ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Relationship between Explicit Learning and Consciousness-Raising Tasks within a Communicative Language Context

Deise Carldart Roscioli[1], Pâmela F. P. Toassi[1], Priscila Fabiane Farias[1], Raquel Carolina Souza Ferraz D'Ely[1]

[1] Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC.

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating whether consciousness-raising tasks, used in a communicative learning environment of EFL, can be considered a valid instrument for eliciting explicit learning in that context. Five participants enrolled in the second level of a language course answered a cycle of tasks that intended to teach the use of comparatives. The materials used in this study consisted of a pre-task, consciousness-raising tasks, an untimed grammaticality judgment test, and a self-report questionnaire. Results showed that the instruments used in this research were of a valid nature for eliciting explicit learning. The findings also provide empirical support regarding the importance of consciousness-raising tasks to assist students' second language learning in a communicative classroom environment. Despite being a small scale research, this study may contribute to a greater understanding of the SLA processes within a communicative context and highlight the importance of explicit knowledge learning within a meaning focused approach.

KEYWORDS: Consciousness-raising tasks; Explicit Learning; Task-Based Approach.

Corresponding Author:
RAQUEL CAROLINA SOUZA FERRAZ D'ELY
<raqueldely@gmail.com>

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Anderson (2000), when learning a second language, adults differ from children in one fundamental characteristic – they possess an ability to acquire complex cognitive skills by means of domain-independent problem-solving operations. DeKeyser (2008, p. 335) explains that because of this difference "the instructional approach should be different depending on age". The author points out that "full-scale immersion is necessary for children to capitalize on their implicit learning skills, and formal rule teaching is necessary for adolescents and adults to draw on their explicit learning skills". Therefore, while children may learn better within a more implicit oriented teaching, adults may profit from an approach that tackles explicit teaching among other types of instruction.

Hulstijn (2008, p. 132) explains that explicit and implicit instruction refers to "when learners do or do not receive information concerning rules underlying the input, respectively". Xavier (2001, p. 21-22) points out that although most proponents of Communicative Language Teaching advocate for a more incidental and implicit teaching, there is still room for explicit instruction given that, according to the author, "explicit knowledge may contribute indirectly to acquisition since it facilitates recognition, understanding and language production" . Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2002) state that there has been much discussion on how to teach 'form' and, hence, various pedagogical options are available for the teacher. Xavier (2001, p. 23) explains that "grammar has been traditionally taught through mechanical exercises such as transformation, restoration, imitation, substitution, expansion and completion exercises". The author emphasizes that as an opposition to the traditional grammatical exercises, teachers who choose to follow a more communicative oriented type of instruction, such as the Task-Based instruction, can make use of what she calls 'grammar tasks', which are tasks that integrate grammar with communication. If one considers a classroom in which a more communicative approach is employed, then, one way to induce explicit learning and still, to preserve the primary focus on meaning within the approach being used, would be through the use of form-focused tasks. According to Long (1991, apud D'Ely, 2011)

> focus on form refers to how attentional resources are allocated, and involves briefly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements (words, collocations, grammatical structures, pragmatic patterns, and so on), in context, as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication, the temporary shifts in focal attention being triggered by students' comprehension or production problems.

Nunan (2004) acknowledges that one way to focus on form is through the use of focused tasks which are tasks that require that a particular structure is used so that the task can be completed. The author highlights that a possible variation of focused tasks is the use of consciousness raising tasks. Nunan (2004, p. 98) points out that consciousness raising tasks are "designed to draw learner's attention to a particular linguistic feature through a range of inductive and deductive procedures". According to Ellis (2003), this

specific type of task has two main characteristics that differentiate it from other types of focused tasks: (1) it is designed to cater primarily to explicit learning, and (2) it makes language itself the content. It can be concluded, therefore, that a possible way to achieve explicit knowledge and still tackle primarily a focus on meaning approach in class would be through the use of a consciousness-raising task. However, few studies have brought empirical evidence to validate this statement.

Taking the ideas aforementioned into consideration, this study has as its main objective to investigate whether a consciousness-raising task used in a language learning environment can be considered a valid instrument for eliciting explicit learning in that context.

2   REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section lays the theoretical ground work of the present study, the objective of which is to investigate whether a consciousness-raising task used in a communicative language learning environment can be considered a valid instrument for eliciting explicit learning in that context. Therefore, this section is divided according to this study's main concepts as follows: (1) Consciousness-raising tasks and (2) Explicit Second Language Learning. Moreover, some relevant studies in the area are discussed.

