

Interaction, Autonomy and Motivation in Teaching Articles under Grammar Tasks

Abstract

This article attempts to compare the effects of two approaches on the teaching of the English definite and indefinite articles: Grammar Consciousness-Raising Tasks and Traditional Grammar. In addition to their avowed beneficial effects on promoting explicit knowledge and grammatical accuracy as indicated in recent literature, the grammar tasks are also found in this research work to improve interaction, autonomy and motivation among students in the classroom.

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Introduction

This article investigates the comparative effects of two types of instructional packets: the well-known Traditional Grammar and the modern Grammar Consciousness-Raising Tasks as propounded by Fotos (1993, 1994) and Ellis (1998, 2003) on the teaching of the definite and indefinite articles in terms of interaction as well as autonomy and motivation.

As learners who are taught under Traditional Grammar (TG) for many years carry on making grammatical errors which usually persist in spite of teachers' attempts to eradicate them, researchers (Ellis 1997, 2004, Fotos, 1993) find that there is something wrong with this approach and that Grammar Consciousness-Raising Tasks (GCRTs), with their emphasis on *the use of language*, are more effective for developing not only grammatical explicit knowledge

ملخص

يسعى هذا المقال إلى مقارنة الآثار المترتبة عن استعمال مقاربتين مختلفتين في تدريس أدوات التعريف والتكثير في اللغة الإنجليزية وهما مقارنة "المهام النحوية التحسيسية" ومقاربة "القواعد التقليدية". فبالإضافة إلى النتائج الإيجابية التي ثبتت عن "المهام النحوية التحسيسية" من حيث تعزيزها للمعرفة الجلية والدقة النحوية في الأبحاث العلمية الأخيرة، فإن النتائج المتوصل إليها في هذا البحث تدل على أنها تقوم كذلك بترقية المشاركة والاستقلالية والتحفيز بين الطلبة داخل القسم.

and grammatical accuracy but also negotiated interaction. Fotos (1994: 343) comes to the conclusion that that GCRTs can be recommended as a useful pedagogy to the teaching of grammar at a time when many teachers are looking for suitable methods to bring back traditional grammar into communicative classrooms (*ibid.*)

This research builds on the results of the previous studies (Fotos, 1993, 1994) which found that GCRTs are more effective than TG for (a) enhancing explicit grammatical knowledge and for (b) developing grammatical accuracy; and attempts to investigate (a) whether GCRTs produce L2 negotiations comparable to those resulting from TG and (b) whether GCRTs yield more autonomy and motivation compared to TG.

What is a GCRT?

A GCRT is an activity which is found to be very successful for enhancing communicating about grammar. The students are organised into groups and are required to discuss some grammar points in order to induce the underlying grammatical rules for themselves. According to Fotos (1994: 325),

[It] provides learners with grammar problems to solve interactively... it is communicative and has an L2 grammar problem as the task content. Although the learners focus on the form of the grammar structure, they are also engaged in meaning-focused use of the target language as they solve the grammar problem. They develop grammatical knowledge while they are communicating.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

On balance, Fotos and Ellis (1991), Fotos (1993), and Fotos (1994) propose the use of indirect GCRTs where an inductive approach to learning grammar involves some information-gap tasks. The necessary data from which to work out grammatical rules are distributed among groups of learners who will share their respective information to sort out the appropriate grammatical rules. These tasks allow learners to develop an explicit grammar of the TL and to promote communication among learners about its grammar. The present study builds on the findings of these studies and aims at finding: (1) Whether communicating about the English articles could generate great amounts of negotiated interaction and (2) Whether GCRTs could promote students' autonomy and motivation. Thus, following hypotheses are put forward:

1. Grammar consciousness-raising tasks could be more effective for fostering *negotiated interaction* and *comprehensible output* in the study of English articles than traditional grammar lessons.
2. Grammar consciousness-raising tasks could drive further students' *autonomy* and *responsibility* for learning, and thus increase their *self-confidence* and *motivation* in comparison to traditional grammar lessons.

Research Design

The present study is concerned with the English definite and indefinite articles which have been selected for several reasons. Firstly, they are part of the first-year programme of the Licence degree in English. Secondly, English articles seem to be a problematic area for Algerian students who are usually confused by their various uses and by the interference of their already-acquired languages like Arabic and French.

Thirdly, students often ask their teachers to provide them with clear rules of thumb to help them use correct forms in speaking and writing without hindering their communication. Fourth, university students of English, in general, follow advanced studies that require a minimum knowledge of the TL grammar and prove readiness for the acquisition of the English articles.

