

THE EFFECTS OF EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLIMENT RESPONSES

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the effects of explicit and implicit instructions in the development of EFL learners' speech acts of complimenting (Cs) and complimenting response (CRs). The participants in this research were 56 intermediate EFL learners from a language center, participating as members of intact classes that were divided into three groups of control, explicit instruction, and implicit instruction. They were asked to answer an open-ended Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect the primary data in the pre-test and post-test sessions. The items in the DCT included 12 situations based on which the participants were required to give or respond to compliments to evaluate their knowledge of Cs and CRs. Then their responses were collected, tabulated, and analyzed. The treatment including explicit and implicit instructions on pragmatic competence lasted for three weeks after which all groups were given the DCT in post-test to measure their pragmatic competence. The results of the study highlighted the effectiveness of both implicit and explicit instructions in developing EFL learners' speech acts of Cs and CRs. It seems that pragmatic instruction regardless of type speeds up the process of learning through consciousness rising and should be considered by language teachers as one of the ways in which EFL learners can most efficiently develop pragmatic competence.

Keywords: Compliment, Compliment Response, Pragmatics, Implicit, Explicit, DCT.

INTRODUCTION

Compliments are often studied under pragmatics of politeness because they are generally given and accepted as praise (Yule, 2003), Normala Othman (2011, p. 4) indicates that compliment exchanges are formulaic expressions that are recognizable in the community that uses them. They occur in pairs and each unit influences the production of the other one. The role of instruction on learners' awareness and production of speech acts in general and complements in particular has generated a lot of interest in the field of Inter-Language Pragmatics (ILP) (Eslami et al., 2004; Fukuya et al., 1998; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Martinez-Flor, 2004; Normala Othman, 2011; Rose & Ng Kwai-fun, 2001; Takahashi, 2001). In fact, the rationale for the need of instruction in pragmatics is provided by Schmidt's (1993) argument that simple exposure to the target language is not enough for developing pragmatic competence. He believes that pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often not salient to learners

and thus not likely to be noticed even after prolonged exposure.

As there are few studies addressing the effects of implicit and explicit instructions on the acquisition of compliments and compliment responses in EFL context, this study seeks to explore how the two types of instruction improve the L2 learners' pragmatic competence in order to produce appropriate speech acts of "complimenting and complimenting response" in their daily conversations. The following research questions guided this study:

1. Does explicit instruction in teaching speech acts of "compliment and complimenting response" affect EFL learners' pragmatic competence?
2. Does implicit approach in teaching speech acts of "compliment and complimenting response" affect EFL learners' pragmatic competence?

1. Literature Review

Kasper (1997) defines pragmatics as the ability to produce

and comprehend a communicative act which includes the speaker's knowledge about the social distance, the social status between the speakers involved, the cultural knowledge such as politeness, and the explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge. Research addressing realization strategies of speech acts used by Foreign Language (FL) learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996; Bouton, 1996; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002;) has highlighted the necessity of instruction in pragmatics based on the evidence that a high grammatical competence is not always indicative of a successful pragmatic performance in the Target Language (TL). As a result, arguments have been put forward for the inclusion of pragmatic instruction including speech acts of compliments and compliment responses in second and foreign language classrooms.

Holmes (1986, p. 485) defined compliment as a speech act that "explicitly or implicitly attributes credits to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and hearer." Herbert (1989) examined a corpus of approximately 700 compliments and categorized compliment functions into 4 compliment actions and 5 compliment responses.

The following studies investigated the effects of instruction in the development of compliment and compliment responses as part of L2 learners' pragmatic competence. Holmes and Brown (1987), who developed a set of exercises to facilitate the acquisition of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. The exercises were aimed at identifying, as well as producing, Cs and CRs. Billmyer (1990) conducted a study investigating the effect of instruction on the performance of compliments by two groups of Japanese adult females studying English as a foreign language at the University of Pennsylvania. Instruction was shown to have positive effects for learners on five out of seven measures of performance. Ishihara (2011) introduces classroom instruction on giving and responding to compliments for intermediate ESL learners. In her previous study (2003), the results had led to the findings indicating that instruction probably facilitated learners' improvement not only in terms of giving but

responding to compliments. Ishihara (2003) explores immediate and delayed effects of formal instruction on giving and responding to compliments in an ESL classroom setting. The instruction, given to 31 intermediate adult ESL learners, facilitated their out-of-class observation and interaction. The results of the analyses lend support to the positive effects of formal instruction in pragmatics reported in previous studies.

Rose and Kwai-fong (2001) compared the effects of inductive and deductive approaches to the teaching of English compliments and compliment responses to University-level learners of English in Hong Kong. Results for compliment responses revealed a positive effect only for the deductive group, indicating that although inductive and deductive instruction may both lead to gains in pragmalinguistic proficiency, only the latter may be effective for developing sociopragmatic proficiency. They point out that more research is needed before any conclusions can be reached concerning cultural preferences for compliment responses. Due to scarcity of research in EFL context, this study intended to investigate the effects of implicit and explicit instruction on EFL learners' Cs and CRs development.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research adopted an experimental, pre-test/post-test design (pre-test, teaching, and post-test). Open-ended Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) were used to collect the primary data in the pre-test and post-test sessions. The treatment study lasted for three weeks. Participants in the control group did not receive any instruction on pragmatics.