2.1   Consciousness – Raising Tasks

The Communicative Approach (CA) has as its main tenet the development of the communicative competence, that is, the development of (1) strategic competence, that refers to how learners deal with language gaps; (2) linguistic competence, that involves the knowledge of how to use grammar to communicate; (3) sociolinguistic competence, that tackles the appropriateness of language use within contexts; and (4) discourse competence, that involves being able to express oneself by using different types of discourse (Mackey, 2006). One way to develop communicative competence within second language learning and teaching can be through the use of the Task-Based Approach, which proposes to achieve this objective by the use of tasks.

Skehan (2003) explains that the term 'task' arouse in the 80s, as an alternative for the term 'communicative activities'. The author points out that different definitions have been given to the construct since then. One of these definitions is given by Ellis (2003) who explains that a task is: a workplan that involves primary focus on pragmatic meaning and real-world processes of language use, focuses on one or more of the four language skills, engages learners in cognitive processes and has a defined communicative outcome.

Although Ellis' (2003) definition of a task will permeate the present study, another important aspect needs to be considered when discussing second language acquisition: the need for a focus on form. Ellis *et al.* (2002, p. 419) point out that "the teaching of linguistic forms, especially grammar, continues to occupy a major place in language pedagogy". Xavier (2001) highlights that the answer to the question of when should grammar be brought to light in class depends on the teacher's learning goals. The author explains that "if

he (the teacher) aims at language development and improvement, then, he may propose grammar activities after language problems are diagnosed in a task or test performance" (Xavier, 2001, p. 22).

One way to tackle the issue of 'form' in Second Language Classes is through the use of consciousness-raising tasks. Xavier (2001, p. 25) explains that "this type of task provides learners with a grammar problem to be solved interactively". Ellis (2002, p. 168) highlights the main characteristics of a consciousness-raising task:

> 1. there is an attempt to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention; 2. the learners are provided with data which illustrate the targeted feature and they may also be supplied with an explicit rule describing or explaining the feature; 3. the learners are expected to utilize intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature; 4. misunderstanding or incomplete understanding of the grammatical structure by the learners leads to clarification in the form of further data and description or explanation; 5. learners may be required (although this is not obligatory) to articulate the rule describing the grammatical structure.

Ellis (2002) explains that the purpose of this type of task is to develop explicit knowledge of grammar. However, it is important to emphasize that consciousness-raising tasks should be used together with other types of unfocused tasks[1] as a way to foster communicative learning. According to Ellis *et al.* (2002, p. 171) "consciousness-raising facilitates the acquisition of the grammatical knowledge needed for communication". The author points out that this type of task contributes indirectly to the development of implicit knowledge because it involves three processes: (1) noticing, when the learner has the opportunity to become conscious about the presence of a linguistic feature in the input; (2) comparing, when the learner has the opportunity to compare linguistic features noticed in the input to other language hypothesis she/he had about language; (3) integrating, when the learner has the opportunity to integrate the representation of this new feature into his/her mental grammar.

2.2 Explicit Second Language Learning

Hulstijn (2005) argues that one of the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition may be the fact that L1 acquisition relies mostly on implicit learning, whereas L2 acquisition relies on both implicit and explicit learning. However, in second language learning, there might also be differences concerning the type of learning depending on the learner's age. As previously mentioned, adults and children may differ when learning a second language and therefore, explicit or implicit learning may be more effective respectively, depending on the context.

Since the focus of the present study is on explicit knowledge, it is important to define this concept. According to Hulstijn (2005), explicit knowledge is related to awareness and to the ability to verbalize this knowledge. The

---

[1] As an opposition to focused tasks, unfocused tasks are defined by Ellis *et al.* (2002) as tasks that elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms.

author defines explicit learning as "input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured" (Hulstijn, 2005, p. 130).

Considering language in use, N. Ellis (2005) posits that, explicit learning occurs when there is conscious effort to negotiate meaning and construct communication. Ellis (2009, p. 3) states that "explicit learning typically involves memorizing a series of successive facts and thus makes heavy demands on working memory. As a result, it takes place consciously and results in knowledge that is symbolic in nature". The author also adds that concerning explicit learning, learners are aware that they have learned something and can verbalize what they have learned. Moreover, Ellis (2009) states that explicit learning is a process which necessarily involves consciousness and intentionality.

Bearing in mind the definitions presented above, this study is an attempt to understand the relationship between explicit learning and consciousness-raising tasks within a communicative language context.

