

A Comparison Study of Three Approaches to Drawing Attention to Article Form and Function on an Information-Gap Task

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The purpose of this study was to compare the impact on SLA of three approaches to drawing learners' attention to the form and function of English articles *the*, *a*, and \emptyset on an information gap, 'Spot the Difference' task. The goal of the task was the reconstruction by pairs of the learners of a passage they had read at the beginning of the task. The pairs first compared two versions of the passage, which differed in their noun phrase encodings. The versions in the Incidental Approach differed in their noun or adjective encodings, whereas the versions in the Implicit and Explicit Approaches differed in their article encodings. The Explicit Approach also followed up with articles instruction and correction. Results revealed that all three approaches were helpful, but the Incidental Approach, which drew attention to Meaning Focused Noun Phrase Differences was more effective for Noticing, Knowledge, Production Accuracy of articles than an Implicit Approach that drew attention to Form Focused Morpheme Differences or an Explicit Approach that followed up with Form Focused Instruction and Correction.

Approach	Theoretical Grounding	Application to Task-Based Research
Incidental	Incidental: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/ Meaning occurs incidentally, as the need to repair comprehension/production problems arise in the context of communication. (Long & Robinson, 1998)	Incidental: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/ Meaning occurs incidentally in tasks, as comprehension/production problems arise in task completion. (Long & Robinson, 1998)
Implicit	Implicit: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/Meaning occurs implicitly as the need to supply specific or required forms arises in order to communicate a function or meaning in the context of communication. (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2003)	Implicit: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/Meaning occurs implicitly in tasks that require specific, often obligatory, linguistic features for task completion. (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2003)
Explicit	Explicit: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/Meaning occurs explicitly through form focused instruction and corrective feedback (described by Spada, 1997), in follow up to learners' need for form or rule as revealed in the context of communication.	Explicit: Attention to relationships of L2 Form/Function/Meaning occurs explicitly through form focused instruction (described by Spada, 1997), as needed, in follow up to tasks in which learners reveal need for assistance with forms and rules in the context of communication.

Tasks in SLA Research		
Time Frame	SLA purpose: Promote L2 development	Task purpose
From 1981 (Long, 1980) to present: (reviewed in Ellis, 2003; van der Braden, Norris, & Bygate, 2008)	Directly through task implementation: (e.g., Mackey, 1999) Indirectly through interaction for: a) input comprehension (Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1983), b) output modification in response to feedback (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996) c) collaborative learning (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998) d) negotiation of meaning (Long, 1981).	Provide a context for Researcher Treatment/Intervention
More Recently: From 1993 (Long, 1993) to present: (reviewed in van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2008)	Directly through task implementation: (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Mackey & McDonough, Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006) Indirectly through: Attention processes (Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006): a) noticing of low salience forms and their functions b) intake to STM c) awareness of L2 form/function/meaning Learner involvement: (Hulstijn 2001; 1998; Laufer & Hulstijn,) a) need (e.g. understand meaning); b) search (e.g. for answers); c) evaluation (e.g. compare; apply to future context	Provide a context for Researcher Treatment/ Intervention AND Facilitate and activate: Cognitive processes Learner involvement L2 learning processes and outcomes

Table 1: Tasks in SLA Research

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Ammar, A. & Spada, N. (2006).	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of Recasts and Prompts	One Way Picture Description	Recasts and Prompts as Feedback to errors in French 3 rd person possessive determiners <i>his and her</i> Preceded by: Explicit instruction, cloze passage practice	45 minutes instruction and cloze passage practice; 30-45 minutes picture task completion	Four weeks	Prompts more effective overall: High-proficiency learners benefited equally from prompts and recasts; Low-proficiency learners benefited significantly more from prompts than recasts.
Doughty & Varela, 1998	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of Corrective Recasts in response to past formation errors Preceded by Task as Instrument for learner suppliance of past forms in obligatory contexts	Oral and written reports of classroom science experiments	Corrective recasting of learners' oral errors, circling of written errors on English L2 simple and conditional past formation	Five sessions/ Week /four weeks	Twenty-two weeks, due to delayed post testing after treatment	Large, significant and durable effect for Past Formation
de la Fuente, 2002	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of researcher intervention to encourage pushed output in negotiation	Follow Directions for Map Placement of Pictures of Targeted Vocabulary	Negotiation with and without pushed output Receptive and productive vocabulary	Two 20 minute sessions	Three weeks, including 1 week and 3 week delayed post-testing after treatment	Positive effects for negotiation on vocabulary comprehension and for negotiation with pushed output on vocabulary acquisition and productive retention
Ellis, R. & He, X. (1999). The roles of modified input and output in the incidental acquisition of word meanings. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21, 285-301	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of Teacher provided pre-modified and interactionally modified input, and for Learner negotiated output	Follow Directions for Picture Match and Label task: NNSs listened to oral directions; marked matrix picture of apartment with pictures of individual furniture Learners wrote and used their own directions; modeled vocabulary and direction design.	Pre-modified input: paired learners provided NS baseline directions, pre- modified for predicted negotiation needs. Interactionally modified input: Teacher provided NS baseline directions, with opportunities for negotiation Negotiated output: Paired learners wrote and used own directions	One 45 minute session	7 weeks, including pre- and posttest sessions	Negotiated Output Group: Outperformed others on: Direction comprehension; Vocabulary recognition in picture-matching tests; Vocabulary production in picture-labeling tests

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Ellis, R., Loewen, S., Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> , 28, 339-368.	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of explicit and implicit corrective feedback	Story Task 1: Student triads retold story to classmates, from picture slightly different from classmates' pictures. Classmates identified the differences. Story Task 2: Student triads retold story to classmates, from picture unseen by classmates, who identified the story sequence	Recasts; metalinguistic explanations English <i>past – ed.</i>	About 2 weeks	1 hour total/2 consecutive days	Metalinguistic Explanations more effective over time: Oral Imitation Test: Metalinguistic Explanations >Recasts >Control (Trend) Grammaticality Judgment Test: Metalinguistic Explanations > Recasts >Control Metalinguistic Test: Metalinguistic Explanations > Recasts >Control
Ellis, R., Tanaka, Y. & Yamazaki, A. (1994). Classroom interaction, comprehension and the acquisition of L2 word meanings. <i>Language Learning</i> , 44, 449-491	Task as Context for Treatment/ Intervention of Teacher provided pre-modified and interactionally modified input.	Match/Label task: Classes of learners listened to teacher's oral directions; marked matrix picture of kitchen with pictures of individual kitchen utensils	Premodified input: Class listened to Pre-modified directions. Interaction with teacher not permitted Interactionally Modified Input: Class listened to baseline version. Interaction with teacher permitted Control Group: Class listened to teachers read baseline version; No interaction permitted Kitchen vocabulary	1 45-minute class meeting	Three months: Post test and delayed post tests	Input quality: Interactionally Modified Groups received more repetitive input than the Pre-modified Groups, which received more repetitive input than the Baseline Control Groups Interactionally Modified Groups: Significantly higher in comprehension scores than other two groups; No significant differences in comprehension or acquisition

