim that pragmatic features can be taught explicitly or implicitly together with input enhancement activities**

In light of these findings, some pedagogical implications may be proposed. First, the role of instruction on the development of pragmatic competence is a beneficial aspect to be implemented in the FL classroom. This issue is especially relevant in FL contexts like Iran where the lack of naturally occurring input on pragmatic issues and limited class time available for teaching the target language make the task of pragmatic language learning especially difficult. The findings may be generalizable to other EFL contexts with similar situations. A second pedagogical implication is related to the use of appropriate tasks. Because it has been argued that learning is effective when the tasks employed in the class provide learners with the opportunity for processing both the form and meaning of target features. Thus, teachers, material writers, and researchers should attempt to design tasks that can help learners process both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources in depth.

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Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group. Since there were no significant differences among the three treatment groups, it could be argued that four 30-minute treatments over a two-week period were not sufficient to reveal the effectiveness of different treatment conditions. However, other factors need to be considered for the effectiveness of these input-based approaches. One possibility is that the application of these two approaches by making input pragmatically salient through the input-based activities appeared to help learners notice the target forms that were the object of instruction.
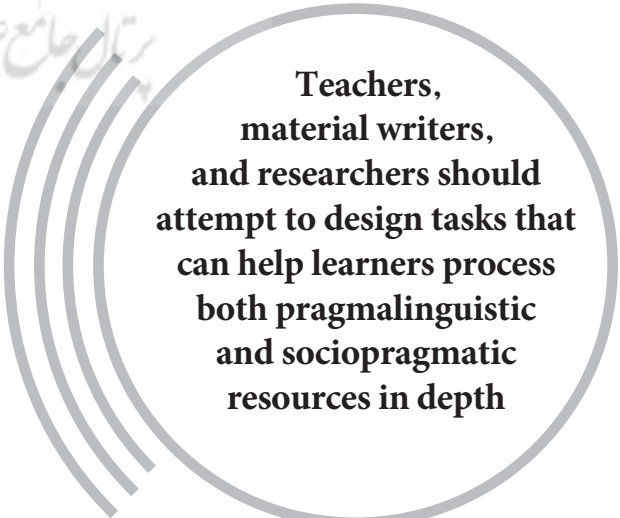
Moreover, learners in the explicit instruction received teacher's explicit information but in the implicit condition they did not receive such information. Consequently, it can be stated that the implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks involved greater depth of processing, resulting in knowledge that was firmly embedded. Given that there is no significant difference between the two groups, it seems that explicit information may not be necessary in the consciousness-raising tasks.

As for the input-based tasks employed in this study, i.e. consciousness-raising tasks, the results indicate that these tasks are effective in promoting learners' pragmatic proficiency. Thus, the findings of the present investigation seem to confirm the previous research that has focused on manipulating input by employing consciousness-raising tasks (Takimoto, 2006, 2008, 2009).

Conclusion and Implications

The present study examined the relative effects of a consciousness-raising task with and without explicit instruction on teaching syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders. The findings indicate that consciousness-raising tasks function effectively when they provide learners with an emphasis on form and meaning. In this sense, it can be stated that the current study contributed to previous research on the positive effect of instruction on second and foreign language learning (Doughty, 2003) and, more specifically, it has shown the benefits of instruction on the development of learners' pragmatic competence in requests. Moreover, the findings of this study could contribute to the field of language teaching in general and pragmatic teaching in particular. The findings would be of great help for language curriculum development, material writers, textbook designers and higher education centers.

> **Teachers, material writers, and researchers should attempt to design tasks that can help learners process both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources in depth**

by calculating the correlation of the two raters' scores. Correlation coefficients for the DCT on the pre-test and post-test were .91 and .97 respectively, which were statistically significant ($\rho < .05$). With regard to internal consistency, the KR-21 reliability estimates for the tests ranged from .92 for the DCT and .91 for the MCT.

Validity

To promote content validity, the present study matched test items to the theoretical framework that outlined the degree of the three social context variables: ranking of imposition, power, and, distance.