2.2 Participants

The participants of the study were selected from intermediate level EFL learners at Jihad Daneshgahi language institute. They were taught Top Notch which came in 12 series, ranging from Fundamental A for beginners to Summit 2B for advanced language learners. The participants' age ranged from 20 to 25 years old and they have already passed six to eleven semesters of learning English courses. The underlying philosophy for this similarity in level was to determine how equal they were in

terms of proficiency, though they were all at the same institutional placement level. The total number of 56 subjects from three intermediate classes of Top Notch 3A and 3B which the researchers randomly assigned as control, explicit experimental and implicit experimental groups participated as intact groups due to institutional constraints. At the time, students attended the classes two days a week, two hours a session. The researcher selected these three groups at different times in order to observe all classes. Participants in the experimental explicit instruction group received explicit instruction on pragmatics from their instructor. The instructor made them aware of what they were going to learn and also of how they can use the structures.

The participants in the experimental implicit instruction group received implicit instruction on pragmatics. That is to say, the instructor applied inductive method in teaching pragmatic competence and speech act so that language learners would themselves achieve a general structure and rule for making statements in this regard.

After three weeks, both groups of participants who received instructions along with the control group were given a DCT post-test to measure their pragmatic competence.

Our 19 participants in the experimental group received a complete explanation during their first meeting to become familiar with the process. During the three-week duration of this study, all 56 Iranian participants met two times a week for 2 academic hours. Enrolling in an "English for daily conversation" class, participants in all three groups were engaged in doing their activities, followed by the teachers' explanation about their difficulties.

Participants in the control group did not engage in any explicit pragmatics activities. All participants in control group participated in 90 minutes, which was the regular class time in those three weeks. In these 90 minutes, students interacted with the teacher and other learners through various classroom tasks. Additionally, students had small group conversations with their peers during the discussion. It means that students practiced using English through writing, listening, reading, and speaking.

Participants in both experimental groups were given explicit and implicit instruction on pragmatics during the extra 30

minutes of each class session, with a focus on learning "Cs and CRs" features, which help them make proper Cs and CRs, such as how to give a compliment on having a new dress or shirt and responding to it. These components were used and explicitly taught to those in the experimental explicit instruction group but not for the experimental implicit instruction group.

2.3 Coding Scheme of the Study

In the present study, the following coding system adopted from Zhang's study (2013, p.8) for compliment response was used. He divided the informants' response to the situation into three types: Compliment, Non-compliment and Opt Out. Non-compliment refers to responses that cannot be regarded as compliments, be it either mere expression of thanks, or bound semantic formula occurring on their own, or replies that do not carry any positive meanings. Opt out refers to the cases where the informants indicate that "I would not say anything" when a compliment is expected in that situation. Table 1 shows the coding system of compliment strategies.

2.3.1 Rating Method

Rating learners' responses was another major task to be done before analyzing the whole collected data. In order to achieve high degree of reliability in this research, two raters carried out the process of coding the data independently. The reliability index was calculated, accounted for 95% of the categorized data. Then the 5% remaining value for agreement achieved through discussion and consultation with each other.

The researchers adopted a five-point rating scale, similar to that of Chen and Boonkongsan's (2012) study, to measure

Compliment Strategies	Raw tokens (the number of instances of using each compliment strategy)	Percentages
Explicit		
Implicit		
Explanation		
Information Question		
Future Reference		
Contrast		
Advice		
Request		
Other		
Non-compliment		
Opt-Out		
Total		

Table 1. The Coding System of Compliment Strategies

what the subjects had answered. The responses were first categorized into 11 groups that Zhang (2013) identified. Then based on the type of response and whether they are Compliment, Non-compliment and Opt Out, the authors rated each answer and calculated the percentages.

2.4 The Instrument

The major instruments used in this study included Open-ended Discourse Completion Tests (DCT). Open-ended DCT is a measure of learners' speech act performance that consists of a written speech act discourse completion task. In this study, the open-ended DCT contained requesting situations adopted from Chen and Boonkongaen's (2012) study of Compliment and Compliment Responses. They adopted the DCT from Yuan's (2002) study of Cs and CRs that contained 12 situations.

The DCT pre-test and post-test were used to measure participants' pragmatic competence with or without explicit instruction in this study. Contextual variables such as relative social status, level of acquaintance (close, somewhat close, or distant), level of social distance, gender, and the intensity of the act (magnitude of imposition) for each situation were controlled by neutralizing their effects in data analysis.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers started collecting data by asking language learners of all three groups to provide an answer for every given situation in DCT. Since the participants were in an intermediate level of the language learning process, the pre-test was intended to measure the extent to which the subjects have realized complimenting and responding types.

The questionnaire had two parts. Part one measured students' ability in complimenting and it consisted of 8 items. In part two of the questionnaire, students' pragmatics competence of responding to compliments was measured.

