

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effects of Consciousness Raising Grammar Tasks on EFL Students' Writing Performance: University of Gondar in Focus

Moges Abay¹

Abstract

This study attempted to look into the effects of consciousness raising grammar tasks on EFL learners' writing performance. The participants of the study were 19 second year students in the department of English Language and Literature, at the University of Gondar, in the 2018/19 academic year. Based on a pragmatic position, quasi-experimental design (time-series design in particular) on a single group of participants was employed. Mixed methods approach was implemented through the application of quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus, these 19 students were taken as one group. Data were gathered through two instruments: writing tests, and diaries. Two writing tests (as pretest1 and pretest2) were administered before the commencement of the intervention. After the treatment phase, two posttests were administered. That is, posttest 2 was administered two weeks delayed after posttest 1 was administered. Repeated measures t-tests were conducted to determine the significance of the mean difference between the mean results of posttests with that of the pretests. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to describe the relation of the pretests themselves, and the posttests themselves, and to find out the inter-rater reliability. The results have indicated that teaching grammatical points through CRGTs significantly increased learners' writing performance.

Keywords: *consciousness-raising grammar tasks, writing performance, writing tests, EFL, Effects*

Introduction

The central aim of language courses is to help students develop a level of language competence that enables them to communicate successfully in their classes as a medium of instruction at the university as well as a key means of communication in their future careers (Celce-Murcia, 2001). In particular, so as to communicate effectively in written aspect of the language, students should write grammatically correct and meaningful sentences. Grammatical knowledge, therefore, becomes one of the most prominent requirements the students should be equipped with in the writing process (Ann, 2008). This is because within a language system, writing mainly relies on grammar and semantics, among others.

In connection with the importance of grammar for writing, Allen (2003) argues that grammar is a tool for communicating more effectively and it is fundamental to language learning as a means to an end. He further calls grammar 'the writer's toolkit'. Muncie (2002:183) further states, "Grammar is just as important instrument of communication as content, and a text cannot be written cohesively without attention being paid to how meaning is being expressed through grammar." In other words, for meaningful commu-

¹ PhD Candidate, University of Gondar, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature E-mail: mogesabayteka@gmail.com



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nication (through writing), accuracy and fluency are fundamentally important which are achieved partly using appropriate grammatical rules. Therefore, in order to employ grammar for language error free writing, it seems essential to consider grammar as one of the components of writing tasks. Supporting this, Hyland (2003:122) suggests “In designing writing tasks, a central question for teachers is the extent to which it is necessary to focus on linguistic form and at what stage in the writing process this focus should occur”. In short, for one to prune his/her writing skills, he/she should be equipped with grammatical knowledge which can enhance students’ writing performance.

If grammatical knowledge is supposed to be essential for writing, then the question is how should it be taught so that students could benefit from it? Although it is not specifically for the benefit of developing writing skills, there have been some debates on how grammar should be taught in the classroom. Despite the significant changes in approaches to language teaching that have occurred in recent years, the status of grammar instruction is an issue that language teachers still have to resolve (Ellis, 2003). According to Sysoyev (1999), there were some basic contrastive positions: one being the view that effective form of instruction was no overt instruction, that is, learners would acquire the grammar of the language implicitly through exposure to comprehensible input roughly tuned to their level and engagement in meaning-focused tasks (Krashen, 1981); others believe that some kind of focus on form in the language classroom is necessary both to accelerate the process of grammar acquisition and raise ultimate levels of attainment (Spada, 1997).

The practical realities of classroom language teaching, however, generally offer teachers a new option; initiated focus-on-form as reconciliation of form and meaning (Long, 1991). This is known as consciousness raising grammar tasks (hereafter: CRGTs) which is initiated by Rutherford (1987) and Smith (1981). . It is based on the assumption that grammar forms are best learned if learners’ awareness to notice particular linguistic structures while maintaining a focus on meaning is cultivated. Ellis (2002) affirms that CRGTs appear to raise the learners’ consciousness of the structure and to facilitate restructuring of the learner’s unconscious system of linguistic knowledge. According to Ellis (2002), CRGT is an approach which learners need to pay attention to both form and meaning when learning a target language.

