

The Effects of Different Task Types on EFL Learners' Acquisition of Two Grammatical Structures (Infinitives and Gerunds): The Case of Iranian High School Students

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Abstract—This study was an attempt to investigate the effects of three different task types, that is dictation task, individual reconstruction task, and collaborative reconstruction task on EFL learners' acquisition of two grammatical structures, gerunds and infinitives. These tasks were also accompanied by either explicit or implicit instructions to see whether explicit or implicit instruction was effective and useful in the final achievement of grammatical structures. 40 low-intermediate male High School learners of English in Lordegan, Iran, were selected as the participants of this study. A timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) was used for data collection. In order to compare the three groups under the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. To compare the means, one-way ANOVAs as well as t-test were used. The results of statistical analysis supported this hypothesis that significant differences existed in the performance of three groups of participants when they completed the treatments including dictation, individual reconstruction and collaborative reconstruction. The students who completed the collaborative reconstruction task outperformed the other two groups who completed the dictation task and individual reconstruction task. In addition, dictation group outperformed the individual reconstruction group. Moreover, the difference between explicit and implicit groups was significant. In addition, the explicit group outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures.

Index Terms—dictation task, individual reconstruction task, collaborative reconstruction task, explicit learning, and implicit learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, there have been several different approaches to foreign language learning and teaching. Many areas of education are undergoing changes in the way teaching and learning is perceived. "Teacher-centered lecturing and structural-syllabus instructions are giving way to a more student-centered, hands-on, practical, and flexible approaches" (Shank and Cleary, 1994, p. 39). Until the 1970s, the teacher controlled the classroom activities and the learning process. During that time, the presentation-practice-production model was in the focus of attention. In this model, the structures were presented to the learners, and then under a controlled practice, they had to perform the structure accurately and fluently (Foster, 1999). Due to noticeable shortcomings of traditional language teaching approaches, second language researchers and teachers seek to develop an approach to language teaching which would essentially assist learners in developing their target language. As early as the 1970s, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach became popular among Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and second language teachers (Skehan, 2002).

Howatt (1984; as cited in Ellis, 2003) differentiates between the weak version and strong version of CLT. Lochana and Deb (2006, p. 143) believe that "the weak version stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use English for communicative purposes and therefore attempts to integrate communicative activities into the program of language teaching", that's "learning to use English" (Yuan, 2011, p. 429). In contrast, the strong version of CLT claims that "language is acquired through communication" that's "using English to learn it" (Ellis, 2003, p. 28). She continues that "task-based language teaching constitutes a strong version of CLT. That is, tasks provide the basis for an entire language curriculum" (p. 30). Moreover, among recent manifestations of communicative language teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a major focal point of language teaching which is based on using tasks as the core of language teaching and learning (Brown, 2007).

According to (Zhang, 1999; as cited in Ruixue, 2006, p.53), task based instruction is such a complete method that "it treasures both the learning process and learning results, language forms and meaning, and linguistic competence and communicative function". Researchers have used tasks to understand both the second language learning and teaching processes (Bygate, 2000). Task-based teaching provides learners with opportunities for learner-to-learner interactions that encourage authentic use of language and meaningful communication. The goal of a task is to "exchange meaning rather than to learn the second language" (Ellis, 1999, p. 113).

According to Oxford (2006), many types of tasks exist, particularly in the realm of communicative instruction. She also lists some key task types found in the literature, such as problem solving, decision making, information-gap, ordering, sorting, etc. In this study, three different tasks were designed to test the acquisition of grammatical structures. So, the focus is on three specific tasks: dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction task in teaching grammatical structures.

Dictation has a long history in language teaching and has both different proponents and opponents. In spite of different criticisms mentioned about the usefulness of dictation (Lado, 1961; Harris, 1969 as cited in Rahimi, 2008; Standfield, 1985; as cited in Rahimi, 2008; Jacobs and Small, 2003), some researchers and scholars (Oller, 1983; as cited in Chastain, 1988; Farhady, Jafarpur & Birjandi, 1994; Kit, 2004; Rahimi, 2008) believe that there is no doubt about the instructional appropriateness and effectiveness of dictation (see below).