Subjects

The experiment was carried out during the first semester of the academic year 2007-2008. The size of the population concerned was a total of 987 Algerian university students of English enrolled in the first year. The sample consists of 92 students making up two classes: 45 students in the control group and 47 students in the experimental group. In this research work, the students were randomly assigned to groups of comparatively equal size by the administration in a sense that the student who came first was enrolled first. This procedure helps us to prevent ‘contamination’ – the possibility that some factor other than the teaching method has brought about the differences in the scores. In addition, both groups were subjected to a pretest and showed ‘homogeneity’ among them. Thus, it may be assumed that the two groups were equivalent and that other variables such as language aptitude, age, intelligence, and motivation existed with equal quantities in both the control and the experimental group. Consequently, the sample under scrutiny could be said to be ‘representative’ of the population, and the results could be generalisable to the whole population. In doing so, we were able to exclude all the extraneous variables that might threaten to invalidate the present experiment.

Treatment Cycles

The students had two required 90-min period per week of English grammar with an Algerian instructor who was the researcher himself and the regular grammar classroom instructor. Since this could be a bias factor, we acted as a facilitator to avoid what is referred to as the ‘Hawthorne effect’ –showing more attention and devotion to one treatment and not enough to the other (Benati, 2001: 105-6). The experimental group performed GCRTs dealing with all the uses of definite and indefinite articles. Students in this group were randomly assigned into groups for each task treatment. The control group received TG on the same lessons. The contents of the lessons were dictated to the students from the task cards elaborated for the GCRTs. The necessary explanation was provided, and the difficult words were written on the blackboard.

As for the experimental group, the task format consists of two main parts: the first part is consciousness-raising to sensitize the learners to the target structures, and the second one consists of consciousness-raising through grammatical judgement activities and filling the gaps to see whether the students comprehend the target structures or not. At the presentation stage, the tasks were designed to draw the students’ attention to the functions of the articles “a”, “an”, and “the”. Each student was provided with the necessary information incorporating grammatical rules about one particular use of an article on their task cards. The students were asked to understand the rules individually as a first step and then to complete the task sheet through the exchange of information on each task card with the other members of the group. The ultimate aim of the task

here is to make the students communicate, negotiate and understand the different functions of the target structures.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observation corresponds to Ellis's (1998: 229) evaluation model which consists of: 'a response-based evaluation' based on the researcher's observations about the 'actual' and 'intended' outcomes of the tasks to evaluate whether GCRTs enhance negotiated interaction and comprehensible output. Classroom observation is an important research tool that is commonly used in SLA to aid researchers in their search for information and explanation of teaching techniques and learning processes. Good observation is a fundamental form of evaluation which consists of objective interpretations and which allows language specialists to draw what is extraordinary from out of what is ordinary. According to Genesee and Upshur (1996: 79), observations enable teachers to check students' learning, strategies, needs, likes, and dislikes as well as their attitudes towards instructional activities and materials.

As observation may take "open-ended form" covering important and unexpected events or "focused-form" focusing on the events specified in the objectives (Genesee and Upshur, *ibid.* 95), the present research renders considerable attention to "focused-form" observation, but does not ignore the "open-ended form" that incorporates all that is unexpected. Concerning the ways of recording observations about students' interaction and response to the teaching method, we opted for a global qualitative analysis of the data through the first method of gathering information propounded by Wallace (1998) which is called 'real time observation' and which consists in taking notes of the students' performance in the classroom. For gauging students' negotiated interaction, we make use of the following units of analysis: clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetitions and requests for repetition (Fotos and Ellis, 1991: 614; and Fotos, 1994: 333-4).

- (1) "Clarification requests" are made by listeners when they do not understand anything and want extra information.
- (2) "Confirmation checks" are made by listeners when they think they have understood what is said, but want to make sure and agree on a particular use of any article.
- (3) "Comprehension checks" are made by speakers to confirm whether the listeners have grasped what they said.
- (4) "Repetitions" represent in most cases all the restatements of the group used for confirming or infirming the information put forward.
- (5) "Requests for repetition" are made by listeners when they do not understand or follow the speaker and want him to repeat to fill in the task sheet.

These five units of analysis helped us to take copious notes on students' activities and participations in the classroom. Undoubtedly, it is not easy for the researcher to

observe the behaviour of all the students and to attend to everything that may happen, especially that the ten groups under the new method perform the grammar tasks in the same time. However, students following the traditional grammar lessons are comparatively easier to be recorded as only one student can speak at a time, and the teacher has enough time to take notes and to transcribe what is being said simultaneously.