Rogers (1994) states that the function of CRGTs is to avoid fossilization of errors while practicing either speaking or writing and help learners acquire the grammatical rules of second or foreign language. Then they will be ready to insert these certain grammatical features into their developing language system so that they can be consciously using their knowledge and skill of grammar during language production stage such as writing or editing process.

Here, it seems true that CRGT bridges the gap between the existing objectives of grammar teaching and that of writing, that is, grammar instruction is about identifying form and function-parts of speech, sentence types, and so forth. Whereas, writing instruction is about characteristics of sentences, types of sentences, types of discourses, and so on, in which the substance of grammar instructions is so different from the substance of writing instructions. But in CRGT, as the learners solve the grammar problems or activities, not only do they put emphasis on the form of the grammar structure, but they are also involved in meaning-focused activities and their grammatical knowledge is developed in the way it is to be used while they are engaged in communication (through writing and editing process) (Fotos & Ellis, 1991).

Though it has not been adequately articulated yet, there have been some theoretical as-

assumptions regarding the relation of CRGTs with writing (Myhill & Jones 2011). Thus, the theoretical assumptions of the relationships of CRGTs with writing are based on major theoretical approaches, namely: functional theories of grammar, descriptive grammar approach, second language acquisition theories and constructivist learning theory (Myhill & Jones 2011).

The functional theory advocates that in order to use grammar as a tool, grammar must be learnt within some contexts (Kratzke, 2003). The learning of grammar can improve learners' writing if they learn grammar "in context". The learning of grammar in writing rather than for writing should be taught so that learners can understand better how the language works and function. Grammar in writing allows learners to understand about language when they write (Hillocks & Smith, 2006).

Regarding descriptive theories of grammar, Myhill and Jones (2011) state that it emphasizes with a more socially-oriented analysis of how language is used, including in different social, linguistic and cultural contexts. Descriptive grammar does not tell us how we should speak or write or what grammar rules we have to use during writing on some issues; it simply describes and explains how it is possible for us to use grammar as a tool (for writing), and it tells what we know about the sounds, words, phrases, and sentences of the target language. Thus, one of the aspects of CRGTs emanates from the nature of descriptive grammar (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2003).

In second language acquisition theory, there has been a debate among second language acquisition researchers and educators on whether different features of language (more specifically grammar) should be taught so that it should be used as a tool for the productive skills. According to Krashen (1981), so as grammar to be served as a tool, it could be acquired naturally, and the only thing to acquire grammar is to provide sufficient comprehensible input to the learners. On the other hand, among scholars, White (1987) points out that the inclusion of formal grammar teaching is vital for learning the L2 sufficiently and effectively. White (1988) maintains that simple exposure to language is not enough and that instruction is necessary. This is because there are certain grammatical forms that cannot be acquired by exposure alone. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2003), and Celce-Morcía (2001) believe that grammar should be taught while students are engaged with meaningful activities. Supporting this, Rutherford (1987) and Smith (1981) proposed CRGTs which incorporates form focused grammar instruction with comprehensible input. Constructivist learning theory as an epistemology, (constructivism) in essence, entails the rejection of traditional transmission-oriented views of learning as well as behaviorist models of teaching. Instead, emphasis is placed on the individual learner's construction of his or her knowledge (Hudson, 2001). At a classroom situation, the theory of constructivism indicates that knowledge can be constructed by interaction with course content, information, learning objects and the learning situation being discussed (Oldenburg, 2005). These interactions later will become named experiences which will allow the learner to use in the production as well as comprehension language skills. Thus, the theory of constructivist learning works here as integrating effect of CRGTs with writing in that learners use their experience during writing, that is, the way they practice CRGTs can help them how to retrieve their grammar knowledge ready for use during writing.