2.3   Explicit knowledge and Consciousness-raising tasks: relevant studies

Eckerth (2008) investigated the use of consciousness raising tasks in order to observe learners' gains regarding explicit L2 knowledge. The participants of the study were learners of German as a second language, at the lower and upper intermediate level, having different L1s, which varied among Slavic, Arabic, French, Korean and Spanish. The data was collected during the German classes. The consciousness raising tasks applied in the study were a text reconstruction task and a text repair task. Participants were recorded while performing the tasks and interacting with each other. The results of the study showed that, while interacting, learners' feedback can lead to acquisition. Moreover, the results indicate a positive outcome of the consciousness raising tasks.

Another study (Takimoto, 2006) set out to investigate the effects of a consciousness raising task and reactive explicit feedback in developing English L2 learners' pragmatic competence. The participants of the study were 45 Japanese speakers, learners of English as a second language, who were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. The experimental groups received two types of treatment, one group received consciousness raising instruction and the other received consciousness raising instruction with feedback. The results of the study indicate that consciousness raising tasks may be effective when they provide an emphasis on forms and meanings.

3   METHOD

In order to pursue the main objective of this study, which was to investigate whether a consciousness-raising task used in a language learning environment could be considered a valid instrument for eliciting explicit learning in that context, the following method was employed and will be described below.

3.1 Participants

Eleven students enrolled in the Extracurricular Course offered by UFSC[2] were invited to participate in this study. The Extracurricular Course was selected because two of the researchers are teachers in that course, and therefore the tasks could be implemented during the classes, taking into consideration the grammar focus proposed by the book. The students that participated in the pre-pilot and pilot studies (to be described below) were also enrolled in the same course and level, but belonged to different groups.

The students were taking classes at the level 2 of the course. This level was chosen because it is considered to be basic, and, therefore, knowledge of grammatical rules could be controlled far more easily. Eleven students answered to the activities but only five were selected to participate on the study. The others were not chosen due to their proficient previous knowledge of the structure being worked in the study (two students declared they already knew how to use the structure well, without any doubts) and also because some of them did not complete all the tasks implemented. The five participants ranged from 19 to 29 years old. The time they have been studying English varied from 10 months to 9 years. They are all students of different programs at the University.

3.2 Instruments

The materials used in this study consisted of: (a) a pre-task, which intended to verify whether participants already knew the target structure; (b) consciousness-raising tasks, which included input of the target structures that were tackled in this study; (c) an untimed grammaticality judgment test (UGJT), which aimed to access students' learning of the two linguistic items; and (d) a self-report questionnaire which was answered by learners in order to unveil their perception on the task and their performance. The Pre-Task, as already mentioned, was designed in order to check whether participants would be able to use the target structure, i.e., the superlatives, while writing about places they would prefer to visit during their vacations (see Appendix A for all tasks). The other three instruments used for data collection are described in the section 3.2.1. below.

3.2.1 *Consciousness-Raising Task*

In order to make students focus on the specific grammatical item that was intended to be taught, several activities were conducted, in a section entitled 'While-Task'. The first task included a hotel review, which presented many samples of the target structure, that is, superlative adjectives, and was followed by an instruction for students to write down the most important characteristics of the hotel, highlighted by the author of the review. The second task included a magazine article about the most famous attractions of New York, and asked students to mention why New York is considered "the

---

[2] The Extracurricular Course offered at UFSC is based on a Communicative Approach of language learning.

most magical city in the world", according to the text. Both tasks made use of input enhancement technique, which according to Sharwood-Smith (1993, p. 281, apud Ellis *et al.*, 2009) refers to "attempts to direct the learners' attention to a specific linguistic form in the input". The third and last task included in the while-task section was an instruction for students to pay attention to some words or expressions (highlighted in bold, italics or underlined) in another text about Florida's beaches, in order to answer some questions as regards the use of the prefix 'est', the expressions 'the most' and 'the best'. (see appendix A for details about the tasks).

Bearing in mind the three processes which are part of a consciousness-raising task, according to Ellis *et al.* (2002), the tasks used in this study can be said to be composed of: **(1) Noticing**: this process can be observed in the first part of the while-task, where the learners had the opportunity to become conscious about the presence of a linguistic feature in the input and start forming hypothesis about the use of this structure; **(2) Comparing:** this process can be observed in the second part of the while-task, where learners had the chance to compare linguistic features perceived in the input to their hypothesis about the language as well as continue forming hypothesis; and **(3) Integrating:** this process can be observed in the third part of the while-task, where students were offered the opportunity to reflect upon the use of the target structure and relate it to the given input so as to integrate the representation of this new feature into their mental grammar.