The other two tasks used in this study are individual reconstruction and collaborative reconstruction. The benefits of peer interaction for learning tasks have been theorized since the time of Piaget (1928; as cited in Gokhale, 1995) and Vygotsky (1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. Recent years have seen a great increase in interest and research on collaborative learning, group learning, and cooperative induction (Laughlin 1996). Bandura (1997) points out that learners "who will work together in a group on cognitively demanding (i.e., high-complexity tasks) tasks will have more confidence in being able to successfully complete the learning task than learners who will work individually" (p.196). Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986, p. 36), "there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals". The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991).

The question of whether or not and how grammar should be taught has long been a controversial issue in the field of language teaching. If we have a brief look at the history of language pedagogy, we will find out that teaching grammar has had its ups and downs in recent decades. For instance, in the Grammar Translation Method, form was the central aspect of learning, while in the Direct Method and Natural Approach grammar had a marginalized role (Brown, 2001). At present, the debate is centered on task-based teaching of grammar; and consciousness raising activities, in addition to the role of noticing, play an important part in grammar instruction (Fotos, 1994).

A new line of research in the domain of grammar teaching is concerned with the distinction often made between focus on forms and focus on form. In this respect, Harmer (2007, p. 53) points out that "focus on form occurs when students direct their conscious attention to some feature of the language, such as a verb tense or the organization of paragraph. It will occur naturally when students try to complete communicative task in Task-based learning". Focus-on-forms approach involves the systematic teaching of grammatical features in accordance with a structural syllabus and focus-on-form approach involves attention to linguistic features in the context of communicative activities derived from a task-based syllabus (Ellis, 2005a). According to Oxford (2006), the learners will master the specific, preplanned forms one at a time before they need to use them to negotiate meaning. This is often called focus on forms.

One of the common ways of focusing on form is 'noticing', a concept introduced by Schmidt (1990; as cited in Baleghizadeh & Mozaheb, 2011). Batstone (1996, p. 273) defines noticing as "the intake of grammar as a result of learners paying attention to the input where 'intake' refers to input which becomes part of the learning process". In Schmidt's (1994) model, implicit and explicit learning occurs as a result of absence or presence of awareness respectively. According to Hulstijn (2005) explicit learning includes conscious intention in input processing to find regularities in the input information and, if so, to obtain the concepts and rules within these regularities. Implicit learning is input processing without such an intention, which takes place unconsciously. Explicit knowledge refers to "knowledge about language that speakers are aware of and, if asked, can verbalize" (Ellis, 2003, p. 105). She also defines the implicit knowledge as the "knowledge of language that a speaker manifests in performance but has no awareness of" (p. 105).

II. THE STUDY

In keeping with the purpose of the study, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the effects of different tasks, that is, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction, on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives?
2. What are the effects of the above mentioned tasks with implicit and explicit instruction on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives?

3. Are there any differences among different task types with regard to retaining grammatical structures after one week?

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants were 40 low-intermediate male High School learners of English in Lordegan, Iran. They were in grade three in High school and their age ranged from 14 to 17. The participants in this study had been learning English for at least five years during Guidance school and High school. Some of the participants studied English in some language institutes in Lordegan.

B. Instrument

A timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) constructed by the researcher. The timed GJT was composed of 40 sentences. The test items of the timed GJT are listed in Appendix A. Twenty out of the 40 test items were the targeted sentences with the targeted feature, and the remaining 20 non-targeted sentences were distractors. Among the 20 targeted test items, 10 were grammatical sentences and the other 10 were ungrammatical ones. Only the results of the 20 targeted test items were computed for further statistical analysis.

C. Treatment Materials

In this study, there were three tasks, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction used as treatments. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatments, consisting of a dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction with either implicit or explicit instruction.

Dictation Task: In dictation task, the participants were asked to listen to a passage of about 75-85 words, during which they were not allowed to take notes. Next, they listened to the passage again but this time chunk by chunk. Next, they were asked to write in what they heard. Then, the students are allowed to review the passage and to correct mistakes. Next, the students read the text on the screen and they were allowed to correct their mistakes and filled in possible gaps in the text. Finally, the teacher tried to get the students to understand what the mistakes were without giving them proper answers.

Individual Reconstruction Task: In the individual reconstruction task, the participants were asked to listen to a passage twice and then to reconstruct it. As the students participated in the study were not familiar with this kind of task and also the collaborative task, two practice sessions were held to familiarize the participant with these two tasks.

Collaborative Reconstruction Task: The collaborative reconstruction task is similar to the individual reconstruction task. But in this task, two participants were paired and were asked to reconstruct the text together.