Results from the DCT and MCT

The results of a one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences among the three groups for the pre-test scores for both DCT, F (2, 21) = .011 and MCT, F (2, 21) = .88 ($\rho < .05$).

To determine whether there were any statistically significant differences in test score means, one-way ANOVA was performed on the post-test scores. The results of a one-way ANOVA of the raw scores in the DCT and MCT revealed statistically significant differences among the three groups for the post test scores, F (2, 21) = 47.39 for the DCT and F (2, 21) = 22.45 for MCT ($\rho < .05$).

In order to see where the differences lie, post hoc Scheffé test were conducted. The results of Scheffé tests from both DCT and MCT revealed the following contrasts: The two treatment groups (EC and IC) performed significantly better than the control group; and there were no significant differences among the EC and IC.

Moreover, in order to compare the performance of each group on the pre-test and post-test separately, matched t-tests were conducted. Results of the matched t-tests from both the DCT and MCT revealed that the employed instructional approaches promoted learners' pragmatic proficiency in the area of syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders in English request forms.

Figures1 and 2 illustrate two important characteristics of the discourse completion test and multiple-choice test results: (1) there were no statistically significant differences among the three groups on the pre-test scores; (2) the two treatment groups made gains from the pre-test to the post-test.

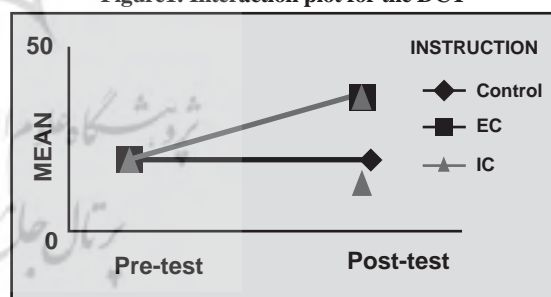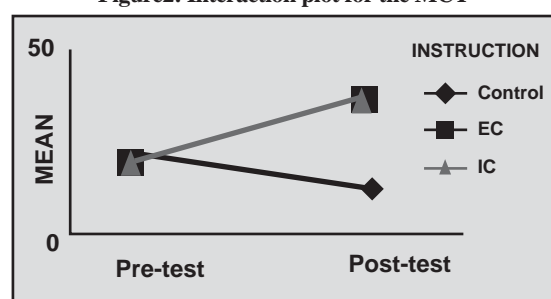Figure1: Interaction plot for the DCT

Figure2: Interaction plot for the MCT

in both dialogues and to list the ways in which one character tried to be more polite than the other character when making requests. In the last activity, metapragmatic discussion learners discussed the features of the target structures with each other.

Implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks

The treatment for implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks was the same as for explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks, but without the teacher–fronted explicit instruction.
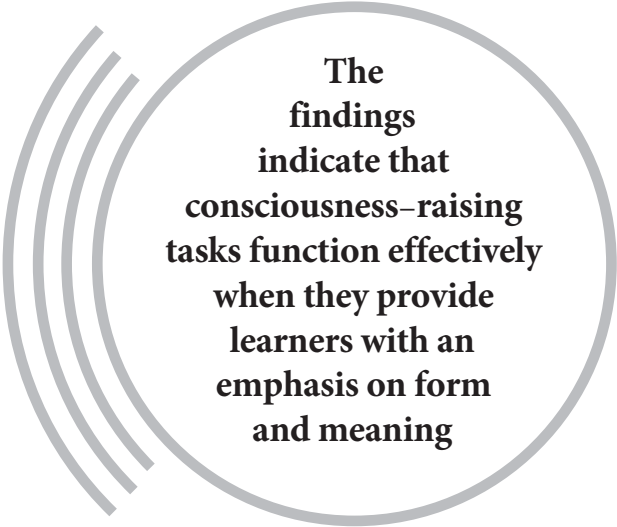
Control Group

In this group, learners received no particular instruction and they were not exposed to the target structures at all. Rather, they were engaged in reading comprehension exercises.