3.2.2 *Untimed Grammaticality Judgment Test*

The untimed grammaticality judgment test (UGJT) consisted of nine sentences, in which participants were asked to indicate whether each sentence was grammatical or ungrammatical without any time pressure. Untimed grammaticality judgment tests are believed to be an effective measure of explicit knowledge, as stated by Ellis *et al.* (2009).

Seven out of the nine sentences of the UGJT included the target structure, that is, sentences using the superlative. Three of these sentences were grammatically correct (e.g. "USA is the largest country in North America"), and four were grammatically incorrect (e.g. "Australia is the interestingest country in the world"). Besides that, two distracters were included, that is, sentences that were grammatically correct but did not present features of the target structure being studied (e.g. "Chile is a beautiful country").

3.2.3 *Self-Report Questionnaire*

In addition, participants were asked to answer a retrospective questionnaire (see Appendix B), which intended to collect information as regards their previous knowledge about the target structure, and whether they had faced any difficulty while participating in the study. Participants were also asked to evaluate the level of difficulty of the tasks, and whether they answered the tasks based on their previous knowledge or on intuition. This questionnaire intended to allow data triangulation, providing more evidence to support the research conclusions.

3.3   Procedures for Data Collection

The present study was divided in five phases: (1) participants read and signed a consent form (2) students answered the pre-task, which intended to verify whether they already knew the target structure; (3) participants answered the consciousness-raising task, which was designed to make them focus on the specific grammatical item (the superlative structure); (4) students answered the untimed grammaticality judgment test, which had the main objective of measuring their explicit knowledge of the target structure; and (5) students answered the retrospective questionnaire, which aimed at confirming whether students have had previous contact with the target structure, whether they answered the questions based on previous knowledge or intuition, and whether they faced difficulties during the data collection phase. All the phases were conducted during class time and it took participants about an hour and a half to sign the consent form, complete the tasks and answer the retrospective questionnaire.

3.4   Pilot study

Previous to the main study, a pre-pilot and a pilot study were conducted with two distinct groups of Level 2 enrolled in the Extracurricular course, so as to check whether the instruments selected for data collection would be able to measure what they intended to. The results from the pre-pilot showed that some modifications should be done in order to adequate the instruments to the objectives of this research. More specifically, the instructions for some of the activities, which were previously written in English, were translated into students' mother tongue (Portuguese) because we realized that having to answer the tasks and also to comprehend the instructions written in a Second Language in which they were not proficient could burden participants' working memory resources. Considering that, as explained by Baddeley (2010), "working memory refers to the system or systems that are assumed to be necessary in order to keep things in mind while performing complex tasks such as reasoning, comprehension and learning" (p. 136), this burden could harm the main objective of this study which was to focus students' attention on the input and not on the instructions themselves.

After applying the instruments again, with a distinct group, some other issues arose and were solved in order to carry out the main study. The issues were related to the while task and post task. In the while task we included one extra text in order to increase the amount of input, and changed the options for the questions in the third part, which were considered confused by some of the participants. As for the after-task, the distracters were changed from sentences using the comparatives to more unrelated ones, because the structure of the comparatives is very similar to the superlative and could confuse students. After the above-mentioned improvements both, the instruments and the procedures, were appropriate to the intended objectives of this research. Bailer, Tomitch and D'Ely (2011, p. 143-144 – our translation) emphasize the importance of piloting by highlighting that the pilot study should be seen as "the mechanism that allows for testing,

evaluating, reviewing, and improving the methodological choices that will inform the future research".

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion presented in this section take into consideration the answers of the five students who had no concrete previous knowledge of the structure being worked with (the superlative) and completed all the tasks proposed. Although no statistical analysis was carried out, it is possible to observe some significant results which rose from participants' answers.