Explicit Instruction vs. Implicit Instruction: Participants were randomly assigned to receive either implicit or explicit instructions. Implicit instructions were operationalised as only containing instructions on how to perform the task. The explicit instructions focused the participants' attention on the target structure and gave an example of it (in accordance with Dekeyser's operationalisation of explicit (inductive) instructions; 1995; as cited in Reinders, 2005).

D. Target Items

The Selection of Target Items: Six passages (Appendix B) were chosen from *A First Book in Comprehension Précis and Composition* by Alexander (1965) with little changes by the researcher. Each passage contained four target items (gerund and infinitive). Totally, six passages had 24 target items. The selection of the target items were based on the *Book 2 and Book 3* (Birjandi, P., Nouroozi, M., & Mahmoodi, G., 2009) taught in High Schools. Each text was about a paragraph in length, and could stand alone as a semantic unit. I was careful in choosing each text to ensure that it did not contain overly complex or subject-specific vocabulary, so as not to divert attention to vocabulary considerations, nor overly complex sentences.

The Gerund and Infinitive Contrast: Teaching the gerund/infinitive distinction in complement constructions is a problematic area in EFL/ESL instruction (my own problem during teaching English grammar in English classes). In other words, one of the many problems which confront EFL/ESL students knows when to use the infinitive and when to use the gerund in verb complementation. In this study, the researcher tried to choose the gerund and infinitive items used in High School English Book 2 and Book 3.

E. Design and Procedure

The participants in this study were 40 students who were chosen from 150 students of High School in lordegan. All participants were pretested consisting of GJT to determine their existing Knowledge of the target structure (gerund and infinitive). After the pre-test, among the whole participants, 40 participants who scored below the threshold of 66% (Reinders, 2005) on the test were invited to participate in the rest of the study. In this study, there were three tasks, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction used as treatments. One week after the pretest, participants were randomly assigned to one of three treatments, consisting of a dictation (n=13), individual reconstruction (n=13), and collaborative reconstruction (n=14) with either implicit or explicit instruction. The first treatment took place one week after the pretest and treatments two and three in one-week intervals after that. The final

treatment was followed by an immediate posttest and a week later by a delayed posttest. The weekly intervals were chosen for practical reasons and because one week was considered the minimum between test administrations to avoid a practice effect.

Each session lasted about 45 minutes. In each session, two passages were instructed and practiced. The participants were fully instructed how to perform each task. Before the first session in each treatment, participants had a chance to practice a sample passage. All tests and treatments included instructions, examples and practice sentences. Participants were instructed to ask for help if they had any difficulty when completing the practice passages.

After each session, the students received a practice passage in a different form. These texts were something like partial dictation and reconstruction editing tasks. In these practice texts, the missing words were the target structures (gerunds and infinitives). After completing the instructional sessions (three sessions for each task), all participants were asked to take part in the post-test. The post-test was also a timed grammaticality judgment test similar to pre-test, but in a different order. In other words, the same tests were used as posttests and finally, as delayed posttests, but items were presented in a different order and a number of the items were replaced by examples not encountered on the pretest or during the treatments.

F. The Pilot Study

A pilot study on the Grammaticality Judgment Test was conducted before the main study, three weeks before the pre-test. The main purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the reliability and the practicality of the instrument. Reliability estimate of 0.6 was calculated using the K-R 20 (Farhady, Jafarpur, & Birjandi, 1994). For this purpose, a total of 15 participants, the same grade (High school students) as those participating in the main study, were invited to take part in the pilot study. Note that the 15 participants did not take part in the main study. The subjects were instructed to read each sentence on the screen to identify and decide whether or not it was grammatical and write their responses on the answer sheets. The duration of time allowed for this test was determined earlier in the pilot study. The subjects were allowed 20 minutes to answer the test.

IV. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

In order to compare the three groups under study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. To compare the means, one-way ANOVAs as well as t-test were used.

A. Investigating the First Question

The results of the students' performance on the immediate posttest were compared to see if different treatments, that is, dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction, produced different results. Table I. reveals the descriptive statistics for the posttest, and Fig. 1, illustrates the means in bar form.