The first part of the questionnaire in the DCT included 8 items and asked students to give compliments. Item one described a situation in which a student saw a classmate helping some charity and delivering relief goods. Students were asked to give a compliment based on the situation

they read. For this situation, one expects explicit and explanation strategies. For example, "You are so generous" or "I saw you helping the NGOs and it shows how kind you are." A total of 5 learners out of 56 provided explicit compliments (clear and related Cs). 10 learners gave implicit compliments (not clear but may be related Cs) by writing statements like "May God help you in difficulties". 18 other learners provided information questions like "How much did you donate?" 21 learners gave advice like "Although you are not from a rich family, you should always be of help". And only 2 statements were rated opt-out (not regarded as Cs). Therefore, 37.5 % of the learners gave advice and only 8.30 % gave explicit compliments which were needed in this case.

The second item presented a situation in which a friend rescued another friend's laptop which contained important data. For this item, three possible complimenting strategies were intended: explicit, information questions, and future reference. For example, "Thank you very much. You are a computer whiz", or "How did you do that?" and "You will be a computer expert one day".

The analytical examination of this item showed that students were only able to use the first strategy again, which means they were not aware of other complimenting types. 50 language learners used explicit strategy saying and the other 6 learners' were opt-out. In other words, 89.30 % were able to compliment correctly.

Implicit and explanation types, on the other hand, were expected for the third item. This item depicted a situation in which a friend listens to another one opening his/her heart saying s/he feels stressed out. Responses like "I feel a lot better now" or "You feel good when you have someone so close to you that listens patiently and understands what you say". Once again, compliments were of an explicit type. 47 learners wrote compliments like "Thank you for listening to me", while this could not be really used when someone is talking about his/her feelings. 9 other compliments were rated opt-out. This means that 83.95% think saying a mere "Thank you" may do good.

In item number 4, a situation was given in which a classmate delivered a good presentation via power point. For this, explicit, implicit, future reference, and contrast

strategies were considered. For instance, "It was perfect", "I couldn't have done it like that myself", "You will make a good teacher", and "It was way better than John's presentation". Again, what I received for this was more of explicit compliments, like "You did a great job!" 40 learners complimented explicitly, 10 compliments were non-compliments, and the other 6 compliments were opt-out.

For item number five, all complimenting strategies were possible but request and future reference. The item depicted a situation in which someone shows a friend a brand new cellphone with all latest options and many functions it has. The complimenter could say "Congratulations! You got the best one", "I love it", "I read an article about this brand. They say it is the best ever", "How do you like it?", "It is a cutting-edge, top-of-the line cell" and "Take good care of it".

For this item, both explicit and implicit strategies were used by language learners. In other words, they were the only strategies used. 38 learners, or 68.75%, deployed explicit strategy and the other 18 learners, 32.15%, used the implicit type.

In item six, a friend is wearing a nice and beautiful dress/shirt his/her aunt bought him/her from a travel to the U.S. S/he looks so nice. For this item, explicit, implicit, information question, future reference, advice, and request were considered appropriate. Compliments like "You look so beautiful in that dress!", "That's quite a dress you are wearing", "Where did you get it?", "If I go there, I will buy one, too", "You should thank your aunt for her nice choice", "Can you ask your aunt where she bought it?"

For this item, learners used explicit, implicit, and future reference types. Explicit and implicit compliments were nearly the same with 23 learners for the explicit and 21 for implicit compliments. 11 learners used the future reference strategy and only one answer was non-compliment.

Item 7, on the other hand, provided learners with a situation in which a classmate had been given a laptop which was beautiful in design and fast in terms of manufacturing. Since the item presented a similar situation like that of item 5, all complimenting strategies were possible but request and future reference. The result retrieved from the pre-test showed similar compliments. Both explicit and implicit

strategies were used by language learners. In other words, they were the only strategies used. 38 learners, or 68.75%, deployed explicit strategy and the other 18 learners, 32.15%, used the implicit type.

The last item of this group was just as similar as item 6. The difference was that the social stand differentiated with that of number six. It asked language learners to compliment on a new T-shirt a neighbor was wearing. Because of the difference in the relationship, an implicit compliment seems to be appropriate. Yet the compliments were again similar to those of number six. Learners used explicit, implicit, and future reference types. Explicit and implicit compliments were nearly the same with 23 learners for the explicit and 21 for implicit compliments. 11 learners used the future reference strategy and only one answer was non-compliment.

The second part of the questionnaire was intended to investigate learners' familiarity with compliment responses. In other words, they received compliments for the situations given, and then they were asked to respond to the compliments. The questionnaire itself had an educational and pedagogical value in that learners could learn how to compliment and respond by just reading the situations in both parts.

Item 1 of part two of the questionnaire was like item 6 in part one. The difference was that the reader was receiving a compliment for a beautiful dress or shirt s/he was wearing to a party. Then a friend says, "Hey, you look great today!" which was an explicit kind of compliment. Learners were supposed to use appreciation token, return, upgrade, explanation, reassignment, reassurance, and downgrade.

These are examples of the above mentioned strategies: "Thank you very much", "You look great, too", "Oh, I like it too much", "It took me some time to make my mind on this", "My mom bought it for me", "Really?", "It is not new, but I still like it". What I received for this item was not surprising. All language learners gave an explicit CR and wrote "Thank you very much".