However, as to the researcher's English language teaching experience, students at different levels seem to have a lack of competency in their writing performance in English language. For instance, most students at university level are unable to express themselves in a clear and comprehensible fashion in writing. Among the prominent mistakes students frequently make in constructing sentences are sentence fragmentation, noun-verb

and subject-verb disagreements, misspelling, and mechanics & punctuation problems. In general, in teaching writing, many students get difficulties in expressing their ideas in grammatically correct sentences, that is, their grammar is usually faulty. Moreover, at a paragraph level, that is, in joining sentences (cohesion), writing unified and well-developed paragraphs are most of the students' problems.

Regarding students' problems in writing, though studies carried out by Geremew (1999) and Italo (1999) on the tertiary level students in Ethiopia which were conducted decades back and may not justify a problem today, the results proved that many students fail to meet the criteria of grammatical accuracy required of them by their instructors. That is, the students were actually less successful in meeting or reflecting their instructors' expectations of good academic papers in their writing. Moreover, both of the researchers (mentioned above) agreed that most teachers in Ethiopia were often heard complaining that most students were incapable of producing reasonably efficient written work. In general, they lack the required command of English even to express themselves by the time they start their tertiary studies.

The researcher, therefore, believes that this limitation of using the language for communication at a desirable level of accuracy (particularly communicating through writing) has resulted mainly from lack of grammar knowledge which may be because of not using more effective grammar teaching and learning methods which help students use their grammar knowledge as a tool while practicing writing, and researches in this regard (i.e. how grammar should be taught so that learners can use their grammar knowledge as a tool while practicing writing) have not been much conducted yet. Specifically, as to the researcher's knowledge, the effect of CRGTs on students' writing performance has not been investigated yet in Ethiopia. The purpose of the study is, therefore, intended to investigate the extent of the effects of consciousness raising grammar tasks on the EFL Learners' writing skills. Thus, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀ Using consciousness raising grammar tasks integrated with writing activities do not bring a significant improvement on students' writing skills compared with teaching writing in the conventional methods.

H₁ There is a significant difference of improvement on students' writing skills because of using consciousness raising grammar tasks

The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the effects of consciousness raising grammar tasks on students' writing performance.

Research Design and Methodology

As it is an experimental research conducted in a classroom setting, (on a single group of participants), it had the form of quasi-experiments where there is no random assignment of participants to groups (Creswell, 2003). The mixed methods approach was employed through the application of quantitative and qualitative methods in a complementary way. A mixed methods design was chosen for this study because the study needs both quantitative as well as qualitative data for comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell 2003).

To explain the research design of this study in terms of research paradigm, the researcher

held pragmatic position. The main reason is that pragmatism embraces mixed method as the third research community in order to avoid either view of positivism (quantitative oriented methodology) or constructivism, (qualitative oriented methodology) rather embraces the two extreme points of view and offers a flexible approach to a research design (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Thus, following premises in pragmatism, data from both quantitative and qualitative measurement tools were drawn in a way the entire conclusion would rely on mixed methods perspectives.

The Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were 19 second year students in the department of English Language and Literature, at the University of Gondar, in the 2018/19 academic year. As it was a single-group quasi-experimental design, an interrupted time-series experiment, these 19 students were taken as one group. The reason students in the department of English Language and Literature were selected was that they were the only students who were taking Advanced Writing course which was used for the experiment. The CRGTs were, therefore, integrated with the writing course, (Advanced Writing Skills) the students took during that time.

Data Collection Instruments

Writing Tests

Two writing tests (as pretest1 and pretest2) were administered before the commencement of the intervention. Then, the experiment was undertaken. After the intervention, similar to the pretests, two posttests were administered. That is, posttest 2 was administered two weeks after posttest 1 was administered. The same form was utilized in administering both pretest and posttests. The pretests had questions which differ in wording from the posttests, though the two tests were from similar content.