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Gass & Alvarez Torres, 2005	Task as Treatment/ Intervention for generating input and interaction and their effects on SLA	Jigsaw and Information Gap Tasks	Input and interaction tasks ordered to compare effects on vocabulary, rule learning for :Spanish vocabulary, gender agreement, verb (estar) + location and rule learning	Two 20- minute sessions	Forty minutes	Positive effects for vocabulary learning across all ordering; “interaction then input” significantly better than other conditions for estar + location
Gass, S. M., Mackey, A., Fernandez, M., & Alvarez-Torres, M. (1999). The effects of task repetition on linguistic output. Language Learning, 49, 549-580.	Task as Treatment/ Intervention in to address role of task repetition in morphosyntactic proficiency	Learners watched and explained video episodes of Mr, Bean	Learners told to watch and explain Mr, Bean, without audio, 1-4 times to promote accuracy: ser, estar; lexical sophistication, overall proficiency Same Content Group watched Mr. Bean episode 4 times: Simultaneously recorded explanation of what was happening. Different Content Group watched different Mr. Bean episode each time Simultaneously recorded explanation of what was happening. Controls: watched Mr. Bean episodes 2 times: Same episode at times 1, 4. Simultaneously recorded explanation of what was happening; no activity at times 2 and 3)	Two Experimental groups: Three 6-7 minute viewing sessions/ 2-3 days between sessions; Final 6-7 minute viewing session: 1 week after session 3 Control group: Two 6-7 minute viewing sessions/2 weeks between sessions	@ 2.5 weeks	Experimental and control groups improved. Possibly due to content familiarity. -ser: All groups showed improvement. -estar: Experimental groups showed improvement, but Same Content group > Different Content Group Lexical sophistication: Open-Class Words: Same Content Group: 11.5%; Control: 9.0%; Different Content: 5.5%. Closed-Class Words: Same Content: 26.8%; Different Content: 12.25%; Control: 5.9%. Mid- to low-frequency Words: Same Content: 12.25%; Different Content: 2.7%; Control: 1.5%.

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Iwashita, N. (1999, 2003). Negative feedback and positive evidence in task-based interaction. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> , 25, 1-36	Task as Intervention for generating NSs' responses to NNS imprecision as negative feedback and positive evidence L2 grammar learning	Experimental Group: 1 2-way information gap task: Spot the Difference; 2 1-way tasks: Information transfer/Picture description, drawing. Control group: Free conversation on topics of choice	Task generated Implicit negative feedback: Recasts, negotiation moves; Positive evidence: models, completion, translation, simple moves of utterance continuation for <i>Japanese locative-initial constructions; (te-form verbs)</i>	1999: 1 session/ week/12 weeks for longitudinal study of one participant 2003:1 session for cross-sectional study	1999 Longitudinal study: 12 weeks 2003 Cross-sectional study: 2 weeks: 3 treatment sessions, immediate posttest; delayed posttest 1 week later.	Experimental group > Controls in grammatical accuracy More Simple continuation moves than Negative evidence utterances (75% vs. 25%), but Negative evidence: greater effect on performance than Simple continuation moves. Positive evidence: beneficial for learners with above average pre-test scores. Treatment effects on posttest for 12 week learners only
Izumi, S. (2002). Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis: An experimental study on ESL relativization. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> , 24, 541-577.	Task as Treatment/ Intervention, through learner reconstruction of a written text and as Context for researcher designed treatments of +/- input and output modification for generating learner noticing and SLA	Computer generated Text Reading>Reconstruction	Visual input enhancement, learner output production, modification, isolated or combined for noticing, acquisition 4 Groups read text several times; wrote summary after all readings. In addition: Group 1: Output/Un-enhanced Input: Read>reconstructed text. Group 2: Output/Enhanced Input: Read > Reconstructed unenhanced and enhanced text versions. Grp 3: Enhanced Input Only: Read text> answered comprehension questions, Group 4: Un-enhanced Input Only: Read text; answered comprehension questions.	6 sessions/ 2 weeks; Output Groups: 30-60 minutes/ session Non-output Groups: 30-45 minutes/ session	3.5 weeks, including 2 weeks treatment; post-testing	All groups improved, but Output Groups > Input and Control Groups; No difference between Input and Control Groups; No difference between Output Groups with Enhanced Input and Output Only Groups

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Leeman, 2003	Task as Context for researcher interventions of stressed-enhanced positive evidence and negative evidence	Information Gap Tasks	Negative evidence, with, without recasts, and stress-enhanced positive evidence for <i>Spanish noun-adjective agreement</i>	One 20-minute session	One week including delayed posttest	Positive effect for recasts and positive evidence; no effect for negative evidence alone
Leeser, M. J. 2004. Learner proficiency and focus on form during collaborative dialogue. <i>Language Teaching Research, 8-1, 55-81</i>	Task as Treatment/ Intervention to generate noticing forms and discussion and resolution of form errors through collaborative text reconstruction	Dictogloss Tasks in Content Based, University Geography course: Learner dyads listened to and reconstructed texts Lexis, Morphosyntax	Learners paired according to same or different proficiencies, 8 with higher proficiency, 9 with lower proficiency, 4 with higher – lower proficiency.	2 sessions	2 sessions	Learners focused on both grammatical and lexical forms and meanings, with more grammatical than lexical; but this varied according to learner proficiency—higher proficiency had more form noticing, discussion, and resolution and form noticing, discussion, and resolution than other groups
Mackey, A. (2006). Feedback, noticing and instructed second language learning. <i>Applied Linguistics, 27, 405-430.</i>	Task as context for teacher intervention of answer to generate learner questions in a Jeopardy-style game show format	Jeopardy-style game: Teacher provides answers to generate learner oral and written questions	Experimental Learners described 2 pictures, 1 video clip, designed to elicit different linguistic forms. 1 st picture- past tense , 2 nd picture- Plural -s Video clip: Questions . Control group: same as experimental but with additional activities, no feedback	3 50 minute classes	150 minutes	Experimental group showed high levels of noticing (operationalized through: learning journals completed in class; stimulated recall interviews, specific questions about forms noticed,) of a) question forms, b) plural forms, and c) past tense, compared to Control group. Levels of noticing: question forms, > plural forms > past tense
Mackey & McDonough, 2000	Task as treatment to promote negotiation and form noticing for noun classifiers and questions	Spot The Difference; Information Transfer through Picture Description, Drawing; Collaborative Story Sequencing		Three 50-minute sessions per week	One week	Tasks triggered negotiation recasts that promoted noticing for noun classifiers. No negotiation or recasts for question forms