TABLE I.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE POSTTEST

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dict.	13	13.77	1.235	12	15
Ind. Rec.	13	12.39	1.044	11	14
Col. Rec.	14	15.93	1.439	13	18

Dict= Dictation
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

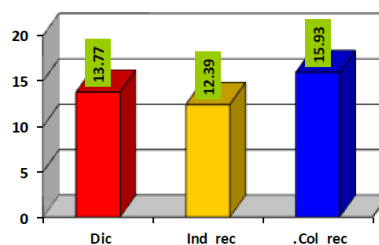


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the means in posttest

By referring to Figure 4.1, one can easily see that the means of the three groups are different. Through applying a one-way ANOVA, these means were compared to find out whether or not their differences are statistically significant. Table II. depicts the results of the ANOVA.

TABLE II.
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA ON THE POSTTEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	86.462	2	43.231	27.430	.000
Within Groups	58.313	37	1.576		
Total	144.775	39			

According to Table II., the value of F-observed (F-observed= 27.430) is significant at the probability level of 0.000 which is indicative of a statistically significant difference. However, this table does not pinpoint the exact area of difference(s). In order to find it out, a Scheffe post hoc test was employed. Table III. shows the results of the post hoc test.

TABLE III.
THE RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST FOR THE POSTTEST

Groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
Dict.	Ind. Rec.	1.39*	.028
	Col. Rec.	-2.16**	.000
Ind. Rec.	Dict.	-1.39*	.028
	Col. Rec.	-3.54**	.000
Col. Rec.	Dict.	2.16**	.000
	Ind. Rec.	3.54**	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**.. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Dict= Dictation; Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction; Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

Table III. tells us that the difference between dictation group and individual reconstruction group is significant with the former group outperforming the latter group (mean difference= 1.39, p= 0.028). Moreover, the difference between dictation group and collaborative reconstruction group is also significant, but this time the latter group outperformed the former group (mean difference= 2.16, p= 0.000). Regarding individual reconstruction group and collaborative reconstruction group, the latter group's performance was better than that of the former group (mean difference= 3.54, p= 0.000). All in all, the first null hypothesis stating that "different tasks (dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction) don't influence the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives differently" is rejected, and it can be claimed that different task types produce different effects in students.

B. Investigating the Second Question

Considering the second question, the students in treatment groups were instructed either explicitly (n=20) or implicitly (n= 20). In order to answer the second question, the performance of those who received explicit instruction was compared with that of the students who received implicit instruction. Table IV. shows the descriptive statistics for these two sets of scores, and Fig. 2, depicts the means graphically.

TABLE IV
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	Min	Max
Explicit	20	14.80	1.542	.345	12	18
Implicit	20	13.65	1.725	.386	11	17

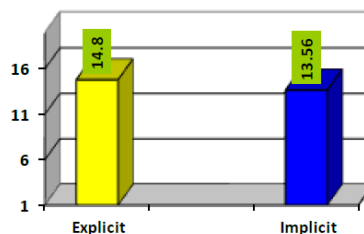


Figure 2. The bar chart for explicit and implicit instructions

It can be seen in Table IV. that the two groups' performances were different. To find out if this difference is significant, a test was applied to scores. Table V. indicates the results of the t-test.

TABLE V.
THE RESULTS OF THE T-TEST FOR EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

t-observed	df	Sig.
2.222	38	.032

The amount of t-observed (t-observed= 2.222), according to Table V., is significant at the probability level of p=0.032, which is statistically significant. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group. Therefore, the second null hypothesis which maintains that "teaching the above mentioned tasks with explicit and implicit instruction produces the same effect on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives" is rejected, and one can claim that explicit instruction produces better results than implicit instruction in Iranian High School students.

C. Investigating the Third Question

In order to find out whether or not the three groups under investigation retained the learned material similarly, the participants took another posttest one week after the treatment. Table VI. presents the descriptive statistics for this delayed posttest, and Figure 4.3 illustrates the means graphically.

TABLE VI.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE DELAYED POSTTEST

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dict.	13	13.08	1.256	11	15
Ind. Rec.	13	11.69	1.032	10	14
Col. Rec.	14	14.86	1.406	13	17

Dict= Dictation
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

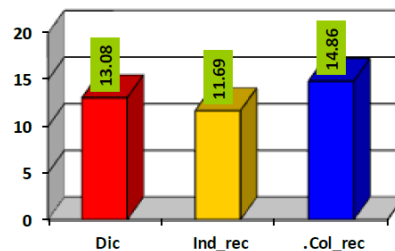


Figure 3. Graphical representation of the means in delayed posttest

In Fig. 3, it can be seen easily that the means of the three groups are different. By employing another one-way ANOVA, the means were compared to understand if their differences are statistically significant. Table VII. indicates the results of the ANOVA.