The main objective of the pretests administered before the experiment was to establish a baseline of the participants' background knowledge and skills on writing as well as initial information for the intervention. The pretests also aimed at checking the plausibility of the tool. Moreover, the pretest results were used to determine the grammatical items to be included in the intervention material, i.e., by examining the pretest results; the grammar elements which were the most serious errors were included in the material.

Regarding the pretests and posttests, a two-part pretest was prepared for the group. The first part was on controlled writing in which students were expected to display their competence in grammar (Brown, 2007). In this part, the students were given incomplete sentences and asked to complete them using the correct forms of the verbs placed in brackets, to insert the missing part (i.e., either subject or verb) of the sentence, to use appropriate voice (i.e., either active or passive), and to use appropriate tense base on the given context. The second part was on guided writing. In this part the students were given information and an outline, and they were asked to write their texts based on the information and the outline. Each part was computed out of 10 points and summed up to 20 points for each of pretests and posttests. Both controlled and guided writing were aimed to assess the participants' grammatical knowledge and performance in their writing.

Two raters who shared similar backgrounds in terms of qualifications (assistant professors), field of study (TEFL), and teaching experiences were involved in rating the scores of the writing task using the guideline. The guideline was prepared based on analytical

scale marking and textual analysis parameters such as writing performance criteria and descriptors adapted from Alderson (2005) and Lumley (2002). That is, for both controlled and guided writing: tense, voice, auxiliary verb errors, adjective, adverb and verb form, faulty agreements (subject-verb, antecedent-pronoun, and tense disagreements), and sentence fragments were focused in correcting the tests. Among the grammar items listed above, taking sentence fragments for instance, 1 point is given when the text has 4 and above sentence fragments, 2 points when 2-3 sentence fragments, and 3 points when there are no any sentence fragments, and all others were marked in the same way using analytic scale.

The Student Diaries

The purpose of student diaries was to provide a rich source of reflective data which can reveal students' reflections on particular areas of difficulty and interest; thus, leading the researcher to identify the participants' perception about CRGTs in the context of learning to write and to investigate whether or not consciousness raising grammar tasks are helpful in enhancing students' writing (Hyland, 2003).

During each implementation time, that is, at the end of one or two CRGTs, participants were asked to reflect on their perception about and engagement in CRGTs in the context of learning to write and to investigate whether or not CRGTs are helpful in enhancing students' writing performance.

The diary was with three major questions: whether the participants enjoy the grammar tasks they practiced, they perceived whether CRGTs enhanced their grammar awareness and helped them improve their writing skill, and if they had some observation during the experiment that they thought should be improved.

Procedure of Data Collection

Data were gathered through two instruments: writing tests and diaries. The data collecting procedure was started by administering the pretests. The pretests were administered two times in a week interval of time. Then the training was offered for a semester. At the end of each of the second week's class of the training, the data through diaries (six times) were collected. Immediately after the training, posttest 1 was administered in the group. Two weeks after the intervention withdrawal, a delayed posttest was administered.

Procedures of the Experimentation (Intervention phases)

To accomplish the purpose of the study the following procedure was pursued in three phases: the first phase was the pre-instructional period, that is, the two pretests were administered. The second phase was the instructional period, and the third phase regards the post-instructional period, that is, the two posttests were administered in the way aforementioned.

The instructional material was already developed by the researcher based on consciousness-raising grammar tasks and principles presented in Willis & Willis (1996), Ellis (2003), and Fotos (1994), that is, the selected grammar elements such as tense, voice, auxiliary verb errors, adjective, adverb and verb form, faulty agreements (subject-verb, antecedent-pronoun, and tense disagreements), and sentence fragments integrated with writing activities were incorporated in the CRGTs. The training was given in a semester, that is, for sixteen consecutive weeks: three contact hours per a week.