The Students' Questionnaire

For evaluating students' success or failure in the grammar lessons or grammar tasks, we adopted Ellis's (1998: 229) 'Student-based evaluation' which included students' attitudes towards grammar teaching and learning to investigate whether GCRTs foster motivation and autonomy. The questionnaire is customarily used after learners have been instructed to assess the effectiveness of a course through their impressions about their language achievements (Genesee and Upshur, 1996: 118). The questionnaire is used as a data collection procedure to probe the students' attitudes and perceptions regarding the teaching of grammar in general and GCRTs in particular. It was administered at the end of the first semester after all the TG lessons had been taught and all the GCRTs had been performed. The students were requested to fill in the questionnaire in the classroom and to submit it as soon as they finished. Since the questionnaire was intended to elicit personal answers, students were not allowed to contact each other. They were encouraged to give their own opinions and suggestions to cooperate to an effective assessment of the courses.

Negotiated Interaction: Classroom Observation

To analyse the students' negotiated interaction, we observed them in the grammar lessons and the grammar tasks.

Negotiated Interaction in the Grammar Lessons

In TG lessons, we observed that the students were not inclined to negotiate at all. In the presentation stage, a few students asked questions about the spelling of some words. In spite of the instructor's insistence on the students to ask any question on the grammar lessons without hesitation, they did not do so. Generally, just few students dared ask questions about a particular use of an article in each session. Hardly any interaction emerged amongst the students or between the teacher and the students. In the practice stage, however, some students had the chance to read their answers. It is quite normal that interactions did not emerge because the TG lessons were not designed in such a way to trigger negotiated interaction amongst learners; the aim of these lessons was to transmit some grammatical knowledge to learners, to allow them to internalise it, and to embark, then, on practising it through some written exercises in order to process it. Although the teacher induced learners to discuss and interact about grammatical topics, they showed reticence in communicating about grammar. It is to be noted that the tape recorder was not used at all in TG lessons; the students' questions were immediately transcribed by the researcher without drawing students' attention to that. The reason behind this avoidance was that students might be disturbed or inhibited if they knew that they would be audio taped.

Negotiated Interaction in the Grammar Tasks

GCRTs appeared to allow students to discuss task directions and the various uses of articles. They had to negotiate and exchange information in order to discover the

appropriate rules together. This required the collaboration of all members of the group and hence all the class for reaching a final agreement. Negotiated interaction observed in the performance of GCRTs has been categorised according to the following patterns:

- (1) “Clarification requests” as in the following examples: 'Why have you selected this rule?' 'Can you explain more why you have provided this form: *a*, *an* , or *the*?' 'What is the difference between the first rule and the second one of this article?' 'The use of the article *the* here is not clear for me; could you tell me the difference between this use and the other?' 'How would you spell it?' 'What is the appropriate use in this context?'
- (2) “Confirmation checks” as in the following examples: ‘the definite article in this series of sentences is used before nouns of which there is only one! Yes? Are you sure?’ 'Is it the correct use?' 'Is it the right article?' 'Is it the correct answer?' 'The definite article is used for expressing this idea, Yes?' 'Do you think this use is right?' 'Do you mean that the use of this article is totally wrong?' 'Is it how it is spelled?' 'Is it the use you selected?'
- (3) “Comprehension checks” as in the following examples: ‘Do you understand this rule?’ ‘Do you agree on this?’ ‘Is it Ok for you?’ ‘All right!’ 'Did you really comprehend the use of this article?' ‘Any questions, please?’ 'Did you understand the various uses of the indefinite article?'
- (4) “Repetitions” as in the following examples: ‘Speak slowly, please!', 'Could you repeat, please?', 'Once more?' 'This rule is quite difficult. Would you repeat it, please?'
- (5) Other questions asked to check the correctness or incorrectness of the answers provided as in the following examples: 'Did you believe this is the right answer; Yes, I did.' 'Is this the correct use?'