TABLE VII.
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA ON THE DELAYED POSTTEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	68.093	2	34.047	21.944	.000
Within Groups	57.407	37	1.552		
Total	125.500	39			

By referring to Table VII. the value of F-observed (F-observed= 21.944) is significant at the probability level of 0.000 which shows a statistically significant difference. However, this table does not tell us about the exact area of difference(s). In order to find it out, a Scheffe post hoc test was employed. Table VIII. shows the results of the post hoc test.

TABLE VIII.
THE RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST FOR THE POSTTEST

groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
Dict.	Ind. Rec.	1.39*	.026
	Col. Rec.	-1.78*	.003
Ind. Rec.	Dict.	-1.39*	.026
	Col. Rec.	-3.17*	.000
Col. Rec.	Dict.	1.78*	.003
	Ind. Rec.	3.17*	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
**. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Dict= Dictation
Ind. Rec.= Individual Reconstruction
Col. Rec.= Collaborative Reconstruction

Table VIII. tells us that the difference between dictation group and individual reconstruction group is significant with the former group outperforming the latter group (mean difference= 1.39, $p= 0.026$). Moreover, the difference between dictation group and collaborative reconstruction group is also significant, but this time the latter group outperformed the former group (mean difference= 1.78, $p= 0.003$). Regarding individual reconstruction group and collaborative reconstruction group, the latter group's performance was better than that of the former group (mean difference= 3.17, $p= 0.000$). As a result, the third null hypothesis stating that "there are no differences among different task types with regard to retaining grammatical structures after one week" is also rejected, and it can be claimed that students who were taught with different task types retained grammatical points differently after one week.

V. DISCUSSION

The above results of this study are consistent with the previous studies which involve individual reconstruction task and collaborative reconstruction task in teaching grammatical structures. For example, Donato (1994) shows that a specific grammar structure is produced successfully by a group of students but none of them are able to do it individually. In another research, Storch (1999) uses three different types of grammar-focused exercises, a cloze exercise, a text reconstruction task, and a short composition exercise. After completing the tasks both individually and collaboratively (in pairs), he concludes that collaboration has a positive effect on overall grammatical accuracy, but tends to vary with specific grammatical items. After mentioning the research findings by different researchers (Long, 1985; Kowal & Swain, 1994; as cited in Storch 1998; Pica, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1998), Storch (1999) suggests that collaborative output tasks are beneficial, particularly in developing learners' grammatical competence. Moreover, Nassaji and Tian (2010) examined and compared the effectiveness of two types of output tasks (reconstruction cloze tasks and reconstruction editing tasks) for learning English phrasal verbs. The learners do these tasks both individually and collaboratively. After performing the task, they suggest that completing the tasks collaboratively leads to a greater accuracy of task completion than completing them individually. Similarly, Kowal and Swain (1994; as cited in Storch 1998) propose the use of collaborative writing tasks considering the grammatical accuracy with in a communicative context. This kind of collaborative task is advantageous because of the availability of peer feedback in drawing learner's attention to gaps in language knowledge and providing feedback which consolidates language knowledge.

Considering the dictation task, the descriptive results showed that the dictation treatment performed considerably better than the individual reconstruction treatment but worse than collaborative reconstruction treatment. These descriptive results also showed that dictation task affected the learners' acquisition of these two grammatical structures. The findings of this part are also in line with the findings of some researchers. Rahimi (2008) believes that practice with dictation results in improvement in grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Morris (1983) points out that dictation as a learning activity helps students develop their accuracy in listening and writing and reinforces structure and vocabulary. Valette (1964; as cited in Rahimi, 2008) adds that practice with dictation can help students learn the language. She believes the teacher's concentration on different component of the language, including sound, sentence structure, etc. encourages the students to correct their papers. Moreover, Richard Kidd (1992) in his article, *Teaching ESL Grammar Through Dictation*, strongly supports the claim that dictation has potential value for grammar teaching. In order to prove his claim, he refers to Oller's (1975; as cited in Kidd, 1992) notion of a "grammar of expectancy" and the acquisition model proposed by Krashen (1982; as cited in Kidd, 1992). In the case of grammar of expectancy, Kidd adds that "dictation obviously provides an excellent means of practicing and improving this general capacity, as it encourages the learner to attend not only to the forms but also to the meanings" (p.50). By referring to Krashen's idea, Kidd also points out that "the second plausible reason for the effectiveness of dictation as a grammar teaching method is that dictation passages may qualify as good comprehensible input, and therefore promote the subconscious acquisition of structures" (p. 51).