In item 2, a classmate was returning back to his or her hometown and another classmate helps him or her deliver the term paper before the due date. After it was done, the classmate says, "Thank you so much. You are always so kind

and helpful." Then students were asked to respond to this compliment as the friend who helped.

To do so, strategies like Topic shift and Disagreement were expected to be used. For such a case, they could even use Return. Examples of the strategies are "Your parents can't wait to see you. I understand you", "Hey, Come on! I didn't do much for you. You did everything", and "Don't mention it".

For this item, 39 learners responded using the Return strategy by writing "You're welcome", 10 language learners provided me with irrelevant responses, and the other 7 learners used Reassurance strategy like "Really? Thanks a lot". Therefore, 69.65% gave appropriate Cs.

In item 3, students would receive a compliment from an English teacher for their fluent English. The researcher wanted to know how language learners respond to a compliment like "Your English is so good. You speak like an American". The intended strategies for such a compliment were Acceptance Token, Upgrade, Explanation, Topic Shift, and Reassurance as in the following examples:

"Thanks a lot", "Thank you, but I knew that", "Well, I have been studying English for two years", "Thank you. I'm flattered! Oh, do you want to learn more about our culture?" and "Really? I didn't know that!"

For this item, 50 language learners simply thanked the complimenter. The other 6 learners used reassurance strategy. So, more than 89 % accepted the compliment and responded by saying "Thank you!"

The last item of this part, item 4, provided learners with a situation in which they were listening to music when a friend gave them a compliment for the nice iPod they had. Many of the strategies were applicable in this case, like acceptance token, upgrade, explanation, reassignment, request/offer, reassurance, and downgrade. Examples are "Thank you", "Yeah. I know it is cool", "I surfed the net before I bought it and I came up with this one", "My parents gave it to me for my 20th birthday", "Thank you! Do you want to borrow it?", "Really? Do you like it?" and "Really? But it is too hard to operate".

Most language learners, 32 to be specific, used acceptance token, 12 learners used upgrade, and the

other 12 used reassurance strategy. The data retrieved for the last item showed a somewhat cultural similarity. Otherwise, the authors could not explain why language learners provided the researcher with correct answers.

After the pre-test, two groups of participants received explicit and implicit instructions and one received no instruction. In the treatment sessions, complimenting and complimenting responses were taught explicitly for the explicit instruction group. They were instructed about what Cs and CRs are and how, where, why, and when they should be used. Then the grammatical points needed for such cases were explained. On the other hand, the implicit instruction group did not get any explicit instruction on what Cs and CRs are. But they practiced making Cs and giving responses, and through this, they tried to tell them how important they are. For instance, when they were giving Cs on a classmate's new dress or shirt, many revisions were given and it was explained why the previous compliments were not appropriate. The shift from explicit to implicit instruction was not an easy task to be performed. Language learners are not directly exposed to speech acts structures; rather, they only use examples and then they have to generalize the structure to other situations. They have the examples and model conversations in their textbooks, and then they need to produce general principles. The control group received no instruction and had both pre and post-tests, because the researchers wanted to know how much language learners would learn pragmatic competence just by following the routine activities and the normal process of learning.

The items in the DCT were used again as post-test to measure the change in the ways language learners use Cs and CRs as the result of implicit and explicit treatment.

In the first item, a classmate helped the charities distribute and deliver the relief goods. S/he also donated some money to the victims. This is while s/he was not from a very rich family. Explicit and mostly explanation strategies were needed in such a case. The control group complimented the classmate using only explicit strategy. 11 out of 17 wrote things like "You are very kind". The other 6 learners had non-compliment responses. The explicit instruction and implicit instruction groups used both strategies. 16 out of 19 used

statements like "I saw you distribute and deliver relief goods to victims. That's very kind of you." The other 3 learners used explicit compliments like "You are very kind." The implicit instruction group, on the other hand, mostly used explicit Cs while they used explanation strategy as well. 13 learners used explicit, 5 used explanation strategy, and 1 was implicit.

The second item of the first part the author provided learners with a situation in which their laptop was hit by a virus and did not start any more. Since s/he did not know what to do and there was important data in it, s/he was panicking till a friend saw him or her and fixed the laptop. For this item, explicit, information questions, and future reference were intended.

The whole control group used explicit strategy by simply saying "Thank you!" In the explicit instruction group they received different responses. 8 learners used explicit, 7 used information questions, and 2 used future reference. In other words, they used all three intended types of strategies. Finally, in the implicit instruction group, learners used only explicit and information questions. 12 language learners used explicit Cs and 8 information questions. This showed that instruction changed the way they previously complimented on the same situation.

In item 3, learners were required to compliment a friend for listening to them. According to this item, the learner felt stressed out. To feel better, s/he talked to a friend and after that s/he felt a lot better. Implicit and explanation strategies were needed for this item. The control group used explicit and implicit strategies. 10 explicit and 5 implicit Cs received from this group. There were 2 opt-out statements. In the explicit instruction group, 14 implicit, 4 explanation, and 1 contrast compliment strategies were used. The latter was not intended for this item. And in the implicit instruction group, I had 10 explanations, 7 implicit, and 3 explicit Cs. Though explicit Cs are not much common in a situation like this, it could be taken as a C.