The first task answered by the participants corresponded to a pre-task used in this study as a tool to evaluate whether students would make voluntary use of superlatives or not. The results show that none of the participants used superlatives in the pre-task even though a situation was created for them to do so (they were supposed to compare three locations and choose only one to spend their vacations. Moreover, they were expected to explain their choice using some given adjectives. Therefore, the use of superlatives could have appeared in this task as a means for comparison). The results of the pre-task corroborate with the participants' answers of the questionnaire. All of them declared they did not know how to use the rules previously to the set of tasks. Participant 5 said she did not know the rules at all while the other four reported they were somehow familiar with the structure but couldn't remember the rules. Participant 2, when asked if she knew how to use the structures being used in the study, answered "*conhecia, mas não lembrava bem como eram usadas*" while Participant 4 explained "*não me lembrava muito bem, já tinha visto há alguns anos atrás no colégio, mas não lembrava direito como usar*". It is possible to conclude, therefore, that although the rules worked with in the study were not completely new to participants in terms of familiarity, none of them felt confident about how to use these structures properly in a sentence or did not remember how to do so.

Taking into account the while task, parts 1 and 2, in which participants were presented to two texts that contained instances of superlatives and were supposed to answer comprehension questions about the texts, some considerations can be made. Firstly, all participants gave the correct answer to both questions about the texts. This may indicate that all of them comprehended the input being given and, therefore, seemed to have understood the structure of superlatives in the context of the texts. Taking into consideration that, the aim of these two tasks was to enhance input for the participants so that they would have been presented with many examples of the structure being worked with within a context, it may be possible to conclude that participants were able to visualize and understand the meaning of the superlatives used in the texts. Moreover, two participants used superlatives in their answers to both activities, which shows that they had noticed the structure being used and incorporated it in their writing. The other three participants did not make use of superlatives in part 1 but did so in part 2, which also reinforces the conclusions taken here. However, it is important to highlight that participant 3 made correct and incorrect use of the structure in the second activity. Even so, it can be concluded that all of them noticed the use of superlatives in part 1 and 2 of the while task.

Part 3 of the while task aimed at providing learners with a grammar problem to be solved interactively, that is "they interact to analyze data and arrive at (or understand) the explicit representation of the target structure" (Xavier, 2001, p. 25). When answering this task, four participants got the answers to the four questions correct and one participant got only the last question incorrect. This shows that most of them were able to infer the rules related to the use of superlatives from the given input (the students were presented to input in while task parts 1, 2 and 3). In addition, in the self-report questionnaire, all participants reported to have understood the rules. Participant 3 explained that part 1 and 2 of the while task helped her to understand the structure. Participant 5 explained that she understood the rules but had difficulties in expressing her ideas sometimes: "*Eu consegui compreender as atividades, mas senti dificuldade apenas para expressar algumas frases como eu gostaria*". It is possible to conclude, therefore, that all participants reported and demonstrated to have mostly understood the rules worked with in the study concerning the use of superlatives in English.

In relation to the post task, participants answered to an UGJT in order to access their understanding of the rules presented in the previous activities. Table 1 below summarizes participants' answers.

Table 1: Participants answers to the UGJT

	a	b	C	d	e	f	g	h	i
Participant 1	c	c	i	c	c	c	c	c	i
Participant 2	i	i	i	c	c	c	i	c	i
Participant 3	c	i	i	c	c	c	c	c	i
Participant 4	c	c	i	c	c	c	i	c	c
Participant 5	c	i	i	c	c	i	c	i	i

c – correct answer; i – incorrect answer.

As it is possible to see, four out of five participants answered letters 'a', 'f', 'h' correctly. In case of letter 'a', Participant 2 justified her answer by saying that the construction "largest" was not appropriate and should be replaced by "biggest". Participant 5 did not give a reason for her choice in letter 'f' since she considered it grammatically correct. In case of letter 'h', participant 5 considered "busy" a long adjective saying it contained two syllables. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that although these two participants did not choose the correct answer to these sentences, the reasons why they made the mistake seems not to be directly related to their understanding of the rules worked with in the present study. In case of letter 'a', participant 2 reported to be concerned with the appropriateness of the adjective to the context while participant 5, in case of letter 'h', reported not to be fully familiar with the syllables separations in English and hence, seemed to have made use of her syllable knowledge from Portuguese.

In relation to letters 'd' and 'e', all participants choose the correct answer. The sentence in letter 'd' made use of the target structure and participants had no problems in recognizing its use as a correct one. It is important to emphasize, however, that letter 'e' was used as a distracter and, therefore, it has no relation to the rules being worked with in this study. The same

is the case of letter 'c' which is also a distracter. All participants got this sentence incorrect due to the possibility of using the verb pattern structures "I love visiting Brazil" and "I love to visit Brazil". However, this result has no relevance to this study since this was not the structure being tackled in it.