The focus of the second research question was to investigate the effects of the above mentioned tasks (dictation, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction) with implicit and explicit instructions on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. In other words, along with the line of research on the effects of instruction in grammar teaching, this study compared the use of explicit and implicit instructions of grammatical structures on Iranian High School students' acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. In order to answer the second question, the performance of those who received explicit instruction was compared with that of the students who received implicit instruction. According to the descriptive statistics for these two sets of scores shown in table 4.4 and the results of the t-test for explicit and implicit instructions shown in Table V., the difference was significant ($p=0.032$). Accordingly, the explicit group outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures.

This is similar to the findings of the studies done in this area. This findings concur with Robinson (1997b; as cited in Radwan, 2005) and DeGraaff (1997; as cited in Radwan, 2005), both of whom showed that learners receiving explicit instruction performed better than those who did not. Similarly, Rahimpour and Salimi (2010) believe that explicit instruction will lead to language learners' achievement in learning English as a foreign language. They continue that the results of statistical analysis support their hypothesis that there is a significant difference between explicit formal instruction and foreign language learners' performance. Also, a similar argument is presented by Ellis (1993; as cited in Radwan, 2005) who contends "that implicit instruction is often slow and laborious and usually requires longer

time than explicit instruction to become effective" (p. 82). Moreover, Rosa and O'Neill (1999) showed that learners receiving explicit instruction manifested higher levels of intake than learners in the implicit conditions.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The desire to make learning more student-centred is reflected in widespread attempts, in different areas of the curriculum, to introduce approaches which engage students actively in the learning process. Task-based learning can be regarded as one particular approach to implementing the broader communicative approach and, as with the communicative approach in general, one of the features of task-based learning that often attracts teachers is that it seems to have a great place for the teaching of grammar. In addition, some students spend most of their time memorizing rules of grammar in or after class. Correspondingly, grammar class became the dullest class and most students got confused by so many rules. Many students complain that they are eager to learn grammar well since grammar is the fundamental knowledge in English but they are not so successful. Actually, grammar teaching should not just maintain its rule-listing routine. Instead, some new attempts should be involved. Teaching grammar through tasks can pursue the appropriate practical use of grammar.

In order to teach grammar through tasks, this study attempted to demonstrate the effectiveness of three specific task types, that is, dictation task, individual reconstruction, and collaborative reconstruction on EFL learners' acquisition of two grammatical structures (infinitives and gerunds). These three tasks were also accompanied by implicit and explicit instructions to compare the use of explicit and implicit instructions of grammatical structures on acquisition of these two grammatical structures. So, forty low- intermediate High School students were pre-tested by the Grammaticality Judgment Test. Then, they were invited to complete the tasks. Finally, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test were administered. After analyzing raw data and using ANOVA and t-test, it was generally revealed that students' acquisition of grammatical structures tended to improve through exposure to task-based input. Specifically, there were significant differences on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives among three groups of students when they were exposed to dictation task, individual reconstruction task, and collaborative tasks. Among them, collaborative reconstruction task had the most effect and the individual reconstruction had the least effect on the acquisition of gerunds and infinitives. Also, at the end of the study, it was revealed that the group who received explicit instruction outperformed the implicit group after receiving the special instructions. In other words, the explicit group performed better than the implicit group in acquisition of grammatical structures in this study.

Generally speaking, incorporating tasks and task-based activities in EFL classrooms enhance the acquisition of grammatical structures and task-based teaching of grammar is a suitable and effective alternative for traditional methods of teaching grammar.

APPENDIX A GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TEST

Your name:

Decide if each sentence is **grammatically correct or incorrect**. If it is correct, circle "c". If it is incorrect, circle "I". You will have a little time to answer each question. Therefore you need to respond very quickly.