In item 4, a situation was depicted in which a classmate made a very good presentation in the class. The slides were well designed and the major points were explained in a very accessible way and they were asked to compliment on this. For this item, explicit, implicit, future reference, and

contrast strategies were considered.

All 17 learners in control group complimented explicitly by writing compliments like "It was great". But different compliments were retrieved from the other groups. 5 explicit, 7 implicit, 4 future reference, and 3 contrast were delivered from explicit instruction group. The compliments gathered from the last group were 8 explicit, 8 implicit, and 4 contrasts. They did not use the future reference strategy.

Except request and future reference, all the other complimenting strategies were possible for item 5. Students were asked to compliment on a situation in which a friend shows them a cell phone s/he has just bought with all its new functions it has. Information questions and explicit Cs were what language learners in control group used. Questions like "Where did you buy it?" or "How much did it cost?" or an expression like "Congratulations!" were mostly written. 11 students used explicit and the other 6 learners used information questions.

In the explicit instruction group, language learners even used future reference and request which were considered as a non-compliment. 4 used explicit, 2 used implicit, 5 used explanation, 1 information question, 2 contrasts, 1 advice, 1 request, and one future reference were recorded for this group. In the other group, the implicit instruction group, 6 explicit, 8 explanation, 5 information questions, and 1 advice were given.

In item 6, appearance was the subject of compliment. Students were asked again to compliment on a beautiful dress a friend was wearing to a party. When the subject of compliment is appearance, explicit, implicit, information question, future reference, advice, and request might be considered appropriate. The control group provided more of explicit and information questions like "What a nice dress" and "Where did you buy it?". 15 students used explicit and only 2 learners used information question. In explicit instruction group, 5 explicit, 2 implicit, 4 information questions, 2 future reference, 3 advice, and 3 request strategies were deployed. And in the implicit instruction group, students used the intended strategies but future reference and request. 9 complimented explicitly, 5 implicitly, 3 asked information questions, and 3 learners used advice.

The subject of compliment in item 7 was possession, like that of number 5. A classmate's aunt gave him a new laptop. The design was very nice and it ran really fast. All complimenting strategies were possible but request and future reference. The Cs students gave for this item was as following:

In control group, 8 learners used explicit, 4 information question, 2 contrast, and 3 implicit Cs. In explicit instruction group, 7 explicit, 2 implicit, 1 explanation, 5 information question, 3 contrast, and 1 advice were given. The Cs given in implicit instruction group was nearly similar to that of number 5. 7 explicit, 7 explanation, 5 information questions, and 1 advice were given.

And for the last item of this part, they were asked to compliment on a neighbor who was wearing a new T-shirt and he looked really good. Once again, appearance was the subject of compliment; therefore, I expected same results for this item as item 6. With a little difference, the following Cs were given:

14 students used explicit and 3 learners used information question. In explicit instruction group, 5 explicit, 4 implicit, 2 information questions, 2 future reference, 3 advice, and 3 request strategies were deployed. And in the implicit instruction group, students used the intended strategies but future reference and request. 7 complimented explicitly, 7 implicitly, 4 asked information questions, and 2 learners used advice.

The results taken from the post-test showed a significant change in the way learners complimented on different situations. In other words, the instruction types proved to be effective in the process of learning pragmatic competence of complimenting and responding to compliments. But to understand which pedagogical approach was more efficient and useful, the second part of the questionnaire should be analyzed. The same procedure was adopted for this part which dealt with CRs.

The first item of this part dealt with appearance. They were asked to respond to a compliment a friend gave them for a dress/shirt they were wearing to a party. When a friend says, "Hey, you look great today", responding strategies like appreciation token, return, upgrade, explanation, reassessment, reassurance, and downgrade were

intended.

All 17 students in control group responded explicitly. In explicit instruction group, 6 appreciations token, 2 return, 8 reassurance, and 3 upgrade CRs retrieved. In the other group, 9 appreciations token, 5 return, 1 explanation, and 5 reassurance CRs were made.

In the second item, a classmate went back to his/her hometown. They helped her print the term paper and submit it before the due day. She said: "Thank you so much. You are always so kind and helpful." Students were asked to respond to this compliment which referred to Kindness. Topic shift and Disagreement were expected to be used. For such a case, they could even use Return. Examples of the strategies are "Your parents can't wait to see you. I understand you", "Hey, Come on! I didn't do much for you. You did everything", and "Don't mention it".

The students in control group used Return strategy by responding like "Your welcome", "Not at all", and "Don't mention it". Students in explicit instruction group used all three possible strategies by including responses they learned during the instruction sessions like "Hey! I just did what I had to do" and "We should deliver this on time". 7 used return, 9 used disagreement, and 3 used topic shift strategies. In the implicit instruction group, students used Return and Disagreement strategies. 8 used disagreement and 12 used return strategies.