In relation to letter 'b', three out of five participants got it incorrect. Since they classified this sentence as grammatical, there is no justification to their choice. One possible explanation could be related to the misunderstanding of the syllables system in English. Another explanation could be related to the unfamiliarity to the adjective 'deep'. However, none of these justifications can be empirically proved.

In relation to letter 'g', three participants out of five answered it correctly. Since the two participants who answered it incorrectly classified this sentence as grammatical, no justifications were made. Finally, concerning letter 'i', most participants answered it incorrectly (four out of five participants). Probable conclusions for this result can be related to the unfamiliarity of the participants with the rule concerning adjectives that have two syllables but end in "y" since the adjective presented in this sentence was "pretty" and its superlative use was incorrectly presented as "the most pretty".

It is possible to conclude, therefore, the results of the UGJT can be used as evidence to show that participants had understood the rules worked with in the study. That is because, as detailed above, most of participants' incorrect answers were not related to the misunderstanding of the rule concerning superlatives and were instead related to the unfamiliarity to other rules. In addition, when answering to the self-report questionnaire, three participants pointed out to have answered the post-task using knowledge-based rules while two participants declared to have used knowledge of rules as well as intuition. Ellis (2005) explains that implicit knowledge is normally related to "intuitive awareness of linguistic norms" (p. 151) while explicit knowledge is normally connected to "conscious awareness of linguistic norms" (p. 151). Moreover, it is relevant to highlight that two participants classified the post task as having medium difficulty (range of 3 out of 1-5 scale) while three participants classified it as having high difficulty (range of 4 or 5 out of 1-5 scale), which shows that they had more doubts when answering the questions and, therefore, could have made more mistakes.

Based on the ideas aforementioned, the results of the present study show that the set of tasks used as instrument in this research was a valid tool for the acquisition of explicit knowledge. Taking into account the answers to the consciousness-raising set of tasks used in this research, it is possible to conclude that it was a valid instrument to elicit explicit learning in a communicative context.

5 FINAL REMARKS

The main objective of this study was to investigate whether a consciousness-raising task used in a communicative language learning environment could be considered a valid instrument for eliciting explicit learning in that context. Based on the results that rose for the data collection, it was possible to conclude that the instruments used in this piece of research were of a valid nature for eliciting explicit learning. Moreover, it is important to highlight

that the results of this study corroborate to the results of Eckerth (2008) and Takimoto (2006) who agreed that consciousness raising tasks may be effective in providing positive explicit outcome.

It is possible to conclude, therefore, that consciousness-raising tasks should be used by teachers of second language within a communicative context so as to aid students with more explicit grammatical knowledge whenever problems appear in more meaning focused tasks which tackle implicit knowledge. This way, the primary focus of the activities would still be on pragmatic meaning but, whenever a problem appeared of a more grammatical nature, students could be helped by being exposed to explicit knowledge through the use of consciousness-raising tasks and, consequently, improve performance and, maybe, acquisition.

This study provides empirical support for previous pieces of research regarding the importance of consciousness-raising tasks to assist students' second language learning. However, it has limitations as well, such as the number of participants, which could be greater in order to increase the study' validity. Furthermore, in the UGJT, students were asked to justify their choices only for sentences they considered ungrammatical. This constrain in the instrument clearly worked as a limitation since some results were not clear due to the lack of participants' voice in case of sentences considered grammatical by them. In addition, no statistical analysis was run in this study, which could have given to it more validity as well.

Even though some limitations were presented, despite being a small scale research, it is believed that this study contributed to a greater understanding of the second language processes within a communicative context and highlighted the importance of explicit knowledge learning within a meaning focused approach through the use of consciousness-raising tasks.

REFERENCES

Anderson, J. 2000. *Learning and memory: an integrated approach* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Baddeley. 2010. Working memory. *Current Biology* 20 (4), p. 136-140.

Bailer, C.; Tomitch, L. M. B., & D'ely, R. C. S. F. 2011. Planejamento como processo dinâmico: a importância do estudo piloto para uma pesquisa experimental em linguística aplicada. *Revista Intercâmbio* (São Paulo: LAEL/PUCSP), p. 129-146.

D'Ely, R. 2011. The impact of familiarity with strategic planning and teacher-led planning on learners' L2 oral performance of focused and unfocused tasks. In: Tumolo, C. H. S., Figueiredo, D. C., Moritz, M. E. W., & D'ely, R. C. S. F. *Conextualized Practices in EFL Teaching and Assessment.* Florianópolis: UFSC.