The instructional method in this study was also adapted from Willis & Willis (1996), Ellis (2003; 2012), and Fotos (1994). There are two approaches used here: the first approach was that the students were presented with a written expository text as an input so that they could first comprehend the whole meaning of the text, study how it is organized, and explore the targeted grammatical expressions contextually. This was done with the help of the writing teacher. The second approach used was a process where learners discover the grammar rules by themselves by examining on the given examples. When students obtain the grammar rules, they practice the language by constructing their own sentences and paragraphs using the grammar expressions.

In both approaches, the training was carried out using three stages within the framework of the CRGTs in the continuum of implicit and explicit forms of instructions, that is, the techniques which are within the range of implicit and explicit forms were used. First communication-oriented activity (a written text) was given to students. Second, the practice on identifying the grammar rules of target grammar items was carried out by the students themselves; short explanations on the discovered grammar rules were given by the teacher as oral feedback. On the third stage, after short explanation about the basics of writing was given to the students by the teacher, they were made to practice the language by producing their own sentences, at paragraph or essay level using the grammar patterns presented in the tasks.

Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitative data (the writing test results) were analyzed by using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) such as repeated measures t-test to determine the significance of the mean difference between the mean results of posttests with that of the pretests. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to describe the relation of the pretests themselves, and the posttests themselves. Computing the pretests themselves was to determine a stable baseline as well as identify a pattern, and computing the posttests themselves was to identify the consistency of the effect of the intervention.

Sample students' written texts (i.e., pretest and posttest) results were analyzed qualitatively. These the qualitative data were used as complementary to the quantitative data to find out the effect of consciousness raising grammar tasks on the EFL learners' writing performance. Furthermore, the qualitative data (diaries) were analyzed thematically, that is, to investigate whether or not consciousness raising grammar tasks were helpful in enhancing students' writing performance.

Reliability and Validity of Data Collection instruments

The data collecting instruments and the whole procedures of the experiment were verified for reliability and validity. The writing test papers were rated by the researcher and another qualified rater. The correcting parameters adapted from Alderson (2005) and Lumley (2002) which were used in correcting the writing tests were shared between the two raters, and Pearson correlation coefficient was computed in order to find out the inter-rater reliability. So, the inter-rater correlation of the group Rater 1 against Rater 2 in pre-test-1 was 0.90; while that of the posttest-1 results of the two raters was 0.96. This shows that inter-rater correlation of the pre and posttests results respectively were very strong. In other words, the two raters' rating was highly consistent. This means that the data collected from the tests were reliable and valid.

The quantitative data being Consistent, tested to be normally distributed, and presented

in terms of the participants' response were believed to be reliable and valid. Moreover, the qualitative data, that is, the sample writing texts taken from the participants' writing tests and their reflections through diary data checked to be the participants' independent reflections, contributed to the neutrality (replacing the quantitative concept of objectivity) of the data which is one of the criteria of validity of qualitative data. Above all, the source of data being from the natural classroom setting made the data valid (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Findings of the Quantitative Data

Results of the Pre-tests

Prior to analyzing whether there was a significant difference of improvement on students' writing skills or not because of the intervention, the researcher sought to ascertain whether the two pretest results were equivalent at the outset. As it is stated in the methods of data analysis section, one reason to be equivalent is that it helps to establish a stable baseline. Thus, in the table 1 below, it was possible to assure whether the two pretest results were equivalent or not.

Table 1: Correlation Results of the writing Pre-tests (Pretest 1 and pretest 2)

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 writing pretest 1 & writing pretest 2	19	.920	.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results ($r=.920$, and the p-value is below .05) revealed that the two scores (Pretest 1 and pretest 2) were strongly related to each other. It implies that there was a stable baseline before the treatment.

Results of the Posttests

As it is mentioned above (Table 1) it was tried to see the relationship between the two pretest results. Also, the researcher sought to ascertain whether the two posttest results were equivalent or not.

Table 2: Correlation Results of the writing Posttests (posttest 1 and posttest 2)

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 writing pretest 1 & writing pretest 2	19	.679	.001

It is seen from the table above that the two writing posttest scores were analyzed using a paired samples correlation. ($r= .679$ and $P < 0.05$) showing that there is strong linear relation and positive association (respectively) between the two tests scores.