Testing instruments and procedures

This study employed a pre-test and post-test design. The pre-test was administered four days prior to the instructional treatment and the post-test one week after the treatment. Each test consisted of one input-based test, a multiple-choice test (MCT) and one output-based test, a discourse completion test (DCT). Situations in the two testing instruments comprised the speech act request.

The DCT required the participants to read short descriptions of eight situations in English and to write what they would say in each situation in English. The

> The findings indicate that consciousness–raising tasks function effectively when they provide learners with an emphasis on form and meaning

participants had a Persian translation they could consult if they wished. There was no time limit for completing the DCT. Most participants, however, spent 40-60 minutes completing it. Two nonnative speakers of English who trained for about half an hour rated the appropriateness of the request forms using a 5-point scale (One of them had lived in America for about 15 years and the other rater had lived in England for about 20 years.). An answer that reflected mastery of the targeted downgraders in the participants' requests received 5 points.

The MCT consisted of short descriptions of eight situations written in English and required the participants to read the situations and select one of the 3 proposed answers. The participants had a Persian translation they could consult if they wished. There was no time limit for completing the multiple-choice test. Most participants, however, spent 20-30 minutes completing it. One nonnative speaker who had lived for about 20 years in England rated this test. Each correct answer received 5 points.

Reliability

Interrater reliability was estimated

What are the effects of (a) explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks, and (b) implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks on the development of pragmatic proficiency among Iranian EFL learners?

Methodology

Twenty four Persian learners of English with the age mean of 19 were selected to participate in this study. The institution placement test indicated that all participants were intermediate learners of English. They were assigned to one of the three groups consisting of the two treatment groups, explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks (EC), and implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks (IC) and the control group (n=8 for all three groups). This study focused on teaching two syntactic downgraders, aspect and tense, and two lexical/phrasal downgraders, downtoners and subjectivizers, in English request forms. The three groups of participants, the EC, IC, and control groups, took part in three types of English language classes. Each teaching session for the two treatment groups and the control group lasted 30 minutes. The sessions occurred biweekly for two weeks. The first treatment session highlighted lexical/phrasal downgraders in English requests, and the second treatment session focused on syntactic downgraders. The third and fourth treatment sessions were reviews of the first and second treatments.

Treatment Groups
Explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks

The treatment for explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks consisted of two parts: (a) teacher–fronted explanation of the target downgraders and (b) consciousness-raising tasks comprising four activities highlighting the target downgraders in English: pragmalinguistic–focused activities, sociopragmatic–focused activities, pragmalinguistic–sociopragmatic connection activities, and metapragmatic discussion.

Learners received handouts with a brief summary of the target downgraders and examples of the target structures in English. In the first part, explicit teacher–fronted instruction, the teacher read the summary and examples aloud in English and explained the summary and the examples in Persian. In the second part of instruction, learners received handouts with some sets of English dialogues. They read each situation and the dialogue. In the first activity, pragmalinguistic–focused activities, learners were asked to copy and compare the underlined request forms in two dialogues while looking for the differences between the request forms. In the second activity, sociopragmatic–focused activities, learners answered two questions regarding the relationship between the two characters and the difficulty of the requests. In the third activity, pragmalinguistic–sociopragmatic connection activities, learners were asked to rate the level of politeness of the requests

the absolutely explicit and the absolutely implicit extremes. What identifies an instruction as explicit or implicit is the extent to which the target of the instruction is made overt to the learners.

Interventional studies of L2 pragmatics

Research conducted in second and foreign language contexts suggests that instruction is both necessary and effective (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). However, House (1996) argues that when such instruction is explicit, it appears to be more beneficial.

One of the studies that demonstrated the advantage of explicit instruction over implicit one was Takahashi's (2001) study, in which the effect of four input enhancement conditions, explicit teaching, form–comparison, form–search, and meaning-focused, on Japanese EFL learners' development of request strategies was examined. The results of the study indicated that learners in the explicit group outperformed all other groups in the use of the target forms.