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Mackey & McDonough, 2000	Task as treatment to promote negotiation and form noticing for noun classifiers and questions	Spot The Difference; InfoTransfer Picture Descr, Drawing; Collaborative Story Sequencing		Three 50-minute sessions per week	One week	Tasks triggered negotiation recasts that promoted noticing for noun classifiers. No negotiation or recasts for question forms
Mackey, A. & Oliver, R. (2002). Interactional feedback and children's L2 development. <i>System</i> , 30, 459-477.	Task as context for treatment of interactional feedback, including negotiation and recasts, to see if it would facilitate second language development in children Hypothesis: Child ESL learners who take part in conversations with interactional feedback will develop more than child ESL learners who take part in conversations without such feedback	Information gap tasks in student-researcher dyads for tests and treatment, designed to elicit target forms from students and allow for interaction adjustments Meet your partner. Spot the difference (Identifying differences between similar pictures), Story completion (by asking questions), Picture placement (small cutouts placed on outline), Picture sequencing (Discovering order picture story), Picture drawing	Interaction and feedback group: Researchers provided interactional feedback such as recasts and negotiation to the learners during communication breakdowns Control group: Researchers' input was premodified; conversation continued without feedback Question forms: Wh: Do-fronting, Copula inversion Yes/No inversion Negative/Do 2nd Do/Aux SVO	One treatment session per day for 3 days	5 weeks, including Pre-test, Treatment, and Posttests:	8 out of 11 children in the interaction and feedback group showed sustained stage increase Only 3 out of 11 children in the control group showed sustained stage increase Increase significant at P<.05 for posttests 2 and 3
Morris, F. 2002. Negotiation moves, recasts in relation to error types and learner repair in the foreign language classroom. <i>Foreign Language Annals</i> , 35, 395-404.	Task as treatment to generate learner collaboration and interaction in co-construction of text and as context for researchers to study whether learners would provide implicit negative feedback in response to each others' ill-formed utterances and whether there were relationships between types of errors and feedback; types of errors and repairs; timing of feedback and repairs	Dyadic Jigsaw activity; collaborative writing task:	Learners given even- or odd-numbered pictures in story about daily routine, then co-constructed story orally, and co-wrote essay about the pictures Syntax/Lexis	One class period	50 minutes	1) 70% of errors received implicit negative feedback. 2) Syntactic errors: Recasted 91% of the time, Lexical errors: Negotiated 70% of the time. Low frequency of repaired errors; only negotiation responses led to repair

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Muranoi, H. (2000). Focus on form through interaction enhancement: Integrating formal instruction into a communicative task in EFL classrooms. <i>Language Learning</i> , 50, 617-673.	Task as context for interaction enhancement, formal and meaningful debriefing and generation of attentional processes	Problem-solving role-play: rehearsal phase: paired learners prepare for role-play > performance phase: learner representative role-plays with teacher > debriefing phase: teacher explains form or meaning	Interaction enhancement – recasts or requests for repetition; explicit correction for 2 groups Interaction enhancement + formal debriefing and Interaction enhancement + meaning-focusing debriefing 3. Observers No treatment (controls) English indefinite articles (a/an)	Whole study including pretest, posttest and delayed posttest: 8 weeks Treatment: 3 weeks	Whole study including pretest, posttest and delayed posttest: 8 weeks Treatment: 3 weeks	Positive effects for interaction enhancement on article use, especially if followed by formal debriefing. Effect lasted after 5-week period, suggested balanced instructions on form, meaning key to long-term effect. Oral elicitation more effective on oral performance than written on written performance., possibly. Both participating and observing learners improved use of indefinite articles
Newton, J. & Kennedy, G. (1996). Effects of communication tasks on the grammatical relations marked by second language learners. <i>System</i> , 24, 309-322.	Task(s) as treatment designed/selected to generate learner interaction and need for form focus	Shared information task: medical dilemma: read, reach consensus Shared information: zoo layout; reach consensus on arrangement Split information :medical dilemma, decide surgery recipient Split information on zoo layout/ exchange information to complete layout	Learner interaction Use of prepositions and clauses	20 -36 /each of 4 tasks	1 session	Higher use of prepositions in zoo topic than in the medical topic. Higher proportion of prepositions and conjunctions in split information than shared information task Fewer prepositions by learners than by native speakers in both split and shared tasks.
Philp, J. (2003). Constraints on 'noticing the gap': Nonnative speakers' noticing of recasts in NS-NNS interaction. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> , 25, 99-126	Task(s) as treatment to generate learner interaction and need for form focus in order to achieve task objective; and as Context for learners to respond to researcher intervention	Picture-drawing: NNS asked questions to NS . Story-completion: NNS viewed 6 pictures in sequence, asked questions about story	Recast to any non targetlike utterances, especially question misformations Linguistic Form: Improvement in English question formation	NS-NNS dyadic interaction Subjects asked questions about pictures and NS gave recast	Whole study including the pretest: approximately 3 weeks Treatment: 2 weeks (100 minutes)	High and intermediate level recalled recasts more accurately than low level. Recasts with 1-5 morphemes recalled more accurately than 6+. Recasts with 1-3 changes recalled more accurately than with 3+ changes. Related to working memory capacity