1. She apologized for borrowing the book without your permission. C I
2. If your sister cut her hand with a knife, what will you do? C I
3. I have been trying to finish this homework all day. C I
4. The president made a very interesting speech in his meeting with teachers. C I
5. I'm afraid that the secretary won't be able to finish them. C I
6. Have they decided where go for their summer holidays? C I
7. I realized that the car was not running properly, so I have to stop it. C I
8. My teacher always says that it is important to read this book. C I
9. The new student whom I talked is living in this apartment. C I
10. They didn't know the meanings of the new vocabulary in their books. C I
11. When you are driving you should avoid to use your mobile phone. C I
12. Can you help me get the dinner ready for children? C I
13. Young boys are climbing up and down the trees and do funny things. C I
14. John wanted to walk to school, but Bob insisted on drive him there. C I
15. The teacher told me draw a picture of a lion in my notebook. C I
16. This morning, I bought nothing because the supermarket was very crowded. C I
17. Do you really expect me to forgive you after what you have done? C I
18. Would you mind not play your radio so loud, please? C I
19. The English language is spoken nearly all over the world nowadays. C I
20. If you can't see without your glasses, why didn't you put them on? C I
21. Don't risk playing your car over here, the police will take it away. C I
22. Do you believe in the existence of life in other planets? C I
23. Was the last problem in the book difficult for them solving? C I

24. I certainly don't know when my father comes back home tonight. C I
25. While I was on holiday, my suitcase was stolen from my hotel room. C I
26. Instead of going to the park, we went to a restaurant near here. C I
27. I've seen many foreign countries, but I haven't been in Japan yet. C I
28. Would you like to come with me to the gym, please? C I
29. Prepare a dictionary is not as easy as it may seem. C I
30. In many cases, researchers couldn't find a cure to certain diseases. C I
31. Would you please tell us more about the accident you see? C I
32. He was awarded a gold watch for his long service to the company. C I
33. My mother disliked to see me with impolite boys. C I
34. It is really the hardest thing for me write a composition. C I
35. The accident happened because the mechanic hadn't fitted the wheel. C I
36. Do you need someone help you with your math problems. C I
37. He took the radio apart but couldn't put it together again. C I
38. If they arrived this afternoon, we might see them again. C I
39. I couldn't help laughing when I saw Sarah wearing that funny hat. C I
40. His mother asked him not to try to borrow money from his friend. C I

APPENDIX B TEXTS FOR TREATMENTS

Text A

Mr. and Mrs. Smith go to the market on Saturday morning. Mr. Smith **dislikes buying** in the market. Mrs. Smith goes shopping and he sits on a box and **enjoys watching** the children. This morning, it was more crowded than usual. So, Mrs. Smith **avoided buying** unnecessary things. She only bought some meat, fish, and fruit. An hour passed and a man came to Mr. Smith, "Excuse me; your wife has **finished shopping** now. She wants you to carry the bags home".

Text B

The children next door often insist on playing football in the garden. Although their parents apologize for breaking the windows, it is not enough. Last Saturday afternoon, I stayed at home. **After reading** a book, I closed my eyes and went to sleep. A sound at the door made me get up quickly. Soon a little boy appeared.

"Not one of my windows again?" I asked. "Oh, no!" answered the boy. "Your window was open this time and **instead of breaking** the window our ball is in your bedroom. May we get it, please?"

Text C

Janet is a good student. She is very good in mathematics but **writing** a composition is not as easy as it may seem. **Choosing** a good topic is the most difficult part. The students **dislike listening** to her. When she wants to read it our teacher repeatedly says, "Would you **mind not speaking**?" **Listening** to her composition made student very tired. Last week he decided to write a better one and the students **couldn't help admiring** her.

Text D

I'm learning **how to drive** a car. A week ago, I had my first lesson. First, we **decided where to go**. My teacher took me out on a busy road. It was full of cars and people. She **told me to drive** carefully and patiently. She also **asked me not to be** afraid. I **tried to do** my best. At last the lesson finished and I went home. I felt very tired. I have learnt many things, but I have still got a lot to learn.

Text E

Every summer students have a long holiday. They should use their free time in a right way. Their parents **expect them to learn** new things. There is a good school near our house. There are different classes like computer, music, sports, etc. Last summer I **wanted to study** English and my parents **encouraged me a lot to take part** in the classes. My teacher was so kind and experienced. He **helped me to finish** the course successfully. After three months, I am able to speak English now.

Text F

Mr. Johnson looked at his watch. It was 7:30. **It was really the hardest thing for him to get up** on time. He was late as usual, so he didn't have time for breakfast. He washed and dressed quickly. Being late in the morning was **difficult for him to solve**. He ran all he way to the station. Mr. Johnson never eats anything in the morning. He always says to his friends at the office: "**It is nice to have** breakfast in the morning, but **it is nicer to lie** in the bed!"

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