In addition to the negotiation of grammar points, the students in the GCRTs group also discussed new or unknown lexical items. If the group did not agree on the meaning of a particular word, they immediately turned to the instructor asking for help. This endeavour enriched their negotiation. Another phenomenon that drew our attention was their attempt to correct each other concerning the correct pronunciation of some words. They sometimes disagreed, but the search for correctness also pushed their negotiations further ahead. GCRTs allowed the students to produce significantly numerous quantities of meaningful interaction. So, interaction dominated the class from the very beginning until the very end. In terms of negotiated interaction, GCRTs seemed to be invaluable; their comparisons to TG lessons were indeed out of equal at all. GCRTs allowed the students to discuss task directions, various uses of definite and indefinite articles, spelling and pronunciation. They also helped them to develop the four learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In general, in these kinds of focused tasks, both reception and production are emphasized. If students do not listen attentively, read clearly, speak distinctly, and write correctly; they will fail in the attempt. The development of these skills can be considered as an indication of the success of the task. Since only one acceptable outcome is possible in these GCRTs, students worked hard to understand each other, to request information from each other, to supply each other with the appropriate feedback, and to modify their output to be understood. This kind of grammar group work lends strong support for Krashen’s input

hypothesis (1981, 1987), Long's interaction hypothesis (1983), and Swain's output hypothesis (1985).

GCRTs promote communicating about grammar and negotiating meaning to a greater extent. This in turn will certainly develop implicit knowledge of grammatical rules. As Fotos and Ellis (1991: 622) argue, this type of grammar tasks "may contribute *directly* by providing opportunities for the kind of communication which is believed to promote the acquisition of implicit knowledge." In fact, under GCRTs, negotiated interaction abounded in the classroom. Individually, each member of the group seemed to be as 'busy as a bee'. Socially, students proved to be like active energetic ants which work hard and which collaborate in an organized society in a very structured way. GCRTs respond to the psycholinguistic rationale for focused tasks which underlies skill-building theories, automatization, implicit learning, and noticing theories. This failed to happen with TG grammar lessons. The problem is that "the value of grammatical instruction as output practice is questionable if the intent of the instruction is to alter the nature of the developing system" (VanPatten and Cadierno, 1993a: 227). Contrary to traditional grammar lessons, GCRTs emphasize consciousness-raising rather than practice. The first hypothesis which stipulates that "Grammar consciousness-raising tasks are more effective for fostering *negotiated interaction* and *comprehensible output* in the study of English articles than Traditional Grammar lessons" was strongly corroborated.

Negotiated interaction is deemed necessary for natural language development. As the motto states, "We are talking to learn and not learning to talk." Talking is essential for language acquisition to occur, and interaction is very crucial for automatization to take place. In fact, GCRTs may contribute directly to L2 acquisition by providing great opportunities for negotiated interaction that is assumed to enhance the acquisition of implicit knowledge (Fotos and Ellis, 1991: 622). How can we imagine learning a FL without interacting and conversing? We believe that Algerian learners need L2 interaction because English is used only in the classroom. Even in the classroom, most students attested through the questionnaire that they rarely spoke English. Most students in the two treatment groups affirmed that they never asked questions and that they rarely discussed grammatical topics in TG lessons. However, they deeply believed that communicating about grammar is useful for language acquisition. The great majority held that GCRTs helped them quite a lot to interact, negotiate and communicate.

The results of the experimental study indicated that the grammar tasks generated an arsenal of L2 negotiations. The average number of words per L2 negotiations ranged from four words per negotiated interaction to more than seven words per negotiated interaction. The data obtained were not mechanical; they consisted much more of extensive and original sentences, and much more complex language production. The grammar tasks used in this study required the use of information-gap activities, reasoning-gap activities, and decision-making activities as advanced by Prabhu (1987). The combination of these task features allowed the students to produce a maximum number of negotiations through some kind of planned language. The first feature forced the students to exchange information in order to fulfil the tasks. The second feature made them think and reason about the raw grammatical data in order to induce the appropriate rules. This procedure helped students to activate their cognitive

processes and to pay more attention so as to notice the relationships between the exemplars and the rules underlying them. The third feature consisted in reaching a single agreed-upon solution, and this necessitated more discussions to sort out the underlying rule. As GCRTs are close-ended tasks that induce learners to provide more precise answers, they have spawned much more negotiation and communication among students.

In the grammar tasks, students worked in groups where each was given only part of the information that was necessary for completing the task successfully. They had to communicate about grammar in order to complete the tasks. Three hypotheses entered into play –the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis and the Interaction Hypothesis. Each student had to listen to the input attentively, to produce a comprehensible output in order to be understood, and to negotiate and interact in order to convince the other members of the group about the rules which govern the various sets of sentences. Thus, the grammar tasks resulted in interactive, dynamic language use that was sufficiently rich to suggest that GCRTS had general benefits to L2 acquisition. It is worth mentioning that the greatest negotiation quantities were promoted through the combination of task features instead of the nature of the grammar structure which constituted the task content.