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration	Length of Study	Findings
Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006	Task(s) as treatment to generate learner modified interaction, noticing, and awareness for low salience noun and verb phrase forms in order to achieve task objective	Text based Spot the Difference, Jigsaw, Grammar Communication with text sentence differences	Learner dyads followed task directions to identify and describe sentence differences, make correct selections and recall them for reconstruction Articles, verbs	Three days of one 2-hour session and different task/day	Three days	Learners able to identify and describe form differences, make correct selections, recall them for text reconstruction through modified/unmodified interaction
Polio, C., Gass, S., & Chapin, L. (2006). Using stimulated recall to investigate NS perceptions in native-non native speaker interaction. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> , 28, 237-267	Task(s) as context to generate learner interaction and need for form focus in order to achieve task objective; <i>and</i> respond to teacher/researcher feedback in a study of learner perception and its relation to teachers' experience	2 way information exchange tasks with picture description and stimulated recall between teachers and learners	Recasts, negotiation, and ignoring of phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical errors through conversational interaction	1 treatment session	1 treatment session	No assessment completed of uptake of feedback. Analysis of teacher feedback, stimulated recall showed experienced teachers recast more than preservice teachers, but the difference was not robust
Shekary, M., & Tahririan, M. H. (2006). Negotiation of meaning and noticing in text-based online chat. <i>The Modern Language Journal</i> , 90, 557-573.	Task as treatment for learners to notice gaps between their interlanguage and the target language during negotiation of meaning in online chat rooms	Dictogloss, Jigsaw, Free discussion	Computer assisted interaction by mixed-level student-dyads Grammar, vocabulary, spelling. Language-related episodes LREs Type (Reactive, Preemptive); Source (Code, Message); Length: (Simple, Complex); Explicitness of feedback (Direct, Indirect); Combination of complexity and directness (Light, Heavy); Timing of response (Immediate, Deferred); Learner response (+/- Uptake): (Successful, Unsuccessful); Type: Inform,	30 minutes of interaction per session; total of 250 sessions among 8 groups; 7500 minutes total	1 month	1) Students initiate LREs but rate of LREs per minute is lower than in other studies because it involves NNS-NNS, negotiated, written interaction, but the ratio of LREs to talk is higher than in other studies because text-based communication allows greater opportunity to notice the gap. 2) Learners able to remember 70% of corrections in immediate posttests and 57% of corrections in delayed posttests. This decrease is consistent with previous findings, but still shows success in learning. 3) Successful uptake significant predictor of correct answers on correction test: learners who comprehended correction retained knowledge.

Study	Task Format	Task Title and/or Description	Recast, Elicit		Length of Study	Findings
			Treatment/ Intervention Form Focus	Treatment/ Intervention: Intensity, Duration		
Smith, 2005	Task as context to generate learner text chat and need for form focus in order to achieve task objective; <i>and/or</i> for learners to respond to each other's negotiation moves	Jigsaw and Decision-Making Tasks conducted through Computer-mediated text-chat	Text chat-generated negotiation for uptake of target lexical items	One 30 minute task session/ week/4 weeks	Six weeks, including final delayed post test given 1 week after final treatment	Uptake rare; had no effect on acquisition of target lexical items
Swain & Lapkin, 1998	Task as treatment to generate learner interaction and need for form focus in order to achieve task objective	Jigsaw Task: Collaborative Story Building through Pictures	Mini-Lesson followed by pair task implementation	Two sessions	Five weeks, including pre-test; 2 weeks treatment and posttest	Collaborative dialogue effective for resolving communication breakdowns and providing assistance with SLA
Swain, M. & Lapkin, S. (2001). Focus on form through collaborative dialogue. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds), <i>Researching pedagogic tasks</i> (pp. 99-118). New York: Longman	Task as treatment to generate learner interaction and need for form focus in order to achieve task objective	Jigsaw task: Story Construction from 8 pictures Dictogloss task: Participants listened to teacher-presented passage; reconstructed with partner	Instruction on targeted form/function, followed by dyadic task implementation Two grade 8 mixed-ability French immersion classes. 30 - 35 students/ class. Noun gender marking; vocabulary recognition; sentence grammaticality	Pretest, post test, two treatment sessions per day /2 weeks, Each task took 10- 14 minutes	5 weeks	Jigsaw task appears to have constrained the range of students' time on task, range in the total number of language-related episodes produced, and the range of student performance in their written narratives, in particular with respect to vocabulary use.
Takashima & Ellis, 1999	Task as instrument to draw attention to form through (a) input provided in task content/directions, <i>and/or</i> (b) interaction <i>and/or</i> output generated by task implementation, and mediated by researcher clarification requests in response to non target past verb forms, in order to achieve task objective of story reconstruction and presentation	Story reconstruction and presentation	Focused vs. non-focused clarification requests in response to utterances with <i>non-target past-verb forms</i>	One 45-minute session/week for 3 weeks	Six weeks, including posttests and delayed posttests following treatment	Clarification requests were effective for learners' self – correction and reformulation; mixed results for verb tense accuracy

Table 2: Design of Study

Preliminary Activities					
Individual Interviews and Pretests					
Instruction and Research Activities					
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Experimental and Control Participants Complete individual Pretests	All Participants discuss theme related to Passage1* Experimental and Control Participant Pairs carry out/read respective Task /Passage 1.	All Participants discuss theme related to Passage2* Experimental and Control Participant Pairs carry out/read respective Task /Passage 2	All Participants discuss theme related to Passage3* Experimental and Control Participant Pairs carry out/read respective Task/Passage 3	All Participants discuss theme related to Passage4* Experimental and Control Participant Pairs carry out/read respective Task/Passage 4	Experimental and Control Participants Complete individual Posttests

*Passages taken from Mims & Nollen (2000); adjusted for consistency in length and number of items.

Length of Study

- 2 weeks
- 2 treatment sessions per week (30 minutes X 2 X2 = 120 minutes)
- 30 minutes of task treatment and 1 hour of exposure to language

Form focus of Study

English articles *the*, *a*, and \emptyset

Participants of Study:

Initial Participants:
52 Volunteers
DIALANG Score Range: B1 – B2 on Structure and vocabulary sections

Experimental Participants

44 participants:
6 Pairs of 2 Participants for Implicit and Explicit, 7 Pairs for Incidental Focus on Form and 3 Pairs for Controls
DIALANG Score Range: B1 – B2 on Structure and vocabulary sections n/a for 1 participants

Pre-test Score Range:
Noticing: 16 – 59% for all participants
Noticing Means: 30.8 % INCIDENTAL; 16.7% IMPLICIT; 59.1 % EXPLICIT; 44.4 % CONTROL

Production: 36.7 % - 46.3 % for all participants
Production Means: 43.8 % INCIDENTAL; 46.3 % IMPLICIT; 45.8 % EXPLICIT; 36.7 % CONTROL

Knowledge: 45 % - 57.5 % for all participants
Knowledge Means: 46.9 % INCIDENTAL; 52.7 % IMPLICIT; 57.5% EXPLICIT; 45% CONTROL

Task Treatments for Incidental, Implicit, and Explicit Participant Pairs
Spot the Difference Task (Passage abbreviated from 13 sentences)
Answers underlined

Incidental, Implicit, Explicit Pairs read:

“Where’s the Beef”*

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to help you become more accurate and precise in your speaking and writing, and to review and edit information more carefully.