The implication is; therefore, the two posttests' results were equivalent; therefore, the treatment has consistent effect on the dependent variable.

Results of the Pretest and Posttests (A paired-samples t-test)

The scores in the two phases (pre-intervention and post intervention) were taken for comparative purposes, that is, paired samples t-test was executed to examine the effects of consciousness raising grammar tasks on EFL learners' writing skills, and it was to verify the hypothesis, that is, either to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis.

As the results indicate, there were significant differences ($MD = 7.79$, $T = 14.43$, $df = 18$, $P < 0.05$) between the posttest and pretest of writing test scores. More importantly, the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest of 19 students were 9.61 and 17.40 respectively with a mean difference of 7.79 (see table 3).

Table 3: Paired Samples t-test Results of the writing pretest and Posttest

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-v</i>	<i>Sig. (P-V)</i>
<i>Posttest</i>	19	17.40		1.83			
			7.79		18	14.426	.000
<i>Pretest</i>	19	9.61		2.76			

Thus, the findings of the tests thus seem to indicate that the consciousness raising grammar tasks could have considerable contribution in enhancing students' writing performance.

Findings of the Qualitative Data Analysis

Pretest and Posttest Results of Students' Writing

In addition to analyzing students' results quantitatively, two randomly selected students' writings of both at the pretest and posttests were analyzed.

Comparing a student's (S9) two texts in the criteria of grammatical correctness, there found many differences at sentence level. In the pretest, many of the sentences were fragments whereas, in the posttest, almost all sentences were complete, grammatically correct, and meaningful. For instance, let's see the extracted sentences in the two tests, that is, the pretest and posttests:

Pretest: *"Particularly in a job interview." And "When you practice peran interview stand up straight."*

posttest: *"Particularly in a job interview, what you say is important but the way you say it is nearly as important in creating a good impression."*

The given question papers (controlled writing) in both the pretest and posttest were with some problems such as missing part of the sentence, (i.e., either subject or verb), tense disagreements, and without appropriate transitional markers. In the pretest, the student (S9) did not write most part of it into complete sentences, that is, as it can be seen in the sample sentence of the pretest above, the student simply copied from the given question paper without developing it into complete sentences. The same student (S9) in the posttest, however, wrote almost all the given sentences into grammatically correct, complete, and meaningful text.

In specific terms, the text in the pretest has many problems of fragmentation, subject-verb disagreement, and errors in controlling overall grammatical structures within the context of the idea of the text. The text in the posttest, however, is in good control of grammatical structures with few problems such as limited control of cohesive devices and inappropriate organization of ideas; for example, sentences starting from: "The third common bad speech behavior....to the end of the text are not coherent and well organized. Similarly, another student's (S11) pretest and posttest texts were taken as a sample for analysis. Thus, many of the sentences in the pretest have problems of subject-verb agree-

ment; whereas the sentences in the posttest have no problems in either subject- verb agreement or fragmentation. Except that few sentences have problems in diction. For example, similar sentences in both pre and posttests of controlled writing have differences:

Pretest: *“What you said important but how you say it be important in creating a good impression.”*

Posttest: *“In a job interview, what you say is important, but how you say it is nearly as important in creating a good impression.”*

As it can be seen, the sentence in the pretest lacks the link verb ‘be’ after the relative clause “what you said”. Moreover, the verb ‘be’ in (“how you say it be”) in the fourth clause is not with correct form. However, the same sentence in the posttest is grammatically correct. To add another instance,

Pretest: *“Not only do it but also make the speaker appear sloppy and lacking in confidence, but mumbling also make it difficult for the interview to hear what is being said.”*

Posttest: *“Not only does it make the speaker lacking confidence, but mumbling also makes it difficult for the interviewer to hear what is being said.”*

The sentence in the pretest is not also free of grammatical errors. It has subject-verb disagreement (“do it... make...the speaker appear”), and misplaced adverb, and faulty parallelism. In comparison, the sentences in the posttest are correct.