The subject of the third item of this group was ability. Students were asked to picture a situation in which they were talking with an American. S/he said: "Your English is so good. You speak like a native speaker." Then, they had to respond to the compliment. In a situation like this, strategies such as Acceptance Token, Upgrade, Explanation, Topic Shift, and Reassurance are to be used based on the reality and nature of the ability.

Once again, all 17 students in control group used acceptance token strategy. The other two groups that received instructions responded quite differently. In explicit instruction group, 4 accepted the C, 2 upgraded the C, 7 explained why they were able to speak like a native American, and the other 6 learners wanted to be reassured. In the other group, only acceptance token, explanation and reassurance strategies were used. 11

accepted the C, 7 wanted to be reassured, and 2 explained.

Possession was the subject of CR in the last item of this part. This item depicted a situation in which students were listening to music on their iPod. A friend says: "You have a very nice iPod". Many of the strategies were applicable in this case, like acceptance token, upgrade, explanation, reassignment, request/offer, reassurance, and downgrade. Students in control group deployed three strategies. 6 accepted the C, 7 upgraded the C, and 4 used reassurance strategy. Students in explicit instruction group used all aforementioned strategies. 3 accepted the C, 5 upgraded the C, 2 learners explained how they got one, one used reassignment strategy, two students offered to lend it to the friend, 4 used reassurance and 2 downgraded the C. And finally, learners in implicit instruction group used 4 strategies. 7 accepted the C, 5 explained, 6 learners used reassurance, and the other two downgraded the C.

4. Results of the Study

The data collected from the pre-test showed that the participants were not apparently proficient enough in complimenting and making different CRs according to the immediate situations.

The mathematical formula used to calculate the percentage,

$$\frac{\text{Raw tokens}}{\text{Number of tokens}} * 100 = \frac{X}{\text{total number of participants}}$$

After the researcher was done with pre-test, she started instructing the target groups. One group, as mentioned earlier, received explicit instruction, another received implicit instruction, and the last group received no instruction.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 represent the results retrieved from both pretest and post-test. The mathematical formula used to calculate the percentages differed from previous one since the percentages were analyzed group by group, but a total percentage was given afterwards:

$$\frac{\text{Raw tokens}}{\text{Number of tokens}} * 100 = \frac{X}{\text{total number of participants in the group}}$$

The analytical review of the data retrieved from post-test showed a distribution of percentages among all groups. Learners in explicit instruction group and implicit instruction

Compliment Strategies	Raw tokens	Percentages
Explicit	$\frac{264}{8} = 33$	$\frac{3300}{56} = 58.92\%$
Implicit	$\frac{88}{5} = 17.6$	31.42 %
Explanation Information Question	0 0	0 % 0 %
Future Reference	$\frac{22}{2} = 11$	19.64 %
Contrast Advice Request Other	0 0 0 0	0 % 0 % 0 % 0 %
Non-compliment	$\frac{12}{3} = 4$	7.14 %
Opt-Out	$\frac{21}{3} = 7$	12.5 %
Total	$\frac{72.6}{8} = 9.075$	16.20 %

Table 2. The Total Percentage of Students' Compliment Strategies for the Pre-test

Compliment response Strategies	Raw tokens	Percentages
Acceptance token	$\frac{138}{3} = 46$	82.14 %
Return	$\frac{39}{1} = 39$	69.64 %
Upgrade	$\frac{12}{1} = 12$	21.42 %
Explanation Reassignment Offer/ request interpretation Topic shift	0 0 0 0	0 % 0 % 0 % 0 %
Reassurance	$\frac{25}{3} = 8.33$	14.88 %
Downgrade Disagreement	0 0	0 % 0 %
Other	$\frac{10}{1} = 10$	17.85 %
Total	$\frac{115.23}{11} = 10.48$	18.72 %

Table 3. The Total Percentage of Students' Compliment Response Strategies for the Pre-test

Compliment Strategies	Raw tokens			Percentages			Total
	CG	EIG	IIG	CG	EIG	IIG	
Explicit	103	37	65	75.73%	27.81%	40.62%	48.5%
Implicit	8	47	28	23.59%	35.33%	28%	28.97%
Explanation	0	10	30	0%	17.54%	37.5%	18.34%
Information Question	15	19	25	22.05%	20%	25%	22.35%
Future Reference	0	11	0	0%	11.57%	0	3.85%
Contrast	2	8	4	11.76%	14.03%	20%	15.26%
Advice	0	8	6	0%	10.52%	10%	06.84%
Request	0	7	0	0%	12.28%	0%	04.09%
Other	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-compliment	8	0	0	23.59%	0%	0%	07.86%
Opt-Out	0	1	0	0%	05.26%	0%	01.75%

CG= Control group, EIG=Explicit Instruction Group, IIG=Implicit Instruction Group

Table 4. The Total Percentage of Students' Compliment Strategies for Post-test

group enhanced their complimenting strategies. To get a better picture of the effectiveness of the treatment, the

results of both pre-test and post-test are compared as follows:

While explicit strategy, on average, was deployed by 58.92% of language learners in pre-test, this percentage decreased to 48.5% in post-test. From this, 75.73% came from the control group which did not receive any treatment. The total percentage of implicit strategy in pretest was 31.42% while it, again, decreased to 28.97% after the treatment sessions. The highest raw was taken by the explicit instruction group. They took this strategy 47 times in the post-test which shows the instruction was a success.