Directions

1. Read the following passage from the chapter that you read on “Where’s the Beef” When you are done reading, go to the next page and don't look at the passage again.

1. “Where’s the beef?” 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980’s Wendy’s commercials, has a special meaning in the McDonald’s in Bombay, India. 3. Because of the large Hindu population, there isn’t any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be Big Macs without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald’s so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty on a sesame seed roll? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches on foreign shores to the fact that “McDonald’s is still an American icon.”

2. Go to the next page and don't turn back.

*Passage from Mims & Nollen, (2000); adjusted for consistency in length and number of items.

3. To do this activity, you have to talk with your partner.
4. Here is a version of the passage you just read. The first sentence is the same as it was in the passage. The other sentences have different words, extra words or word omissions.
5. Do not show your Version of the passage to your partner.

Incidental Pairs	
Version A	Version B
1. “Where’s the beef?” 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980’s Wendy’s commercials, has <u>a strong meaning</u> in the McDonald’s in Bombay, India. 3. Because of <u>the large Hindu population</u> , there isn’t any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be <u>Big burgers</u> without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald’s so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty <u>on a poppy seed roll</u> ? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches <u>on faraway shores</u> to the fact that “McDonald’s is still “an American icon.”	1. “Where’s the beef?” 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980’s Wendy’s commercials, has <u>a special meaning</u> in the McDonald’s in Bombay, India. 3. Because of <u>the big Hindu population</u> , there isn’t any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be <u>Big Macs</u> without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald’s so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty <u>on a sesame seed roll</u> ? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches <u>on foreign shores</u> to the fact that “McDonald’s is still “an American icon.”

Implicit and Explicit Pairs	
Version A	Version B
1. “Where’s the beef?” 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980’s Wendy’s commercials, has <u>special meaning</u> in the McDonald’s in Bombay, India. 3. Because of <u>a large Hindu population</u> , there isn’t any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be <u>the Big Macs</u> without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald’s so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty <u>on the sesame seed roll</u> ? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches <u>on foreign shores</u> to the fact that “McDonald’s is still “an American icon.”	1. “Where’s the beef?” 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980’s Wendy’s commercials, <u>has a special meaning</u> in McDonald’s in Bombay, India. 3. Because of <u>the large Hindu population</u> , there isn’t any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be <u>Big Macs</u> without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald’s so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty <u>on a sesame seed roll</u> ? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches <u>on the foreign shores</u> to the fact that “McDonald’s is still “an American icon.”

Incidental, Implicit, Explicit Pairs:

1. Read your Sentence 1 aloud to your partner.
2. Read your next sentence aloud to your partner. Listen to your partner's sentence.
3. Find the differences between these two sentences. Read them aloud to your partner
4. Compare your sentence with your partner’s. Choose the sentence that is more accurate and precise. Give reasons for your choice. Agree on one choice. Underline the choice you agreed about.
5. Repeat Steps 2-4 for the remaining sentences.
6. Re-read the passage aloud to each other. Make sure that you and your partner agree on your choices. Make sure that you have a general understanding of the passage. You and your partner will be asked to complete some of the passage when you go to the next page. Make sure you are ready to do that.

7. Go to the next page and don't turn back.

8. Either you or your partner has the page with the complete Direction 8.

- Use that page for now.
- Complete the passage in your own words. Try to use the words you and your partner chose, but if you can't remember your choices or other words that were in the passage, use your own words.
- Either you or your partner can be the writer.
- Both you and your partner should talk about what you write.

1. "Where's the beef?" 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, clever Sarah Peller in the 1980's Wendy's commercials, has _____ in the McDonald's in Bombay, India. 3. Because of _____, there isn't any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be _____ without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald's so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty _____? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches _____ to the fact that "McDonald's is still an American icon."

9. Go to the next page.

10. Here is the passage again.

- The underlined words make the sentences more accurate and precise.

1. "Where's the beef?" 2. That famous line, spoken by the spunky, elderly Clara Peller in the 1980's Wendy's commercials, has a special meaning in the McDonald's in Bombay, India. 3. Because of the large Hindu population, there isn't any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be Big Macs without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald's so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty on a sesame seed roll? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches on foreign shores to the fact that "McDonald's is still an American icon."

Incidental, Implicit Pairs

11. Compare the passage with the one that you and your partner wrote.

If you and your partner find any differences, explain the reasons to each other.

Write your reasons next to the numbers below. You can write as many reasons as you would like. You don't have to write reasons next to all the numbers.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Explicit Pairs:

11. Compare the passage with the one that you and your partner wrote.

If you and your partner find any differences in the way you used a and the, you can find the reasons for the difference in chart below.

Sentence	If you and your partner used:	instead of the correct, under-lined answer:	You didn't follow this rule for using articles:
2	article <u>the</u> , or no article at all	<u>has a special meaning.</u>	Use article <u>a</u> with words that can refer to any person, place, or thing. In sentence 2, <u>a special meaning</u> refers to any person, place, or item that can have a special meaning.
3	article <u>a</u> or no article at all	<u>the large Hindu population</u>	Use article <u>the</u> with words that are related to words mentioned already. In Sentence 3, <u>the large Hindu population</u> is related to Bombay, India, which was mentioned in Sentence 2.
4	article <u>the</u>	<u>Big Macs</u>	Do not use article <u>the</u> with words in a general category. In Sentence 4, <u>Big Macs</u> refers to Big Mac hamburgers in general

To practice these rules, copy the correct answers into the passage below.

1. "Where's the beef?" 2. That famous line, spoken by _____ in the 1980's Wendy's commercials, has _____ in the McDonald's in Bombay, India. 3. Because of _____, there isn't any beef in the burgers there. 4. How can there be _____ without the beef? 5. Why is McDonald's so wildly popular in a country that serves lamb maharaja Macs instead of the old standby, the all-beef patty _____? 6. Author Lini Kadaba attributes the success of the Golden arches _____ to the fact that "McDonald's is still an American icon."

Noticing Test:

Assessed ability to retain L2 articles in the short term.

Determined by accuracy of article of *a*, *the*, or *zero* inserted in noun phrases in cloze version of passage read immediately prior to test. Consistent with Recall of noun phrases with articles during Cloze Step of Research Tasks. (See Task Direction 8)

Knowledge Test

Assessed ability to judge grammaticality of L2 article use.