Alcón's (2005) study was another investigation that lent support to the claim of the superior effect of explicit over implicit instruction. Learners were assigned to three groups, explicit, implicit and control group. The results of the study demonstrated that learners' awareness of requests benefited from both explicit and implicit instruction. However, the explicit group showed an advantage over the implicit group.

Despite the general trend in support of explicit instruction, some studies (Fukuya & Clark, 2001; Martinez-Flor, 2004) presented inconclusive results. In the study conducted by Martinez–Flor (2004), for example, a combination of implicit techniques, were employed to analyze the effect of explicit and implicit teaching on the speech act of suggestion. Findings from this study reveal no significant differences in the pragmatic ability of learners from both the implicit and explicit treatment groups.

Among the conducted studies on pragmatic teaching, some studies have provided empirical evidence for the claim that pragmatic features can be taught explicitly or implicitly together with input enhancement activities. The adaptability of these input–based approaches, to the teaching of L2 pragmatics is examined in some studies (Takimoto, 2006, 2008, 2009).

In the study conducted by Takimoto (2006), for example, the effect of explicit feedback and form–meaning processing on the development of pragmatic proficiency in consciousness-raising tasks was investigated. The students were assigned to three groups: consciousness-raising instruction, consciousness-raising instruction with feedback, and control group. The results revealed that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group.

The present study

The present study has attempted to address the following research question:

In Iran, as many other foreign language (FL) contexts, limited opportunities for developing L2 pragmatic competence are offered in language classrooms

is necessary for second language (L2) learning. Bardovi-Harlig (2001) argued that learners who receive no particular instruction in L2 pragmatics differ from native speakers in their pragmatic production and comprehension. Furthermore, Kasper & Rose (2002) pointed out that pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic rules are not salient enough to guarantee that learners will notice them without pragmatic instruction. Pragmatic learning is particularly difficult for those studying in English as a foreign language (EFL) context. The reason is that, in EFL classrooms, the range of speech acts is narrow and interaction patterns restrict pragmatic input. In Iran, as many other foreign language (FL) contexts, limited opportunities for developing L2 pragmatic competence are offered in language classrooms.

Consciousness-raising tasks

According to Ellis (2003, p: 163), the consciousness-raising (C-R) approach is one type of input-based instruction that consists of the following features:

1. There is an attempt to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention.

2. The learners are provided with data that illustrate the target feature and they may also be provided with an explicit rule describing or explaining the feature.

3. The learners are expected to utilize intellectual efforts to understand the target feature.

4. Learners may be optionally required to verbalize a rule describing the grammatical structure.

Moreover, Ellis states that a C-R task consists of: (1) data containing exemplars of the target feature and (2) instructions requiring the learners to operate on the data in some way. It has also been argued that C-R tasks appear to be an effective means of achieving a focus on form while at the same time providing opportunities to communicate. They have been shown to be effective in developing explicit knowledge and to promote subsequent noticing of the target features (Ellis, 2003, p: 166).

Explicit and implicit learning

Ellis (2003, p: 105) refers to implicit knowledge as "that knowledge of language that a speaker manifests in performance but has no awareness of" and explicit knowledge as "knowledge about language that speakers are aware of and, if asked, can verbalize".

In this sense, explicit and implicit instruction, are two ways of drawing learners' attention to target features during tasks (Takimoto, 2006). According to Jeon and Kaya (2006, cited in Takimoto, 2009), instruction is as a continuum between

Abstract

This paper is based on a study designed to investigate the efficacy of instruction at the pragmatic level. Specifically, the main purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which the two types of input-based approaches including explicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks and implicit instruction with consciousness-raising tasks affected learners' competence to use request strategies. In this study, 24 native speakers of Persian were assigned to 1 of 3 groups, which consisted of two treatment groups and one control group. The purpose was to teach the learners how to use lexical/phrasal and syntactic downgraders in English request forms. The treatment group performance was compared with the control group performance on the pre-tests and post-tests. The results of the study revealed that the two treatment groups performed significantly better than the control group. This empirical study has provided insights into interlanguage pragmatic pedagogy.