It was the implicit instruction group that did better in the third strategy, which was explanation. Since they did not receive any direct instruction and what they learned was all through indirect explanations, they were probably able to take this strategy more than the other two groups. They deployed this strategy 30 times which was 37.5% of the total percentage.

For the fourth strategy of this part, again the implicit instruction group performed better by getting 25% of the total percentage. This is while no one used this strategy in all groups during the pre-test. Even the control group devoted 22.05% of the Cs to itself while it was 0 in pre-test. How they were able to use this needs further research and analysis.

Although no one used future reference strategy in pre-test, it was the explicit instruction group that used it 11 times in post-test which indicates the effectiveness of explicit instruction in using this strategy.

Both implicit and explicit instruction groups did well in Contrast strategy. While they did not use this in pre-test, they learned how to use this strategy after the treatment. The average percentage gained from pre-test for this strategy was 0 but it increased to 15% after they received instructions. Similarly, they managed to use advice while this one was not deployed in pre-test either. The request strategy was used just by explicit instruction group which shows the effectiveness of explicit instruction. The figures show the improvement rates before and after the treatment sessions.

Figure 1 shows, the compliments in post-test are well-distributed. All three groups mainly used three strategies in pre-test, while all 8 possible strategies were used after they

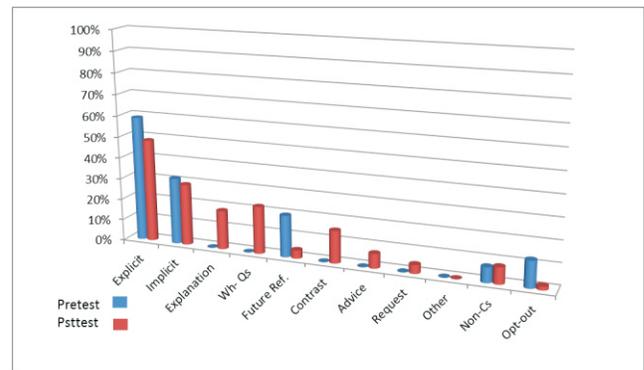


Figure 1. The Overall Results from Pre-test and Post-test

received instructions. For instance, nearly 60% of the learners used explicit complimenting strategy in pre-test while it decreased to less than 50% after they received their special instructions. Figure 2 helps better understand the effectiveness of instruction in Cs and CRs development.

Figure 2 shows, explicit instruction group performed better in post-test. One reason, among the others, could be the clarity of instructions presented. In other words, they previously complimented based on their basic knowledge of the target language and pragmatics competence, but when they learned what pragmatic competence of complimenting is and how much cultural literacy is important, they were able to compliment almost like native speakers.

Table 5 represents CR strategies used in posttest. It should be reminded that lower the percentages are, the better the results are because they show distribution of CRs among other strategies taken by learners.

Once again, the explicit instruction group did better in post-test. The responses were almost fairly distributed and they only did not use the reassignment strategy. They might not

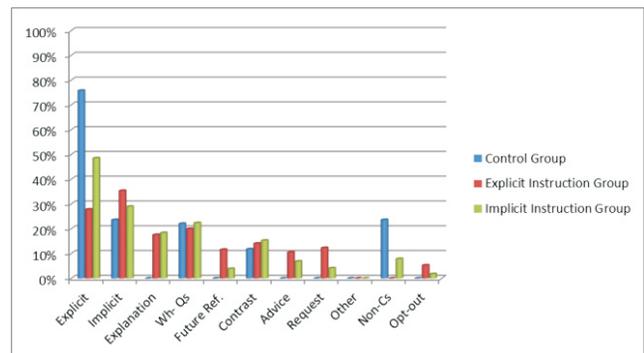


Figure 2. The Percentage of Using Compliment Strategies in Post-test

Compliment response Strategies	Raw tokens			Percentages			Total
	CG	EIG	IIG	CG	EIG	IIG	
Acceptance token	57	13	27	83.82%	22.80%	45%	50.54%
Return	0	9	17	0%	23.68%	42.5%	22.06%
Upgrade	7	10	0	41.17%	17.54%	0%	19.57%
Explanation	0	9	8	0%	23.68%	13.33%	12.33%
Reassignment	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Offer/ request interpretation	0	2	0	0%	10.52%	0%	3.50%
Topic shift	0	3	0	0%	15.78%	0%	5.26%
Reassurance	4	18	18	23.52%	31.57%	30%	28.36%
Downgrade	0	2	2	0%	10.52%	10%	6.84%
Disagreement	0	9	8	0%	23.68%	40%	21.22%
Other	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 5. The Total Percentage of CR Strategies in Post-test

have understood the instructions because learners in implicit instruction group did not take this strategy either.

Figure 3 shows no one in all three groups used reassignment strategy even after both implicit and explicit groups received their instructions. It could be either due to the instruction methods deployed by the researchers or students' inability to grasp the explanations.