Determined by accurate identification of sentences correctly encoded with articles within a meaningful passage.

Consistent with Decision-Making, Justifications about articles during Choosing and Comparing Steps of Research Tasks (See Task Directions 1-6).

Production Accuracy Test

Assessed ability to use articles accurately in meaningful contexts.

Determined by accuracy of article of *a*, *the*, or *zero* inserted in noun phrases in previously unread passage with a line preceding each noun phrase.

Consistent with Decision-Making about articles during Cloze Step of the Research Tasks (See Task Direction 8).

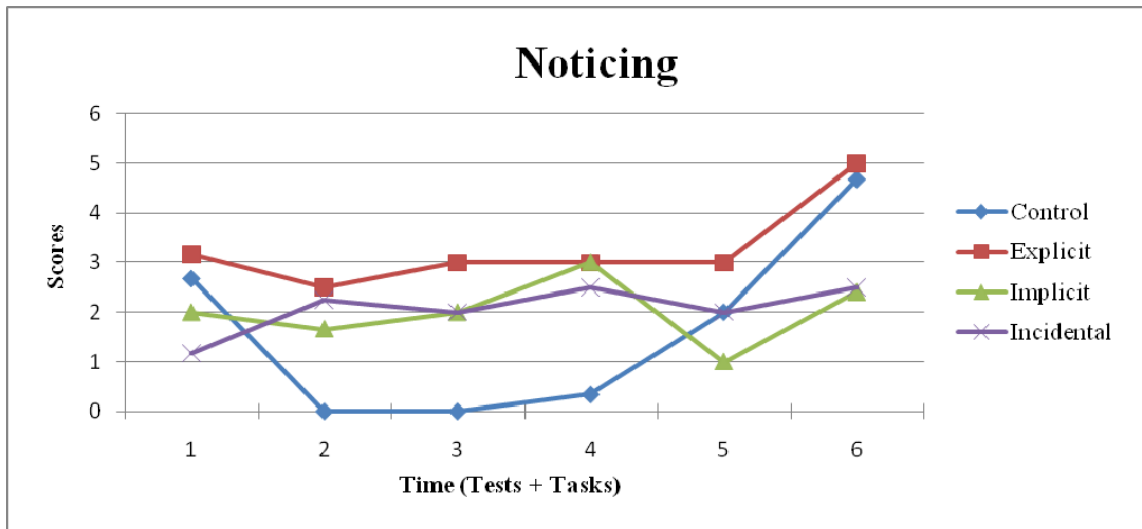
Noticing	Knowledge	Production Accuracy
<p>At some point, a woman will ask a man how she looks. The man must be careful about the answer to this question. It is best to first give an opinion that is honest yet sensitive. The strategy after that is to collapse on the floor and pretend he is dead. This is the easiest way out because it is impossible to form a correct answer. Women generally do not think of their looks in the same way as the men they know. Women place great value on their looks, and think that their appearance is "not good enough."</p> <p>At some point, a woman will ask a man how she looks. The man must be careful about the answer to this question. It is best to first give an opinion that is honest yet sensitive. The strategy after that is to collapse on the floor and pretend he is dead. This is the easiest way out because it is impossible to form a correct answer. Women generally do not think of their looks in the same way as the men they know. Women place great value on their looks, and think that their appearance is "not good enough."</p>	<p>It used to be that what mattered in life was how woman looked and what men did. Many women had a negative attitude about these different points of view. Now, due to effects of social and psychological factors, what women do matters more in the world. Meanwhile, how the man looks is also beginning to matter a great deal to him. He can have an operation to tighten the sagging skin under his eyes and flatten his belly. He can use coloring products to cover up his gray hair. He buys the magazines to find out how to lose excess weight and gain self-confidence. According to the psychiatrists, there are increasing social pressures on men that require them to look good. What physical characteristics do the others expect them to have? Is there a special, masculine ideal that they should try to imitate? These are the questions that American men ask themselves these days.</p>	<p>In the last ten years, mass media has changed the ways in which men are portrayed to the world. <u> </u> <u> </u> Clothing ads send <u> </u> <u> </u> message that how <u> </u> <u> </u> men look is extremely important. Nowadays, it has become much more culturally expected for <u> </u> <u> </u> men in our society to be worried about <u> </u> <u> </u> gain in weight. They are concerned about <u> </u> <u> </u> the impression they give other people. <u> </u> <u> </u> The number of men who try to live up to <u> </u> <u> </u> woman's expectations has increased greatly. In some instances, they can even develop <u> </u> <u> </u> eating disorders. Their eating disorders, which begin innocently, with <u> </u> <u> </u> desire to be slim, can quickly become problematic.</p>

*Passages from Mims & Nollen, (2000); adjusted for consistency in length and number of items.

Answers shown for display purposes only

Equal number of contexts for a, the, zero forms in 2nd mention, cataphoric, generic, indefinite functions in pre and post versions of each test type

Noticing



	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%		HI-LOW	1/60+	2/40+	3/30+	
Control	4.4/44	4.7/47	+0.3/+3		PRESCR	EXP	CON	INC=IMP	
Explicit	3.3/59	4.1/59	0		POSTSCR	EXP	CON	INC=IMP	
Implicit	2.5/41	2.6/38	-0.1/-4						
Incidental	1.8/31	2.7/39	+1.2/+8		GAIN	INC	CON	EXP	IMP

PRE	EXP > CON = IMP > INC
POST	EXP > CON > IMP = INC
GAINS	INC > CON > EXP > IMP

Observations:

Explicit, Implicit, and Control: consistent pre- and post –test percentage scores.
 Incidental: Considerable improvement

Further analysis:

Cloze section of task treatments:

Each Cohort retained a level of similar Noticing during each task treatment.