In addition to the fact that classroom observation allowed us to notice that GCRTs enhanced negotiated interaction and comprehensible output, they also enabled us to observe the students' responses to the tasks. The students actually developed some positive psychological characteristics. We observed that they showed a great autonomy and responsibility for learning. They no longer waited for the teacher to provide them with all the bits and pieces of language, but they themselves built up their own lessons from the task cards according to the directions given in the task sheets. They showed self-confidence in dealing with the tasks; they no longer hesitated; they even ceased to expect that the truth comes only out of the teacher's mouth. Their enthusiasm and discussion about grammar without the least vacillation demonstrated that their affective filter allowed them to work at the lowest anxiety level. They also developed an outgoing tendency to participate and take risks, and generally adopted a tolerant, sociable, friendly and extrovert attitude. They felt that they were in a good company that permitted them to work without fear and reserve, to speak spontaneously and to improvise even inaccurately without wariness and hesitation. They disregarded the fact that they might be ridiculed if they committed lexical or grammatical mistakes in front of their peers. We also observed that they developed an analytic orientation in the sense that they preferred conscious learning and the use of metalanguage in order to discover the rules for themselves and to explain them for their peers relying on the TL, without any form of inhibition, reserve or embarrassment.

What is also notable in the performance of such grammar tasks is that students seemed to keep away from L1 interference and avoidance. They did not use their L1 for explaining or commenting on the task sheets and task cards; they made use only of their L2 to provide the missing information and to elucidate all that was not clear. They led an active role in their attempt to master the various forms and uses of the tenses, and they lent a great attention to the form and content alike. Eventually, GCRTs have proved to be very useful for building up students' motivation, a prerequisite for any attempt to learn any language. The GCRTs were found to promote

negotiated interaction and comprehensible output to a greater extent. They were also found to build up the general communicative, affective and cognitive abilities of learners. It is for all these advantages that we strongly suggest the use of GCRTs for the teaching of grammar for university students of English.

Autonomy and Motivation: The Students' Questionnaire

The administered questionnaire seeks to elicit answers about the students' perceptions and attitudes towards grammar instruction under TG lessons and GCRTs.

Q. 1 Did you consider the material about GCRTs interesting? The findings show that 96% of the students considered the task materials as interesting. Only one student (02.60%) did not think so. The general attitude can be regarded as a positive judgement towards the use of tasks in the teaching of grammar. This supports the first hypothesis which stipulates that "Grammar consciousness-raising tasks drive further students' autonomy and responsibility for learning, and thus increase their motivation and self-confidence in comparison to TG lessons."

Q. 2 How did you find your performance in the GCRTs? The results showed that 81% of the students affirmed that their performance in the GCRTs was 'average'. This may be due to the fact that it is the first time that these students are taught grammar through the use of tasks. They have been accustomed to receiving lessons passively without making the least effort. GCRTs require that the students would prepare their grammar tasks alone; this undertaking is rather demanding upon them.

Q. 3 How much grammar did you learn through grammar GCRTs (a lot, quite a lot, not much, or not at all)? The results show that the large majority (69%) of the students affirmed that they learned 'quite a lot' through GCRTs. Grouped together, those who ticked 'A lot' and 'Quite a lot' formed 86;11% against those who ticked 'Not much' and 'Not at all' with 13.89%. This high proportion is a plain suggestion that the grammar tasks have good effects on general grammar learning.

Q. 4 Did GCRTs tasks help you interact, negotiate and communicate? The results show that 84.12% of the students affirmed that GCRTs helped them interact, negotiate and communicate 'quite a lot', and 12.15% said that they helped them 'a lot'. Given the high percentage of the students who said that GCRTs helped 'a lot' and 'quite a lot' together (96.27%), the grammar tasks can be said to be very useful for enhancing negotiated interaction and communication. So, the first hypothesis underlying this study, "GCRTs are more effective for fostering negotiated interaction and comprehensible output in the study of English articles than TG lessons" is confirmed in this questionnaire.

Q. 5 Did GCRTs help you gain autonomy, self-confidence and motivation? The results show that 75.06% of the students affirmed that GCRTs helped them 'quite a lot' in enhancing their autonomy, motivation and self-confidence, and 21.18% said that they helped them 'a lot'. Due to the higher number of the students who said that GCRTs helped 'a lot' and 'quite a lot' together (96.24%), GCRTs can be said to have very good effects on students' autonomy, motivation and self-confidence. The second hypothesis conducting this research work, "GCRTs could drive further students' autonomy and responsibility for learning, and thus increase their motivation and self-confidence in comparison to TG lessons" is answered affirmatively in this questionnaire.