Key Words: input-based instruction, consciousness-raising tasks, interlanguage pragmatics, explicit instruction, implicit instruction

Introduction

Learning foreign languages is regarded nowadays as an essential component in the curricula at different educational levels. In particular, learning the English language has become necessary given its widespread use throughout the world (House & Kasper, 2000). Considering the worldwide importance of the use of English as a means of international communicationand instruction it seems a necessity medium throughout the world. However, in order to make learners become communicatively competent in the English language, there is a need for a shift from previous theoretical frameworks, which considered language as a formal system based on grammatical rules, towards a more communicative perspective. This change will be possible, due to the introduction of pragmatics as a specific area of study within linguistics that favors a focus on interactional and contextual factors of the target language (TL). In this respect, David Crystal (1985, cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001, P: 2) considers pragmatics as: "The study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication."

In recent years, pragmatics has become a very important branch of linguistics, as the inadequacies of the previous purely formalist and abstract approaches to the study of language have became more evident. In this respect, the specific area of research known as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has aroused the interest of a number of researchers over the last three decades.

Recent research on interlanguage pragmatics has revealed that providing learners with instruction in pragmatics
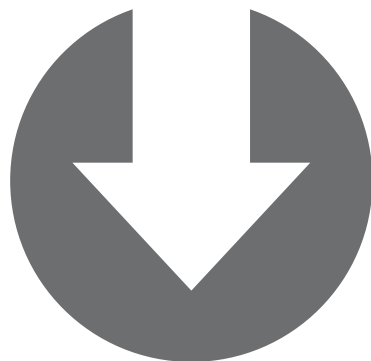
The Effects of Instruction on the Development of Pragmatic Proficiency in Consciousness-raising Tasks

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چکیده

تحقیقات اخیر در حوزهٔ «منظورشناسی بین زبانی»، ضرورت آموزش منظورشناسی را به زبان آموز آشکار کرده است. در این راستا، کاسپر و رز (۲۰۰۲) خاطرنشان کرده‌اند که صورت‌های زبانی ـ منظورشناختی و قوانین منظورشناسی ـ اجتماعی، از برجستگی لازم برای تضمین این که زبان آموزان بدون دریافت آموزش به آن‌ها توجه کنند، برخوردار نیستند. آگاهی در این دو حوزه، مخصوصاً برای افرادی که مشغول مطالعه در محیطی هستند که در آن‌جا از زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی استفاده می‌شود، بسیار دشوار است.

مقالهٔ حاضر براساس مطالعه‌ای نگارش یافته است که به منظور بررسی تأثیر آموزش در سطح منظورشناسی طراحی و اجرا شد. مخصوصاً، هدف اصلی این مطالعه بررسی میزان تأثیر دو روش مبتنی بر درونداد، یعنی آموزش صریح همراه با فعالیتهای افزایش آگاهی و آموزش تلویحی همراه با فعالیتهای افزایش آگاهی بر توانش زبان آموزان در استفاده از کنش گفتاری تقاضا بوده است. در مطالعهٔ حاضر، ۲۴ زبان آموز فارسی زبان به یکی از این سه گروه، دو گروه رفتاری و یک گروه کنترل تقسیم شدند. هدف، آموزش نحوهٔ استفاده از تنزل‌دهنده‌های نحوی و واژگانی در کنش گفتاری تقاضا در زبان انگلیسی بود. عملکرد گروه رفتاری با عملکرد گروه کنترل در پیش آزمون و پس آزمون مورد مقایسه قرار گرفت. نتایج مطالعه حاکی از آن بود که دو گروه رفتاری نسبت به گروه کنترل به‌طور معنی‌داری عملکرد بهتری داشتند. این مطالعهٔ تجربی نکاتی را در زمینهٔ آموزش منظورشناسی بین زبانی ارائه می‌کند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: آموزش مبتنی بر درونداد، فعالیتهای افزایش آگاهی، منظورشناسی بین زبانی، آموزش صریح، آموزش تلویحی