Incidental: Post test score elevated by absence of participants with low pre-test and task treatment scores

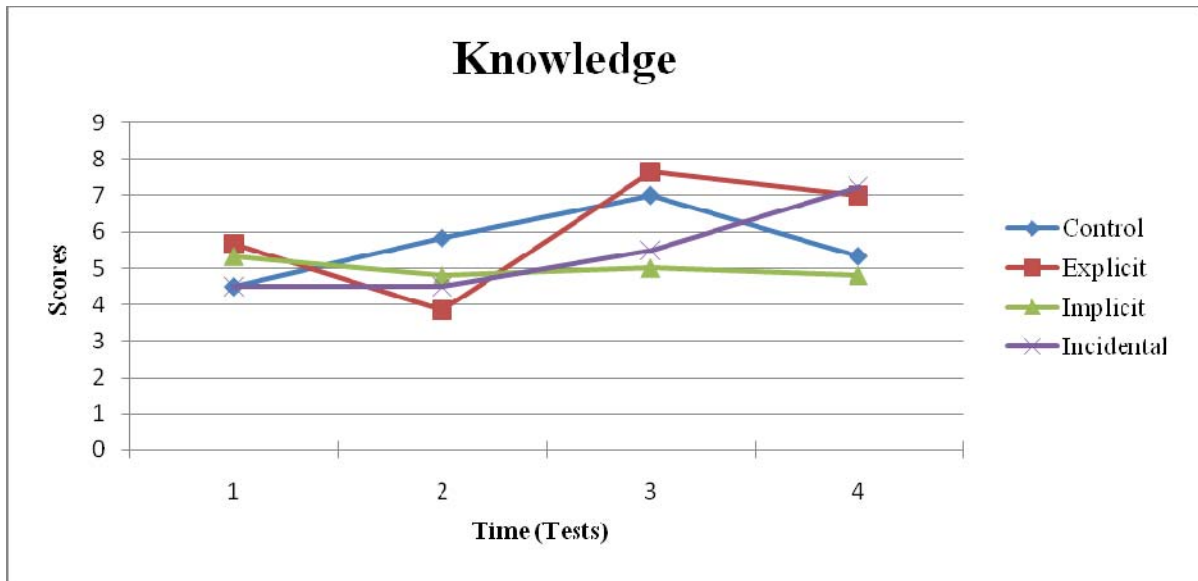
Participants’ oral discourse during task implementation:

Noticing, Learner Involvement among all Cohorts: Searched for, advanced forms had identified as different, compared them with those of their partners, evaluated appropriateness, accuracy, referred to them during cloze passage.

Inference:

Possible that all three approaches were effective for task implementation and completion,
 But their impact on Noticing required a greater number of task treatments and a longer study duration.

Knowledge



	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%	HI-LOW	1	2	3	4
Control	4.5/45	5.3/53	+0.8/+8	PRESCORE	EX	IMP	INC=CON	
Explicit	5.8/58	6.6/66	+0.8/+8	POSTSCORE	EX=IMP		CON	IMP
Implicit	5.3/53	4.6/46	-0.7/-7	GAIN	INC	EXP=CON		IMP
Incidental	4.7/47	6.6/66	+1.9/+19					

PRE	EXP > IMP > INC = CON
POST	EXP = INC > CON > IMP
GAINS	INC > EXP = CON > IMP

Observations:

Explicit and Control: Similar patterns in scores and gains
 Implicit: Little change
 Incidental: Lower pre-test scores; highest gains

Further analysis

Interim tests of Knowledge after Task Treatments:
 Implicit: Consistent with pre and post-test scores
 Incidental, Explicit: Progression throughout.

Oral discourse during Treatment Tasks:

Evidence of appropriateness judgments, Learner Involvement.
 All Cohorts searched for, advanced forms identified as different, compared with partners', evaluated appropriateness, accuracy.

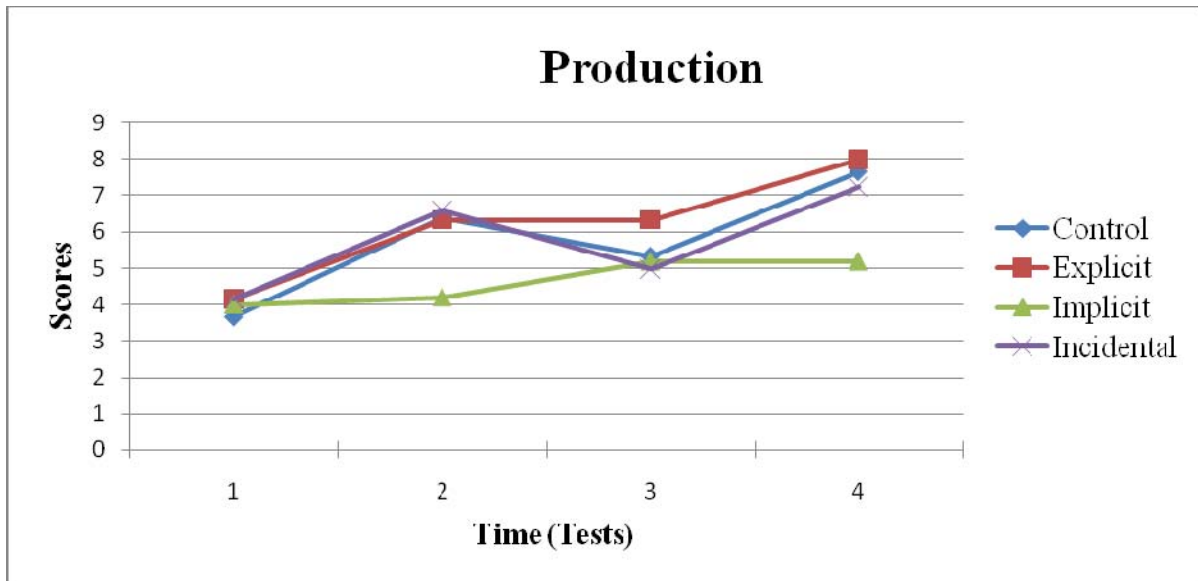
Inference:

Explicit and Incidental Approaches promoted Attention and Learner Involvement in distinct, but important ways for SLA:
 Explicit: Form focused correction and instruction on final step of Treatment Tasks.
 Incidental: Decisions and deliberations about noun and modifier appropriateness entailed repetition of same and different nouns and modifiers in phrases encoded with same, accurate articles.

Implicit:

Greater challenge during decisions and deliberations about noun phrase appropriateness: focused on locating low salience articles only.
 Likely to have performed better with Form focused correction and instruction, based on results of Explicit Approach, which was exactly like that Implicit Approach in all other steps.
 Might require more time to impact SLA.

Production Accuracy



	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%	HI-LOW			
Control	3.7/37	7.7/77	+4.0/+40	PRESCR	EX=IMP=INC	CON	
Explicit	4.6/46	8.0/80	+3.4/+34	POSTSCR	EXPC>/=INC=CON	IMP	
Implicit	4.6/46	6.3/63	+1.7/+17	GAIN	CON	EXP=INC	IMP
Incidental	4.4/44	7.7/77	+3.3/+33				

PRE	EXP = IMP > / = INC > CON
POST	EXP > / = INC = CON > IMP
GAINS	CON > EXP = INC > IMP

Observations:

Explicit, Implicit, Incidental: comparable pre-test percentage scores, gains.
 Control Cohort lowest pre-test scores; highest gain scores.