DeKeyser, R. M. 2008. Implicit and explicit learning. In: C. Doughty & M. Long (eds.). *The handbook of second language acquisition.* Oxford: Blackwell, p. 313-348.

Eckerth, J. 2008. Investigating consciousness raising task: Pedagogically targeted and non-targeted learning gains. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 18 (2), p. 119-145.

Ellis, N. C. 2005. At the interface: dynamic interactions of implicit and explicit language knowledge. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 27, p. 305-352.

Ellis, R. 2009. Measuring Implicit and Explicit Knowledge of a Second Language. In: Ellis, R. *et al. Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing and Teaching.* Great Britain: Multilingual Matters, p. 3-64.

Ellis, R. 2002. Grammar teaching: Practice or Consciousness-raising?. In: Richards, J. C., Renandya, W. A. *Methodology in Language Teaching.* CUP, p. 167-174.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. 2002. Doing focus on form. *System* 30, p. 419-432.

Hulstijun, J. 2005. Theoretical and Empirical Issues in the Study of Implicit and Explicit Second Language Learning: Introduction. In: *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, p. 129-140.

Long, M. H. 1991. Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In: K. DeBot, R. Ginsberg, C. Kramsch (eds.), *Foreign language research in crosscultural perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 39-52.

Mackey, A. Second Language Acquisition. In: R. Fasold & J. Connor-Linton (eds.), *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.433-464, 2006.

Nunan, D. 2004. *Task Based Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skehan, P. 2003. *Task-based Instruction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Takimoto, M. 2006. The effects of explicit feedback and form-meaning processing on the development of pragmatic proficiency in consciousness-raising tasks. *System* 34, p. 601-614.

Xavier, R. 2001. Focusing on Grammar Pedagogy. In: Fortkamp, M. B. M. & Xavier, R. P. *EFL Teaching and Learning in Brazil: Theory and Practice.* Florianópolis: Insular.

APPENDIX A

TASKS USED AS INSTRUMENTS

Pre-Task

Where would you rather spend your vacation?

At the beach

in the mountains

in the desert

Choose <u>only one place</u> and explain why you prefer it than the others. Use adjectives like "beautiful", "relaxing", "exciting", "calm", "fun" to explain your choice.

....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....

While Task

Hotel Review

We stayed at Bandos Island Hotel, in the Maldivian Island, from the 18th to the 25th April! Every part of this holiday was perfect! We got <u>the best</u> accommodations in the hotel. It was *the biggest* room of all and **the most comfortable one** too.

The beach in front of the hotel was amazing, everything you can imagine. The water was warm, the shade from the trees was perfect. It was **the most wonderful** place in the world! The pool in the hotel was great, very clean. The hotel had very high standards of hygiene, *the cleanest* hotel I have ever been to.

Evening entertainment was really fun and differed each night. <u>The best</u> one for me was Karaoke. I loved the traditional Maldivian dancing too.

I had **the most incredible** time in this hotel! I surely recommend it for people who want to rest and have a good time!

Adapdted from: <http://www.tripadvisor.com.br/Hotel_Review-g1203006-d501020-Reviews-Bandos_Island_Resort_Spa-Bandos.html>

Part 1 – Read the review above. According to the author of the review, "she had the most incredible time" in the Bandos Island Hotel. Why does she have this opinion? Write down the most important characteristics of the hotel that contribute to her opinion.

....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....

Part 2 – Read the magazine article below and answer the following question.

> Some locations, such as <u>New York</u>, are much more impressive in person. The Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center is almost certainly **the most famous** Christmas tree in the world, but it's only one part of *the greatest* Christmas feeling you find in NY. "There's something about the holiday decorations that makes this time of year **the most charming** one," says Jason Clampet, senior editor at Frommers. The carriage rides through Central Park are <u>the best</u> attractions in the city. And we can't forget *the cutest* decorations of the department store. The whole New York becomes **the most magical** city in the world. Brooklyn and Queens, for example, are **the most famous** neighborhoods for their Christmas decoration competitions. New York is definitely <u>the best</u> place to visit during Christmas!
>
> Adapted from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johngiuffo/2011/12/05/the-worlds-top-christmas-destinations/>.

a) Why is New York considered "the most magical city in the world", according to the text?

....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....

Part 3 – Pay attention to the words in **bold,** underlined, and in *italics.* Then, using the Hotel Review above and the text below, answer the following questions.

Millions of people visit the beaches of Florida every year, and while many travel to the busy beaches of Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and other South Florida beaches, I believe the beaches of the Florida Panhandleare are <u>the</u> <u>best</u> vacation spots to visit in Florida.