Further, one purpose of student diaries was to display the effect of consciousness raising grammar tasks on the EFL learners’ writing performance. In this regard, most of the participants confirmed that the tasks they practiced would help them improve their writing skills. For example, S5 says:

The task I practiced will improve my writing skill exactly. Anyone must know the grammatical structure of English sentences. So, the task we practiced and identified them in a sentence like adjectives, nouns, prepositional phrases, etc. will improve my writing skills in my future activities.

In the text above, the participant tries to corroborate that they were able to identify the grammar elements such as adjectives, nouns, etc. and practice them in sentence construction, would help them improve their writing performance.

To add one more sample in a different diary text, S7 states:

All the task I practiced last day enhanced my grammar awareness. I know the forms of passive and active construction. And using the forms I could construct sentences and I know how to identify subject and verb of sentences.

Student 7 also affirmed that he/she was able to identify the forms of grammar items, particularly, active and passive voice of verbs, subject and verbs of a sentence are important in sentence construction practices. The point here is how did they identify and internalize the grammar elements and use them in writing and editing? One of the possible reasons is that CRGTs played the role for the students to shift themselves away from the passive receiver of facts about grammar towards an active participant who is encouraged to discover rules themselves, improved their willingness to engage themselves in tasks that aimed at

developing their mastery over form.

The students' improvements in their writing performance due to the tasks /training/ could also be visible comparing the other two texts (diary 1 and diary 3) of a randomly selected participant (S15). For instance, from diary 1 the first sentence is not a complete sentence, that is, it starts with an informal expression, 'yes' and subordinating conjunction but not with main clause. Moreover, the verb phrase 'was confused' is wrong. It cannot be in the passive voice since the subject 'task' rather may confuse someone but not itself can be the receiver of the action. "Yes, because before the task was confused about d/t verbs".

Diary 1 (S15)

Yes, because before the task was confused about d/t verbs. Even though I knew d/t kinds of verbs and functions/use of verbs/, I always asked myself what other verbs are called, what are their used/function in a text. but on today task I learnt about verbs function, subjects, and subjects and verbs agreement. In general today task helped me b/s it completed our gap. and it was important training and it was practical. Moreover, the end of the class was writing activity and this was useful to apply grammar for writing.

Diary 3 (S15)

The tasks we practiced today enhanced my grammar knowledge to improve my writing skill. When I want to write anything, I know how to choose either passive voice or active voice. And I know that how to use the subject either performer (active) or receiver (passive) of action in a sentence. Generally, the task I practiced today was very important for my grammar knowledge, and this was useful for me to use grammar to write correct paragraph.

The other sentence's error (in diary 1) is that two clauses are loosely connected: "I always asked myself what other verbs are called, what are their use/function in a text". In this sentence, the second clause seems the extended part of the first clause but it is not connected with some kind of connector like a colon; otherwise, the whole sentence should have been restructured in some correct form.

Moreover, the frequent errors committed in the diary 1 is using non standard abbreviations like d/t, b/s and starting sentences with coordinating conjunctions ... "but on today task I learnt about verbs function, subjects, and subjects and verbs agreement". In short, in diary 1 each sentence is not free from any grammatical error. On the contrary, the text in diary 3, except some tense inconsistency, was written in more precise and accurate language than the text in diary 1.

Analyzing both students' pretest and posttest writings /corpora/, and samples of their diaries, the result indicated that in many of them students' writing performance was improved as it was compared to their pretest writing results as well as their reflection through the diaries, that is to say, teaching grammatical points through grammar consciousness-raising tasks significantly increased students' writing performance.