Implicit: More modest gains, possibly due to task demands on time needed to identify word, phrase differences, choose which was better; did not require L2 production.

Further Analysis:

Oral discourse during Treatment Tasks:

Evidence of oral production as Cohorts searched for, advanced forms identified as different, compared with partners', evaluated appropriateness, accuracy.

Inference:

Explicit Approach: More opportunity for accurate articles production during Treatment Task Exercise.

Incidental Approach: More opportunity for accurate articles production during Choosing step, as accurate article is used by participants in two different noun phrases/task.

COMPARISON BY COHORT

EXPLICIT

Noticing	3.3/59	4.1/59	0
Knowledge	5.8/58	6.6/66	+0.8/+8
Production Accuracy	4.6/46	8.0/80	+3.4/+34

Observations and Inferences

Highest pre-test scores in Knowledge, Noticing; Highest gains in Production Accuracy

Production Accuracy: opportunities for conversation and discussion through study participation, participants from large pool of applicants, eager to participate because research was classroom based, content focused, conversational.

Knowledge: Demands of sentence comparison, instruction and correction invited learner involvement, accurate focus on form in the context of meaning

IMPLICIT

	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%
Noticing	2.5/41	2.6/38	-0.1/-4
Knowledge	5.3/53	4.6/46	-0.7/-7
Production Accuracy	4.6/46	6.3/63	+1.7/+17

Observations and Inferences

Highest pre-test scores in Knowledge.

Highest post scores, gains in Production Accuracy.

Production Accuracy: opportunities for conversation and discussion through study participation, participants from large pool of applicants, eager to participate because research was classroom based, content focused, conversational.

Declines in Knowledge and Noticing scores possibly due to Treatment Task demands: More focused attention to form differences; no opportunity for follow up instruction and corrective feedback.

INCIDENTAL

	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%
Noticing	1.8/31	2.7/39	+1.2/+8
Knowledge	4.7/47	6.6/66	+1.9/+19
Production accuracy	4.4/44	7.7/77	+3.3/+33

Observations and Inferences

Highest pre-test percentage scores in Knowledge

Highest post-test percentage scores, gains in Production Accuracy.

Considerable development of Noticing.

Performed better and displayed continual development more than other Cohorts

Possibly due to emphasis on locating differences in meaning, encoded in two noun phrases with same, accurate articles in each task.

More noticeable differences, e.g. "the old clock" vs. "the old watch" allowed participants to produce more language, hear more accurate phrases, and notice their features.

CONTROL

	PRE/GRM/%	PSTGRM/%	GN/GRM/%
Noticing	4.4/44	4.7/47	+0.3/+3
Knowledge	4.5/45	5.3/53	+0.8/+8
Production Accuracy	3.7/37	7.7/77	+4.0/+40

Observations and Inferences

Highest pre-test scores in Knowledge, Noticing

Highest post-test scores, gains in Production Accuracy.

Opportunities for conversation and discussion offered by participation in the study

Higher pre test scores for Noticing and Knowledge, remained relatively low in post testing.

Possibly due to exclusion from Treatment Task participation and accompanying opportunities to practice Noticing, build grammar knowledge through production of article form in two noun phrase contexts/task.

Discussion

1. An Incidental Approach that uses Spot the Difference Tasks with Meaning Focused Phrase Differences might be more effective for L2 Noticing, Knowledge, Production Accuracy than an Implicit Approach that uses Spot the Difference Tasks with Form Focused Morpheme Differences or an Explicit Approach that uses these same Form Focused Tasks and follows them up with Form Focused Instruction.
2. Possible reasons for the effectiveness of an Incidental Approach. It provides opportunities for learners to do the following:
 - 2a. Hear and read correct encodings of articles in context, as produced by themselves and each other.
 - 2b. Hear and read correct articles in two times as many np contexts
 - 2c. Receive modified, meaningful input and produce modified, meaningful output that extends beyond input flood or output practice.
3. Whether an Incidental Approach would be effective without a Spot the Difference task could not be determined by results of this study.
4. When designing tasks for promoting SLA of low salience features, teachers should use **phrase** function and meaning as a unit of design. For example, they should provide phrases that cover multiple contexts:
 To make articles salient to learners, teachers should make sure the articles occur in exophoric, anaphoric, unique contexts, with two different nouns or modifiers in each context.
 To make verb ending differences salient, they should make sure the endings are used with each of two different verbs that introduce, background, generalize, and detail information, or that make temporal and spatial references with pronouns and adverbs.
5. Choosing, Recalling, and Comparing *the old clock* and *the old watch* might be a more effective way for learners to notice, acquire, and produce correct forms of articles *a*, *the*, and \emptyset than Choosing, Recalling, and Comparing *an old clock* and *the old clock*.
6. Overall Success of the Cohorts was consistent with Cognitive and Learner Involvement Constructs

Tasks, Cognitive Processes, Learner Involvement					
Task Step	1. Read original passage	2 Read Version A or B of original passage	3. Choose between phrases in Versions A and B. Justify choices	4. Recall choices from Step 3. Insert in cloze of original; Explain, justify	5. Compare choices with original/Identify differences;List/use to complete original
Attention Processes	Notice low salience forms that encode function, meaning	Notice low salience forms that encode function, meaning. Display awareness of form, function, meaning through explanation, justification	Notice low salience forms that encode function, meaning Notice differences between forms that encode function, meaning;	Recall forms from Step 3 to reveal intake from STM Intake for further application to text passage completion Display awareness of form, function, meaning through explanation and/or justification	Notice the gap between needed and unneeded forms Intake for further task application to list or passage Display awareness of form, function, meaning through explanation and/or justification
Involvement	Need to understand passage	Search for differences	Evaluate choice of differences by comparing choices	Evaluate choices by comparing choices with application to cloze passage completion	Evaluate choice of differences by comparing choices, apply to list or passage completion

Research Directions:

Continue Data Collection

- Recruit Participants from Community
- Continue University/Community Classroom Format
- Keep records on Tasks for Research and Instruction on L2 Form/Function/Meaning
- Identify Theoretical Constructs that Support TBLT

Extend Data Collection

- across National and International Contexts
- with additional Cohort that reads, discusses, compares passages as a conversation, but does so without a focused, Spot the Difference Task

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