Finally, the explicit instruction group could use all strategy types except for reassignment. This indicates that the explicit type of instruction was more effective in teaching CRs. They also performed better than the other two groups in complimenting the situations.

5. Discussion

The first research question focused on the effectiveness of explicit instruction and its advantages on teaching pragmatic competence. The analysis of our pre-test showed that language learners may not be able to use speech acts properly at the right time and right place, but they learn, over time, how to compliment and respond to compliments properly. Prior to the treatment, 16.20% of the

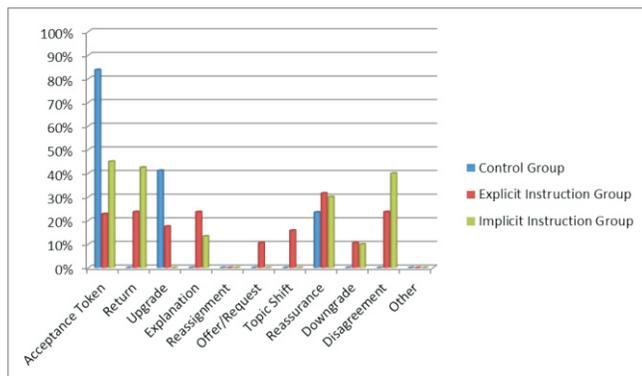


Figure 3. The Percentage of Using CR Strategies in Post-test

participants responded correctly deployed proper strategies. In other words, they used the schematic knowledge they already learned during the process. 83.60% of the participants in control group, which is an average percentage of both parts of the questionnaire, used only 3 to 5 strategies out of 11. Clearly, they were not familiar with complimenting and compliment responding strategies.

The authors expected to achieve the same results for all groups in pre-test since they were at the same intermediate proficiency level. But the pre-test revealed some differences in using speech acts of Cs and CRs by the learners which indicated that the natural process of language learning does not necessarily help learners learn whatever they need for becoming proficient, native-like speakers. They, indeed, need focused instruction and consciousness raising particularly in learning to use speech acts of Cs and CRs.

The post-test results revealed that instruction, whether explicit or implicit, is effective in internalizing what language learners need to remember and use in the target context. The data from both pre and post-tests highlight the fact that explicit instruction really works because it enhances conscious learning which is necessary in a non-English speaking context. It was the explicit instruction group with the total percentage of 86.19% that deployed almost all strategies in both parts of the questionnaire. 79.93% of participants in explicit instruction group could use at least 9 strategies out of 11 strategies provided for both parts of the questionnaire. This showed that explicit instruction was effective in teaching Cs and Crs.

The second research question aimed to analyze the extent to which implicit instruction is effective in terms of the speech act of Cs and CRs. First a comparison was made between the data obtained from post-tests of implicit and control groups. All participants in control group used just three strategies in both parts of the questionnaire. In other words, 79% were able to use three strategies and the other 21% had irrelevant Cs or CRs. This is while 83% of language learners in implicit instruction group managed to use 8 strategies. This showed that instruction, regardless of the type, was effective.

A question that arises here is which instructional type works better in teaching speech act of Cs and CRs. The results of the study evidenced that both implicit and explicit instruction groups' responses significantly improved while the responding patterns of control group without any instruction did not change. It is not clear which instructional type is better since the results are very close in terms of ratings. Based on the results presented in Figure 2, the implicit instruction group slightly outperformed the explicit group by a small margin. This is in line with the results of Koike and Pearson's (2005) study in which they examined the effectiveness of teaching pragmatic information through explicit or implicit pre-instruction, and explicit or implicit feedback to Spanish-language learners. They reported that students who received implicit instruction performed better in the open-ended dialogues.

But this should not be interpreted as implicit type of instruction as being more effective in teaching speech act of Cs and CRs. What is revealed in this study is that both explicit and implicit types of instructions were effective and enhanced English language learners' knowledge at least in terms of pragmatics. The studies comparing the relative effect of explicit and implicit instruction (e.g. Wildner-Bassett, 1994) found that students' pragmatic abilities improved regardless of the adopted approach, but the explicitly taught students did better than the implicit groups. Eslami et al. (2004) explored the effect of explicit pragmatic instruction on the comprehension of advanced EFL students of the speech acts. The results indicated that students' speech act comprehension improved significantly, supporting the claim that explicit metapragmatic instruction facilitates inter-language pragmatic development.

Conclusion

The results of this study are in line with the literature (Billmyr, 1990; Eslami et al., 2004 ; Koike & Pearson's, 2005; Tateyama et al., 1997; Wildner-Bassett, 1994) that revealed the effectiveness of both types of instruction in improving the use of different speech acts by L2 learners. The findings of this study indicated that instruction has a positive effect on the development of learners' speech acts of Cs and CRs. Learners in control group performed poorly since they

did not receive any instructions; therefore, their basic knowledge of speech acts, especially those of Cs and CRs, was not really helpful. This means conscious learning is a part of implicit or explicit instruction which informs students of what they are learning. The improvement in the use of Cs and CRs in post-test could be the result of facilitative effect of implicit and explicit instructions in raising learners' consciousness to focus on pragmatic competence in EFL context.

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