Q. 6 Would you like to study grammar in the future through TG lessons or GCRTs or both? The students were asked this question after being taught grammar by the same instructor, who is in this case the researcher himself, for a whole academic year. The reason behind this question is to detect whether the students really like GCRTs and find them useful. The results show that 72.12% of the students would like to study grammar in the future through GCRTs. Only 10.13% of the students would like to study grammar through TG lessons, and 17.75% favoured alternating between TG lessons and GCRTs. The conclusion to be drawn from such figures is that GCRTs are preferable to TG Lessons, and therefore must have a place in the FL grammar pedagogy.

Q. 7 Please, indicate your general feeling about GCRTs? The results indicate that 75.12% of the students confessed that they were 'very satisfied', and 20.11% of them avowed that they were 'satisfied'. So, those who are 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' form the large majority (95.23%). The high percentages of students who overtly express their satisfaction with GCRTs lend a strong support for the effectiveness of such innovative teaching materials.

Q. 8 What are the advantages of GCRTs? According to the students' answers, GCRTs improve understanding, communication, negotiated interaction, motivation, spelling, vocabulary acquisition, self-confidence, memorization, active work, enthusiasm, autonomy, responsibility for learning, good relationship between teacher and learner and their classmates, students' social status, spirit of competition. However, the disadvantages of GCRTs as listed by few students may be grouped as follows: the availability of the information about articles in the task cards prevents students from making personal investigation, students' explanations do not equal teachers' explanation, use of dialects, no practice through exercises, students' bad pronunciation, students' compulsion to talk, irresponsibility of some learners, noise problem emanating from negotiation, students' heterogeneous levels, heavy demands on students, no familiarity with grammar tasks. The results of the students' questionnaire lend strong support for the second hypothesis which stipulates that 'GCRTs could drive further students' autonomy and responsibility for learning, and thus increase their self-confidence and motivation in comparison to TG lessons'.

As the teacher-researcher played the role of a counsellor and not of an authoritarian master who said and controlled everything in the classroom, the students found the group as a favourable nest to allow their personalities to hatch out and their quiescent linguistic knowledge to blossom naturally without shaking their inner feelings and upsetting their natural development. Indeed, GCRTs offered a relaxed environment that allowed the students' anxiety level to lower drastically and to reinforce their natural trust and self-confidence. The participation in the grammar tasks was compulsory: all the students had to talk in order to accomplish the tasks. Even introvert learners were made to communicate about grammar and overcome their psychological blockade. If some students may not like GCRTs, it is because they involve cognitive processing and rule formation techniques. This kind of students are fond of gathering data in an implicit way without working out their cognitive abilities such as attention, noticing and intelligence.

In addition, classroom observation also provided strong support for the second hypothesis. Through classroom observation, we noticed that the experimental group

students embarked on performing the grammar tasks meticulously and enthusiastically. Through collective interdependence and collaboration, these students eagerly tackled the grammar tasks completing them in less than the time allocated to the TG Lessons. However, the students in the control group seemed to be passive recipients relying on the teacher spoon-feeding operations. They were reluctant to do the exercises, and even disinclined to manage without the teacher's encouragement and incitement. The students in the experimental group were not dependent on the teacher; they were rather autonomous and responsible for their learning. They prepared their grammar lessons alone with the information they had in their task sheets and task cards without the teacher's intervention. They relied on themselves for the completion of their works showing a great confidence in themselves. Their enthusiastic attack of the tasks was but a clear indication of the motivation that boosted them up in their endeavour to cope with the different tasks.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that GCRTs are more effective than TG Lessons for fostering negotiated interaction and comprehensible output, and for driving further students' autonomy, self-confidence and motivation. If we want to put an end to the dependence of the students on the teacher and to make them more dynamic and collaborative, we have to make extensive use of GCRTs. We can conclude that the learner-centred GCRTs can be recommended as a motivating method to the teaching of grammar throughout the world at a time when Traditional Grammar is invading our classrooms. Our interest in grammar does not mean that we are seeking a golden age of grammar teaching, but we are only deploring the strong return of traditional grammar to our communicative classrooms on the one hand or the total abandonment of grammar teaching in schools and universities on the other hand. Eventually, we believe that future research should be concerned with the comparison of GCRTs and other types of communicative grammar tasks because TG lessons were incomparable to GCRTs in terms of promoting autonomy and providing more opportunities for negotiated interaction.

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