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

The objective of this study was to find out the effects of consciousness raising grammar tasks on the students' writing performance. Thus, the findings of the study revealed that

the improvement occurred in participants' writing performance was due to the intervention of CRGTs. That is to say, teaching grammatical points through CRGTs significantly increased learners' writing performance. Evidently, findings drawn from the participants' writing tests results (quantitatively), analyzing students' sample written works i.e., analyzing both students' pretest and posttest writings /corpora/ (qualitatively), and their reflection through the diaries indicated that many of the students' writing performance was improved as it was compared to their pretest writing results. In other words, the findings seem to indicate that the consciousness raising grammar tasks could have considerable contribution in enhancing students' writing performance.

Thus, the study reveals that it is possible to reject the null hypothesis, that is to say, the alternative hypothesis which has been formulated as "there is a significant difference of improvement on students' writing skills because of using consciousness raising grammar tasks" is proved to be accepted with above 95% degree of confidence.

Although the researcher of this study could not find research findings conducted locally or abroad with exactly similar research topic, (i.e. effect of CRGTs on students' writing performance), the results of this study is clearly incongruent with earlier researches on the impact of consciousness-raising grammar tasks on the macro and micro language skills such as on the domain of reading comprehension and writing, students' listening comprehension performance, students' grammatical proficiency, EFL learners' lexical inferencing, and EFL learners performance in general. For example, Nosratinia & Roustayi (2014) found that CRGTs has a positive effect on reading comprehension and writing performance of learners. Similarly, the effect of CRGTs on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension conducted by Azizifar, Babaei, Jamalinesari, and Gowhary (2015) found that CRGTs did affect language learners' reading comprehension ability. The authors added that CRGTs promotes students' motivation and this makes them more interested in classroom participation.

In general, the findings of the study implied that CRGTs provide input in text/context so that students could explore the targeted grammatical expressions contextually, discover the grammar rules, and explain grammatical rules by themselves. This enables students to be equipped with and conscious of grammatical rules while practicing on the tasks. Hence, according to Crivos and Luchini (2012), an effective grammar teaching model should be compatible with a communicative framework that emphasizes learners' understanding of classroom input through meaningful, negotiated interactions. In fact, such kind of model is an integration of explicit grammar instruction with an implicit language teaching. Furthermore, it is crucial to train learners in any possible way as to equip them with higher order thinking skills in order to develop individual cognitive aspect (Ellis, 2003). This study also proved that the grammar tasks require learners not only to discover the grammatical rules by themselves but also to justify their choice of grammar expressions in constructing sentences while composing on some issues. Moreover, CRGTs lead learners to greater concentration on language learning materials.

Conclusions

Although this study was limited in duration and scope, the results clearly support earlier research on consciousness-raising grammar tasks in the domain of writing which was found that it had a positive effect on writing performance of learners. Moreover, it was proved that the use of the CRGTs has many pedagogical benefits for the EFL learners. For instance, CRGTs characterized by guided discovery of rules may involve greater depth of processing which has the potential to make learners more autonomous by developing

their analytical ability, that is, since CRGT is an active process, it encourages critical thinking in students. i.e., they have to observe on the given data, analyze them, identify/confirm, and practice the target feature than is the case with traditional deductive approaches. It can help learners notice how language is used, even when they are not doing a consciousness-raising activity, it is hoped that learners are able to pick up language / grammar/ from incidental target language input they may encounter such as while learning or reading other subjects. In general, the study provided insight on the importance of raising students' consciousness of grammar by assuring that they were able to notice linguistic features and developed explicit knowledge of how these grammatical structures are applied.

However, it should also be noted that there are some limitations to consciousness-raising grammar tasks. A case in point is that learners have been highly attached to the traditional method of grammar teaching and because of this, they were less willing to participate in the CRGTs.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that for EFL teachers and learners, however, this does not mean that using CRGTs should replace all other methods of grammar teaching; rather it should be used in addition to those methods in order to boost development further. Furthermore, EFL teachers need to understand how to design and implement CRGTs in the way that can promote better grammar learning and enhance learners' opportunity of being proficient in English language in general and skills (writing) in particular.

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