These beaches are **the most beautiful** ones. There you'll find *the longest* coast lines in Florida, **the most delicious** seafood cuisine. I have been on some of <u>the best</u> cruise lines in the world, gone skiing in North Carolina and Colorado, and had great Hawaii Vacations, but this area is **the most comfortable and relaxing** in the world. I believe these are *the greatest* beaches in Florida!

Adapted from <http://jdavis88.hubpages.com/hub/Great-Vacation-Spots-Florida-Panhandle>.

Florida Panhandle

Fort Walton Beach
Santa Rosa Beach
Crystal Beach Destin
Grayton Beach
Seagrove Beach
Seacrest Beach   98
Carillon Beach   Lynn Haven
Rosemary Beach   Panama City
LaGuna Beach
Panama City Beach
Gulf Of Mexico

Mexico Beach

a) A expressão "**the most**" é usada quando…
   1. O adjetivo é curto (geralmente, só tem uma sílaba)
   2. O adjetivo é longo (geralmente, tem 2 ou mais sílabas)
   3. O adjetivo é apropriado para o contexto no qual está inserido

b) O sufixo "*est*" é usada quando…
   1. O adjetivo é curto (geralmente, só tem uma sílaba)
   2. O adjetivo é longo (geralmente, tem 2 ou mais sílabas)
   3. O adjetivo é apropriado para o contexto no qual está inserido

c) A expressão "<u>the best</u>" é usada para indicar...
   1. Que um lugar/ uma coisa/ uma pessoa é ruim, se comparada com outras
   2. Que um lugar/ uma coisa/ uma pessoa é bom, se comparada com outras
   3. Que eu não tenho opinião sobre aquele lugar/ coisa ou pessoa

d) As expressões "**the most**" e "*est*" são usadas juntamente com adjetivos para demonstrar que…
   1. um lugar/ uma coisa/ uma pessoa é melhor do que outro lugar/ coisa/ pessoa
   2. um lugar/ uma coisa/ uma pessoa é o melhor de todos, se comparado a outros lugares/ coisas/pessoas
   3. Queremos comparar apenas uma pessoa com outra pessoa

Post-Task

1 – Decide whether the sentences below are grammatical or ungrammatical. Write (G) for grammatically correct sentences and (U) for incorrect sentences.

   a) . USA is the largest country in North America   (   )
   b) . The Russian Lake Baikal is the most deep lake in the whole world   (   )
   c) .. I love visiting Brazil   (   )
   d) . Brazil is the most beautiful country in Latin America   (   )
   e) . Chile is a beautiful country   (   )
   f) .. Trinidad and Tobago is the most small country in Latin America   (   )
   g) . Australia is the interestingest country in the world   (   )
   h) . London Heathrow is the busiest airport in the world   (   )
   i) .. Brazil is the most pretty country in the world   (   )

Now, <u>in Portuguese</u>, explain why the sentences you selected are ungrammatical.

....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....
....

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student, obrigada por participar em nossa pesquisa. Por favor, complete o questionário abaixo esclarecendo a sua opinião em relação as atividades trabalhadas.

Nome: ....

Idade: ....

Há quanto tempo estuda inglês: ....

Onde você já estudou inglês (ex: extra curricular, escola regular, curso de idiomas):

....

Curso na UFSC/profissão: ....

1 – O que você achou das atividades que fez? Isto é, qual a sua opinião sobre a pré-task, while task and post task? Especifique sua visão sobre cada atividade separadamente.

....

....

....

2 – Como você se sente em relação a seu entendimento sobre as regras trabalhadas nessa atividade? Explique.

....

....

3 – Você sabia usar as regras trabalhadas nessa tarefa antes de ter feito a atividade?

....

....

4 – Quando você respondeu a primeira parte da atividade, intitulada "Pre-Task", você fez suas escolhas baseando-se no seu conhecimento de regras ou na sua intuição? E quanto as suas escolhas na parte intitulada "Post task"?

....

....

....

5 – Avalie de 1 a 5 o grau de dificuldade das tarefas realizadas, sendo '1' muito fácil e '5' muito difícil. Depois, se achar necessário, explique suas escolhas:

(   )   Pre-Task
(   )   While task (Part 1)
(   )   While task (Part 2)
(   )   While task (Part 3)
(   )   Post-task

....

....

6 – Caso você tenha mais algum comentário a fazer, utilize esse espaço.

....

....

....